

## Academic Honesty @ York

### Eser's Scenario: Submitting Assignments Found on Content Sharing Websites

Welcome to Academic Honesty at York: Eser's Scenario (Submitting Assignments Found on Content Sharing Websites).

Meet Eser! Eser has an assignment due this week for a class he and his classmates find really boring. It is required for his degree, so he feels stuck taking it and is having a really hard time getting motivated to complete the assignment.

Eser's friend took the class last year, so he decides to talk with them about the assignment. They tell Eser not to bother actually completing the assignments because the professor uses the same assignments and answers every year. The answers are posted online on a content sharing website where everyone can see them. Eser finds the link to the website and sees all the assignment answers are there. Eser feels confident using the answers because his friend used them last year and got a good grade on the assignment, plus probably everyone else will be using these answers too.

Eser doesn't feel like it's dishonest because the answers for the assignment never change. This way he can finish the assignment quickly and focus on a class he's more interested in.

Did Eser make an academically honest choice?

**Reflection point:** Take a moment to reflect on Eser's scenario and what you already know about academic honesty. What does academic honesty mean to you?

By posting answers and using the answers found online, Eser and his classmates were cheating. They were being academically dishonest which can have an impact on their assignment, class grade, or transcript. In this scenario, cheating means locating homework/assignment/test/exam answers that have been posted online without your instructor's knowledge or permission and submitting these answers as your own.

But more than that, because York students are here to learn:

- Eser and his classmates were engaging in behavior that lessens the value of the degree and the learning experience.
- They were prohibiting exploring their own connection with the topic and opportunity to talk to their prof or TA about ways to make the course more meaningful to them.
- They were also prioritizing short-term results over long-term understanding, if the tests or assignments changed Eser and his classmates would not be in a position to successfully complete the course.

Now that we know what Eser did is academically dishonest, let's think about why he used the answers that he found online. Firstly, the assignment and answers are the same every year. Eser didn't feel motivated to complete the assignment. He didn't want to spend time on this assignment. And Eser didn't see this as cheating, or even as that big of a deal. These are all understandable reasons to make that choice, but they still result in academically dishonest behavior.

Academic honesty is a set of practices that academics follow in their work, and which generates credibility, trust, and respect within the academic community. Knowing this how, can Eser move forward to make more academically honest choices?

- *The assignment and answers are the same every year:* The assignment may be the same every year, but the learning was the process of completing the assignment not the answers themselves.
- *Eser didn't feel motivated to complete the assignment:* It can be hard to stay motivated when you aren't interested in a class, instead of focusing on the content that you don't find interesting focus on the learning and the skills you're building as a student. You get out what you put in.
- *Eser didn't have to spend time on this assignment:* Students have so many pressures on their time, if you're balancing a lot try working in small chunks.
- *Eser didn't think it was cheating, or a big deal:* Eser doesn't see his actions as dishonest since everyone is participating, but it doesn't matter how many students are involved. Cheating is still cheating.

If you get into Eser's situation here are some academically honest solutions you could try.

- Lean into the overall value of the content and elements of the course that could be useful in the future.
- Have a conversation with your prof or TA about your interests and how they intersect with the course, discuss ways you can blend them together.
- Focus on the skills that come from completing assignments on a range of topics, use this course to practice your time and project management skills.
- And find tutoring outside of class if extra help is needed.

Submitting shared work as your own or sharing your work with others is academically dishonest. This can result in academic consequences.

Because York students are here to learn, don't cheat yourself out of an opportunity to learn!

**Reflection Question:**

If you were in Eser's position, how would you move forward?

- a) By having a conversation with your Prof or TA about your interests and how they intersect with the course to see if you can blend them together.
- b) By breaking up your work across classes in small chunks, ensuring that the work for this class is completed in between working on your other assignments.
- c) By identifying the skills that come from completing these assignments; such as project and time management.
- d) By finding tutoring outside of class.

**Responses:**

- a) Yes, because this could lead to you feeling passionate about the course and motivated to complete assignments. The other choices are also good options for moving forward.
- b) Yes, because working in small chunks will help you stay on top of all your assignments and help prevent you from feeling overwhelmed. The other choices also good options for moving forward.
- c) Yes, because these skills are essential for success in completing your studies and for your future career. The other choices also good options for moving forward.
- d) Yes, because sometimes you need some additional help building understanding of a topic. York's Learning Commons provides additional help with writing, library research, English learning support, learning skills, and more. The other choices also good options for moving forward.