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# Contract Cheating

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# Questions we will tackle together...

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- ▶ What is Contract Cheating?
- ▶ What does it look like?
- ▶ Why does it matter?
- ▶ Who are the players?
- ▶ What can we do?

**Special Acknowledgement Christopher Lang**

# What is Contract Cheating?

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- ▶ Contract cheating is any form of cheating where a student hires another person to do their work for them. This can include everything from using an essay mill to write a paper, hiring another student to take a test for them, or paying someone to complete all or part of a project

(Plagiarism.org, 2017)

# What is Contract Cheating?

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- ▶ The term **contract cheating** describes the form of academic dishonesty where students get academic work completed on their behalf, which they then submit for academic credit as if they had created it themselves.
- ▶ Often contract cheating involves the payment of a fee to a third party, who then creates the work for the student.

# What is Contract Cheating?

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▶ Three characteristics of Academic Custom Writing Sites [feature their persuasiveness]

1. Informativeness → services offered – terms of use
2. Credibility → assurances of quality [writers & work – includes privacy/ cost]
3. Involvement → customers have access 24 hours /7 days per week by live text chat, social media, personal accounts

<https://bid4papers.com/>

<https://www.ultius.com/writing-services/research-paper-writing-services/buy-research-paper.html>

# What does Contract Cheating look like?

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- ▶ Pay or trade for an assignment  
<https://www.coursehero.com/file/28634934/Individual-Assignment-Marketingdocx/>
- ▶ Pay to write exam
- ▶ Pay to take on line course  
<https://www.onlineclasshelp.com/services/>
- ▶ Purchase a degree parchment  
<https://www.diplomacompany.ca/>

# What does Contract Cheating look like?

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- ▶ Bid 4 Papers (<https://bid4papers.com/>)
- ▶ Bluekey (<https://ut.bluekeyedu.ca/>)
- ▶ Easy 4.0 (<http://www.ez4edu.com/>) caters to foreign students
- ▶ SOS (<http://www.sosessays.com/>)
- ▶ Kijiji (<https://www.kijiji.ca/b-oakville-halton-region/psychology-essay/k011700277?dc=true>)
- ▶ Beat Your Course (<https://beatyourcourse.com/>)
- ▶ Course Hero (<https://www.coursehero.com/>)

# What is Contract Cheating?

## Current Research

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- ▶ Students self report: 3.5% and 62.5% more than once (Curtis C.J & Clare, J, 2017); 7% US students state purchased assignment (Newton & Lang, 2016).
- ▶ 50% of students willing to buy an assignment (Rigby, Burton, Balcombe, Bateman, & Mulatu, 2015)
- ▶ Accounts for about 1/5 of the plagiarism in papers submitted to Turnitin (Newton & Lang, 2016)
- ▶ It is big business –In UK, “more than 20,000” students are buying from websites (York, 2017)



# Why does it matter?

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- ▶ Academic Integrity is the foundation of the educational enterprise. When students submit assessments that are honest, trustworthy, respectful, responsible and fair representations of their knowledge and abilities at a particular point in time, they are exhibiting the courage to act with integrity...when students do this, faculty are able to honestly and fairly evaluate the knowledge and abilities of their students, and our educational institutions are able to honestly and fairly certify the students for the good of the knowledge economy. Without academic integrity, then, our educational institutions fail to serve a core purpose of their existence – to prepare students for lives as ethical and knowledge citizens and professionals and to certify this preparation (Moriarty et al., 2016, p.2)

# Why does it matter? Cont'd

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- ▶ Provides an academic advantage to the student who contract cheats over their peers
- ▶ Students who contract cheat do not gain the knowledge and skills that they need to be successful in college/university and in the work force
- ▶ Devalues the education of other students who followed academic integrity expectations
- ▶ Contributes to a culture of dishonesty and the commercialization of education
- ▶ Damages institutions reputation and the value of degrees, diplomas and certificates

