

# Beware of ghosts: Explaining contract cheating and ghostwriting and why you shouldn't do it

TEQSA

Kiata Rundle, Murdoch University; Guy Curtis, University of Western Australia

## Focus Area: Partnering with students

Contract cheating has become a major concern at tertiary institutions around the world in recent years. Open conversations between academic staff and students has been proposed to be beneficial for ensuring students understand the risks associated with engaging in contract cheating (Ellis, Zucker, & Randall, 2018). As a part of Murdoch University's Students as Change Agents in Learning and Teaching (SCALT) project, PhD student Kiata Rundle developed a short animated video designed to educate students on contract cheating and ghostwriting (<https://youtu.be/HRhekZ9uqOo>). The video was developed based on the results of her honour research (Rundle, Curtis, & Clare, 2019), as well as recently published literature on contract cheating (e.g. Bretag et al., 2019; Curtis & Clare, 2017). Assistance was provided by Kiata's supervisor and Learning and Teaching professional staff, and Murdoch University provided a small amount of funding for the animation software licence.

The video focused on informing students of what contract cheating and ghostwriting are, the consequences of engaging in these activities, both within the context of the University as well as potential future consequences, the norms surrounding student engagement in contract cheating, and services within the university that can help students who are struggling. The video was paired with a pre- and post- knowledge test designed to test students' learning. Students performed significantly better on the post-test, with an increase of nearly 16% answers correct on the test. Murdoch University has since embedded the video into a number of resources for students on academic integrity and misconduct.

## References:

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