



Exploring the Issue of Contract Cheating

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION STATEMENT

HREC Project Number:	<i>HRE2019-0080</i>
Project Title:	<i>Exploring the Issue of Contract Cheating</i>
Chief Investigator:	<i>Dr Lesley Sefcik Academic Integrity Advisor, Office of the Academic Registrar Curtin University</i>
Student researcher:	
Version Number:	<i>1</i>
Version Date:	<i>04/02/2019</i>

What is the Project About?

In recent years, the issue of contract cheating has received a lot of media attention. Contract cheating, in which students outsource academic work to another person or company, is an important issue for students, universities, and industry, globally. This study will allow us to form a better understanding of what Curtin University students think about contract cheating. We are mainly interested in your views, thoughts and opinions. This information will help us to develop better policies so that we can support and protect students through their university careers. We hope that as many students as possible will take part in our study.

Who is doing the Research?

- The project is being conducted and funded by the Office of the Academic Registrar at Curtin University.

Why am I being asked to take part and what will I have to do?

- We are asking undergraduate and postgraduate coursework students from Curtin University to participate in our study. We believe that your views, experiences and opinions will be valuable in understanding the issue of contract cheating.
- We will be running the study in two phases. Phase 1 is a survey and Phase 2 is an optional interview, also on contract cheating.
- To participate in Phase 1 of the study you need to complete and submit our e-survey on contract cheating
- This survey is electronic and needs to be completed and submitted online.
- Because we are using an e-survey, this study will take place entirely online. It is anonymous and confidential. This survey will take around 10 minutes to complete.



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- We will ask you general questions about contract cheating. What you know about contract cheating and how you feel about certain issues relating to contract cheating? We will also ask you to answer questions based on two made-up contract cheating scenarios.
- This survey only needs to be completed and submitted once.
- Participating in this survey is free and entirely your choice. However, any costs associated with data and internet usage will be your responsibility. If you choose to access this survey using a university computer or Curtin's free WiFi, then there will be no cost to you. You will not be paid to participate in this study.
- Optional Consent for Phase 2 of the Study: We would like you to consider participating in Phase 2 of this study. Phase 2 is an optional interview on contract cheating and is related to the content of this survey. In this survey you will be asked a yes or no question about whether you would like to take part in Phase 2 of the study. If you select 'Yes' you will be directed to another survey, that is unlinked to your anonymous contract cheating survey, to provide your email address. You will only be contacted for the interview if you provide this information. Your email address will be kept secure and only be used to contact you. It will not be given to any third-parties.

Are there any benefits' to being in the research project?

- There may be no direct benefit to you from participating in this research.
- However, this project also gives you an opportunity to express your opinion or describe your feelings, about contract cheating

We hope the results of this research will allow us to:

- Develop better policies to protect and support Curtin University Students.
- Prevent academic dishonesty
- Protect the reputation of your degree from Curtin University.

Are there any risks, side-effects, discomforts or inconveniences from being in the research project?

- We have been careful to make sure that the questions in the survey do not cause you any distress. But, if you feel anxious about any of the questions you do not need to answer them. If the questions cause any concerns or upset you, we can refer you to a counsellor.
- Apart from giving up a small amount of time, we do not expect that there will be any risks or inconveniences associated with taking part in this study.

Who will have access to my information?

- The information collected in this research will be non-identifiable (anonymous). This means that we do not need to collect individual names. Information is anonymous and will not include a code number or name. No one, not even the research team will be able to identify your information.



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- The following people will have access to the information we collect in this research: the research team Dr. Lesley Sefcik (Curtin), Professor Jon Yorke (Curtin), and Dr. Terisha Veeran-Colton (Curtin), and in the event of an audit or investigation, staff from the Curtin University Office of Research and Development.
- The information we collect in this study will be kept under secure conditions at Curtin University for seven years after the research has ended and then it will be destroyed.
- The results of this research may be presented at conferences or published in professional journals. You will not be identified in any results that are published or presented.
- If you wish to enter the Contract Cheating Survey Prize draw you can enter your email address in the space provided in the survey. This will allow us to contact you if you are one of the winners of our prize draw. Your email address will not be linked to your survey responses. After the prize draw we will delete your email address. That means the data we analyse and the data we store will be non-identifiable, and we will have no way to identify your information.
- Electronic data will be password-protected and stored in a secure data drive designated for the study. Only researchers will have access to this data.

Will you tell me the results of the research?

- The results will be made available as part of a conference publication or professional journal.
- If you are interested in obtaining a summary of the results please contact the researchers after 1st December 2019.

Do I have to take part in the research project?

- Taking part in a research project is voluntary. It is your choice to take part or not. You do not have to agree if you do not want to. If you decide to take part and then change your mind, that is okay, you can withdraw from the project. If you choose not to take part or start and then stop the study, it will not affect your relationship with the University, staff or colleagues.
- With your permission, if you chose to leave the study we will use any information collected unless you tell us not to. We will be unable to destroy your information because it has been collected in an anonymous way.

What happens next and who can I contact about the research?

If you would like any further information about the study or have any questions, you can contact:

- Dr Lesley Sefcik, Academic Integrity Advisor, Office of the Academic Registrar, Curtin University.
- Phone: 08 9266 5735
- Email: Lesley.Sefcik@curtin.edu.au
- If you decide to take part in this survey we will ask you at the beginning of the survey if you consent to taking part in our study. By ticking the 'Yes' option, it is telling us that you understand what you have read and what has been discussed. Providing consent indicates that you agree to be in the research project. Please take your time and ask any questions you have before you consent to participating in the study. You can click the link provided in the introduction to the survey to download a pdf copy of this information sheet.



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Curtin University Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) has approved this study (HREC number HRE2019-0080). Should you wish to discuss the study with someone not directly involved, in particular, any matters concerning the conduct of the study or your rights as a participant, or you wish to make a confidential complaint, you may contact the Ethics Officer on (08) 9266 9223 or the Manager, Research Integrity on (08) 9266 7093 or email hrec@curtin.edu.au.