# Why does it matter?

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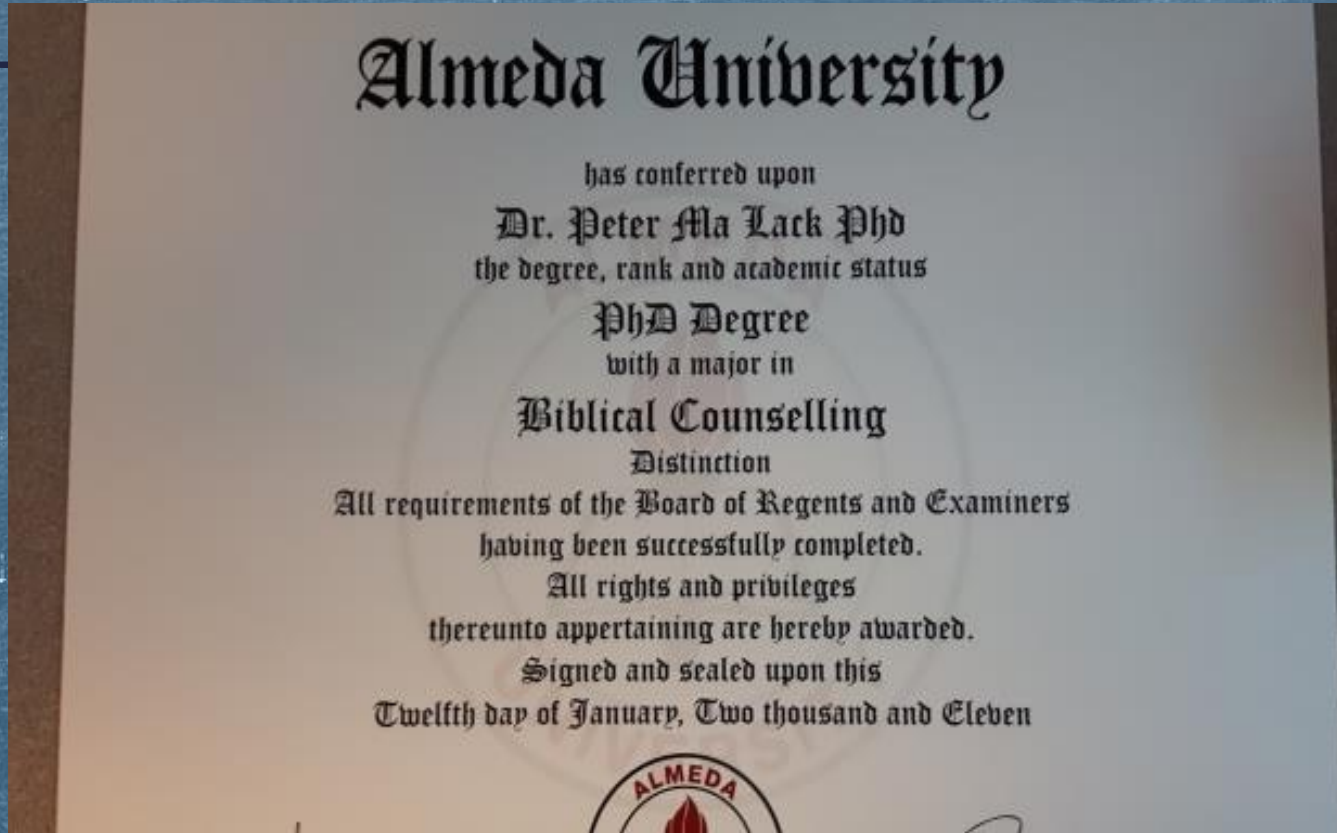
- ▶ When a student is enabled to cheat, **that student has the potential to gain (academic advantage?) a degree under false pretenses.**
- ▶ **Students who are millennials and digital natives are bombarded by targeted online advertising** from these services.

# Who are the players?

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- ▶ Students
- ▶ Companies
- ▶ Writers

