

# Redesigning high-risk assessments to engage students and address contract cheating

TEQSA

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## Focus Area: Assessment design, contract cheating

### What is happening?

To address contract cheating in high-risk traditional assessments, we redesigned an assessment and tested the impact over three terms. The “PPMP20015-Research in project management” unit is a core postgraduate unit within the Master of Project Management course at CQUniversity that predominantly attracts international students. Before the intervention, students were assessed via two traditional individual assessments: (1) a critical review report (20%); and (2) a research proposal (80%). Accordingly, many contract cheating cases were reported and upheld. The investigation process of each case was labour-intensive and time consuming. To address this, we aimed to stimulate students to genuinely engage in undertaking the work. To do so, we redesigned each assessment into several consecutive sub-tasks. The first assessment was kept as an individual assessment while the second one was designed to be completed by randomly formed groups. We also made some changes to the second assessment requirements to make it challenging enough to warrant group effort. The assessment design evolved over time, based on scholarly practices and stakeholders’ feedback. The assessment items were eventually redesigned as follows:

- (1A) **Critical review report (10%):** Each student selects a unique research topic, annotates two relevant academic papers and provides a critical evaluation by only using the unit learning resources.
- (1B) **Self and peer assessment of the report (10%):** All reports are distributed to students randomly and anonymously for ‘in-class self and peer evaluation’ during tutorials in computer labs using the tool ‘Moodle Workshop’. The tool automatically calculates grades for 1A & 1B.
- (2A) **Group presentations of outline proposals (10%):** Each randomly-formed group negotiates a group research topic and develops a proposal outline for presentation during tutorials.
- (2B) **Draft detailed proposal (10%):** Groups incorporate feedback on presentations and submit the draft proposal. The tutor provides detailed feedback on this submission.
- (2C) **Oral examinations (10%):** Each group is interviewed by the tutor during tutorial time to test understanding of submitted drafts in parallel with other scheduled activities.

**(2D) Final proposal (40%):** Groups submit a feedback compliance statement along with the final submission. Students only receive grades on this submission with no further feedback.

**(2E) Group evaluation (10%):** Students are required to complete an online self and peer survey to rate and comment on the performance and genuine contribution of each group member.

**This assessment design was effective in stimulating students of diverse abilities to be active learners throughout the term. Not a single suspicious case was reported over three terms following the intervention, saving significant university resources. The technology helped in automating grading processes but more effort was still needed for administration and providing regular feedback. However, the Course Convenors considered this to be a small price to pay for building students' confidence in their abilities and stimulating them to genuinely undertake assessments and ensure their attainment of the unit learning outcomes.**



### **References:**

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