

## **Cheating or Collaboration – proper and improper use of information sources?**

### **What is cheating?**

Cheating on a written exam is easily defined as the use of improper information as e.g. notes on a piece of paper, a sms in the cell-phone or a programmed text or formula in your pocket calculator. Besides written exams students in our education system may have other assignments as part of their coursework. Given the way these assignments are structured, one may be tempted to cheat by copying full texts, or part of texts or data from other sources without proper use of references. In the world of science there is a principle: honour to whom honour is due. Copying without proper referencing is a violation of this principle and considered cheating.

It is very hard to give a complete definition of what constitutes cheating, each case must be considered separately. What we can do here is to provide guidelines and typical cases and here are some examples:

#### Allowed:

- To hand in work on which one has been given assistance by a teacher at the department.
- To write and hand in joint lab reports or other assignments when it has been explicitly announced that group work is allowed.
- To help or be helped by a fellow student with how to use laboratory instruments and equipment and computer programs etc.
- To discuss course material, problems, and solving methods with another students in order to increase understanding.
- To cite, with citation signs and reference to the source, texts from books or from Internet.

#### Not allowed:

- To steal tests or solutions from the teacher. This is a very serious offence.
- To hand in someone else's work as one's own, with or without the other person's knowledge, or consent. To hand in an assignment, partly or entirely copied from another sources is a serious offence.
- To allow someone to hand in your work as his/her own or to allow someone to copy parts of your work or the experimental data in your work. Remember to protect your files on the public computers in the computer rooms.

- To write lab-reports or other assignments together or hand in several copies which are presented, explicitly or not, as individual work. Mind that the department has IT-based tools to make comparisons of texts
- To use experimental data which you have not measured yourself but gathered from earlier lab-reports are just fabricated
- To present as one's own, lab-reports or texts taken from other sources, e.g. via Internet.

### **Are you uncertain?**

Contact the teacher of the course to find out if what you intend to do will be considered cheating.

### **Action on suspected cheating?**

Cheating is suspected if we find that an assignment or a lab-report, in part or in full, is nearly identically in its text and outline with what can be found in previous reports or on the Internet. In such a case, the student will be given a chance to explain the situation and a rapport will be compiled.

### **Consequences**

The institution is not the judging part in matters regarding cheating but will compile a report, which will be processed by the University's Disciplinary Committee. A student found guilty of cheating may be barred from the University for up to six months.

The text above is a revision of the text originally published by the Department of Computing at the Science Faculty, Lund University, see:

[www.cs.lth.se/masters/cheating.shtml](http://www.cs.lth.se/masters/cheating.shtml)