# Who are the players?



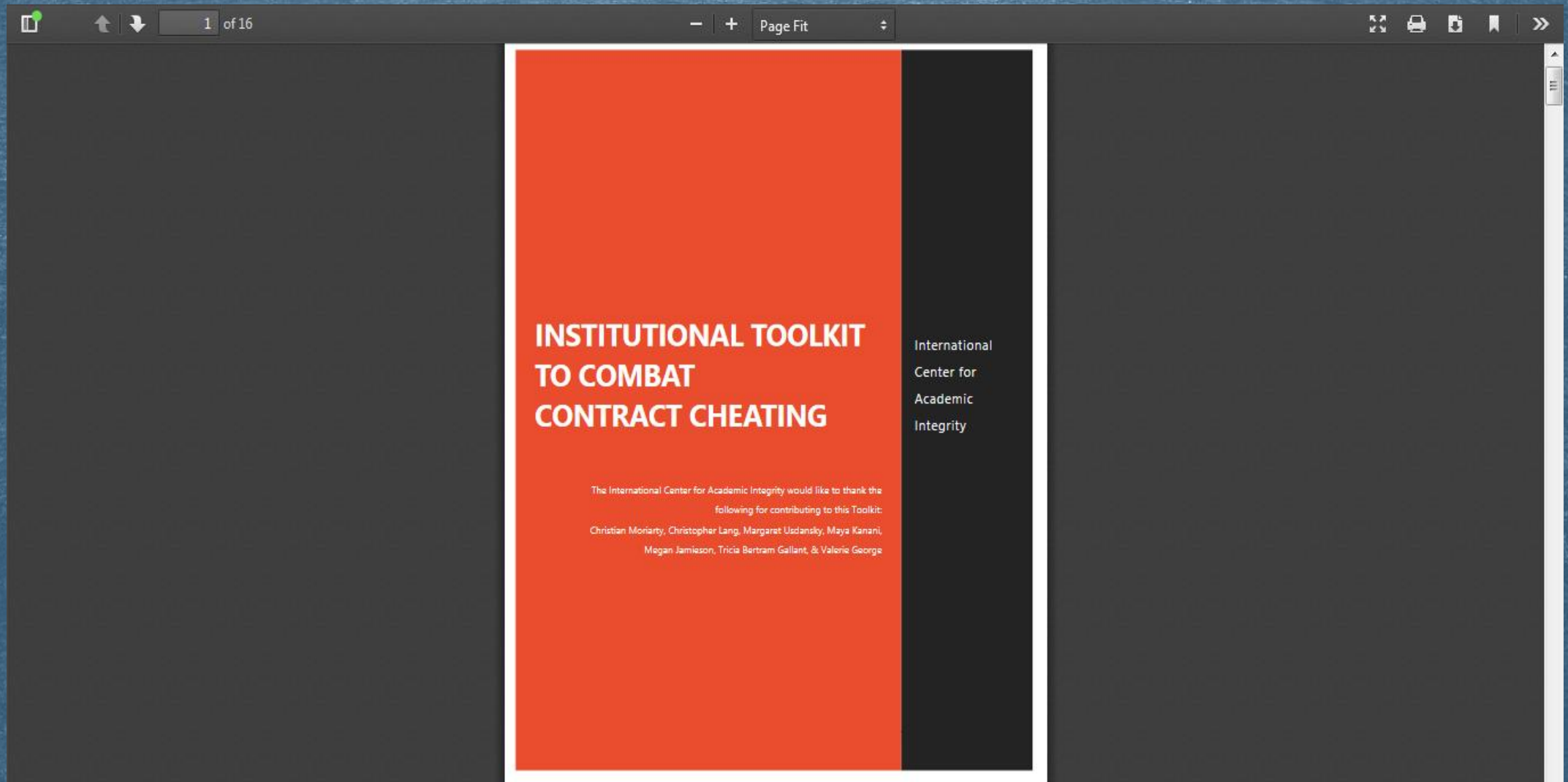
**“Lack insisted on a degree from Almeda University, so Gatesville University came back with a package deal: a PhD in psychology from Gatesville University and a PhD in biblical counselling from Almeda University for \$3,200 US. After complaining about the hefty price tag, Gatesville lowered it to \$2,500.”**

# What can we do?

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“The first step to countering a contract cheating culture on your campus is to focus on academic integrity (Moriarty et al., 2016, p. 7)

# What can we do?



# What can we do?

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- ▶ Lancaster, T. (2017, October 9). *Is it time for universities to get tough on contract cheating?* Retrieved from <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/time-universities-get-tough-contract-cheating-thomas-Lancaster>
- ▶ I have [previously advocated for the redesign of assessment to make outsourcing more difficult](#). My view has not changed. If nothing else comes of this report, **the idea that traditional essays offer the best way to assess students needs to be seriously reconsidered**. Although essays may have some benefits, they are also formulaic and the “bread and butter” for those companies who have developed techniques that use non-specialists to quickly deliver presentable essays that do not raise suspicion.



