

## Academic Honesty @ York

### Raz's Scenario: Buying an Assignment

Welcome to Academic Honesty at York: Raz's Scenario (Buying an assignment).

Meet Raz! Raz has been assigned a research paper for one of their classes. The deadline is approaching, but they've been so busy with their other responsibilities at home they still haven't chosen a research topic.

The deadline is fast approaching, none of their ideas fit the assignment requirements, and they're losing all motivation to finish this assignment.

Raz is very stressed, and isn't sure what to do next. They decide to search the web for A+ paper examples for some inspiration.

One of the results is for a website that catches their eye. It looks like tutoring websites they've used in the past, and it advertises custom written papers you can purchase for any class. The website even promises you will get an A+ or your money back. Raz was surprised they hadn't heard of the service before, but doesn't see this as academically dishonest because they aren't copying anything, they're just paying someone else to write the paper. The website even has a handy plagiarism checker tool! Raz decides to purchase one of the papers and move on to their next assignment.

Did Raz make an academically honest choice?

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

Even though the website Raz visited says otherwise, paying someone to complete your assignment is considered contract cheating. Contract cheating is academically dishonest and can have an impact on your assignment, class grade, or transcript. Contract cheating occurs when you engage a third party to complete your work for you for payment or not, and you then submit that work as your own. Third parties can be a writing service, a friend, a family member.

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

- Raz is engaging in behavior that lessens the value of their degree and their learning experience.
- They were circumventing their learning of the topic and the experience of completing the assignment for a short-term result.
- They were also prohibiting 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.

Now that we know what Raz did is academically dishonest, let's think about why they paid someone to write their paper. Raz couldn't come up with a paper topic that fit the assignment. They were feeling stressed, overwhelmed, and out of options. Raz was able to finish the

assignment and quickly move on to their other responsibilities. They were also tricked by the website that seemed legitimate. 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 Raz move forward to make more academically honest choices?

- *Raz could not come up with a topic for their assignment:* Sometimes it can be hard to get started on an assignment, try reading general resources to help you brainstorm or incorporate your own interests. Don't be afraid to bring your personal life into your assignment.
- *They were feeling stressed, overwhelmed, and out of options:* It's hard to be a student on top of other responsibilities. If you're feeling stressed and overwhelmed York can offer support. You are never out of options.
- *Raz was able to finish the assignment and quickly move on to their other responsibilities:* Raz has a lot of other responsibilities in their life and ran out of time for this assignment. If you feel like you're managing too much, try working on time management skills or getting support from the York community.
- *They were also tricked by the website that seemed legitimate:* Paying someone to complete your assignment is always academically dishonest even if a website says otherwise.

If you get into Raz's situation, here are some academically honest solutions you could try: try reading general resources to help with brainstorming a topic, or ask your professor or TA if you can use a topic related to your own life. Draw strength from what you know! Be honest with yourself and others about your workload, use the support of the York community. If you have too much on your plate contact your academic advisor to come up with a plan that works for you, and get help from counseling health and well-being if you're feeling stressed or overwhelmed.

Paying others to complete your assignments 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 Raz's position, how would you move forward?

- a) By trying time management techniques to help you deal with all your responsibilities.
- b) By getting help from Counselling, Health, and Wellbeing, if you're feeling overwhelmed.
- c) By reading general resources to brainstorm a topic
- d) By asking your instructor if you can use a topic relevant to your personal life.
- e) By talking to your Academic Advisor, if there is too much on your plate.

**Responses:**

- a) Yes, because time management techniques can help you get assignments completed on time and help prevent you from feeling overwhelmed. The other choices are also good options for moving forward.
- b) Yes, because your mental health and wellbeing is extremely important! The other choices are also good options for moving forward.
- c) Yes, because general resources will allow you to encounter a variety of topics and ideas. The other choices are also good options for moving forward.
- d) Yes, because you may be able to meet the assignment requirements by using a topic that is relevant to you. The other choices are also good options for moving forward.
- e) Yes, because your Academic Advisor can help you make decisions and plans about your course load. The other choices are also good options for moving forward.