# What can we do? International Day of Action!

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF ACTION – PART OF GLOBAL ETHICS DAY 2017



Speak up and out against  
**CONTRACT CHEATING**

#### WHAT?

**Contract Cheating** "form of academic dishonesty where students get academic work completed on their behalf, which they then submit for academic credit [and/or advantage] as if they had created it themselves" ("About Contract Cheating", nd)

#### WHEN?

**October 18/2017**

#### WHO?

Students, Faculty, Staff, Administrators, all those who value learning!

#### HOW?

Participate in the Whiteboard Declaration!  
On a whiteboard write a personal declaration about why contract cheating is wrong – then tweet it @humbercollege #excelwithintegrity OR post to Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/events/356993794718234>

#### WHY?

**Contract Cheating** erodes learning, is dishonest, and unethical.

INTERNATIONAL CENTER FOR ACADEMIC INTEGRITY (ICAI)

# What can we do?

## International Day of Action!

- ▶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zA9mBNCmfSc&feature=voutu.be>



[veebly.com/](https://www.veebly.com/)

<https://www.veebly.com/ThomasLancaster/combating-commissioning-student-workshop-on-27-february-2017>

# Thank you !

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# What can we do?

## Students

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- ▶ Understand what constitutes Contract Cheating
- ▶ Speak to your Faculty/Instructors and GA/TAs if you are feeling overwhelmed
- ▶ Don't pay for 'tutoring' or 'essay' services online or off campus
- ▶ Believe that your voice and contribution to the college/university matters
- ▶ Know your responsibilities regarding your institutions academic integrity policy
- ▶ Learn about stress reduction, time management, study strategies and reading and writing skills by accessing the amazing services at your institution

# What can we do?

## Faculty

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1. Design evaluations with integrity
  - ✓ Allow for multiple drafts
  - ✓ Use in class writing to give you a baseline of what to expect
  - ✓ Personalized & authentic assignments (Assessment design and detection: “Preferred Practices”  
[https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B5bT3MX6fj6\\_V0dLX0V5ajF1aWs/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B5bT3MX6fj6_V0dLX0V5ajF1aWs/view))
  - ✓ Limit non substantive requirements (e.g. page limits, word limits)
  - ✓ Allow for late submissions
  - ✓ Give students more choice & control
  - ✓ Provide at least one proctored assignment

# What can we do?

## Faculty

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2. Detect when contract cheating has occurred
  - ✓ Checking properties of paper (e.g. right click on Microsoft → properties → details \*caution that this is circumstantial & a conversation should happen with student)
  - ✓ Use software
  - ✓ Practice good invigilation practices
  - ✓ Have students sign a pledge statement with each assignment/ test

# What can we do?

## Organizations

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1. Clear policies with language that describes and prohibits contract cheating.
2. Lobby for legislation
3. Include families/ friends & other stakeholders in the efforts
4. Use media to get the message out
5. Include a component to our quality assurance
6. Invest in education (Faculty/Students/TAs)
7. Invest in software
8. Invest in research
9. International Day of Action [#excelwithintegrity#defeatthecheat]

# Where should we go?

## Research

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- ▶ Global Essay Mills Survey “survey students across Europe, Australasia and the Americas to investigate student self-reported use of essay mills and associated sites/companies. “



# Reference List

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- Curtis, C.J. & Clare, J. (2017). How prevalent is contract cheating and to what extent are students repeat offenders? *Journal of Academic Ethics*, 15(2):115-124.
- Newton, P. & Lang, C. (2016). Custom essay writers, freelancers, and other paid third parties. In T. Bretag (Ed.), *Handbook of academic integrity*, (pp. 249-271). Singapore: Springer.
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- Yorke, H. (2017, January 13). More than 20,000 university students are buying essays and dissertations as Lords call for ban on 'contract cheating'. *UK Telegraph*. Retrieved from <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/education/2017/01/13/20000-university-students-buying-essays-dissertations-lords/>

# Your feedback.....

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- ▶ [https://uwaterloo.ca1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_3Q8AQMbilrWkv6l](https://uwaterloo.ca1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_3Q8AQMbilrWkv6l)