Academic Integrity

Including Generative AI

Academic Integrity

This course is intended to teach **fundamental skills** you will develop and use over and over again in your degree and professional life

If you somehow get through this course without building these skills, you will struggle terribly in later courses which assume you have them

So academic integrity – doing the work assigned to you yourself – is in your interests

It is also an ethical and disciplinary issue

- And yes, we *do* catch a number of people and there *are* consequences

What Counts as Plagiarism

- Work will be considered not your own if it looks so much like some other work (for example, that of another student) that we cannot believe that the work was produced individually

- Viewing another person's assignment code, or report text, is **extremely** dangerous
  - **But** it *is* possible to plagiarise without seeing each other's code, if discussions about assignment-solving strategy becomes excessively detailed

- Any use of sources without citation. But it is *still* plagiarism if you use another's solution for an individual assignment, even with citation

What Does Not Count as Plagiarism

- Discussions (including about assignments) that remains at the level of *concepts but not solutions.*
  - For example, discussions of relevant parts of the lecture notes
- Anything to do with lab material, where group study is fine
  - But we do not recommend getting someone else to do your labs!

What Happens to Plagiarism Cases

- There is a stressful and sometimes prolonged investigation, including interview
  - Please be civil if you are asked to participate in such an interview
- Assessment marks are reduced heavily, usually to 0%
- Information is recorded against your name by the university, which will be seen by academics in any setting where the (internal) academic transcript is relevant

A Warning about 'Tutors'

- Approach people or organisations offering 'tutoring' with skepticism
- Some of these people and organisations are plagiarism facilitators
- Some of them have even engaged in blackmail

- Note that we regularly catch people who use these 'services'. Just because they are expensive, doesn't mean they care if their clients get caught

Working with Integrity Successfully

- Group study is great! But assignment work is not the place
- Assignments are mostly there to help learning – 73% of course marks unconnected to assignments, and final exam is a hurdle
  - So plagiarists often fall short anyway
- If you cannot answer part of the assignment, there are many resources that might help
  - Consultations, Ed Discussions (keep your code private!)
- If you still cannot answer part of an assignment, that's OK! Do your best, and get more detailed help after the deadline

AI-produced code

Large language model AIs e.g. Copilot, ChatGPT can write in computer languages, as well as human

- Not even *close* to quality standards of a professional programmer
- But very fast, so may be useful in practice to ease time wasted on humans writing 'boilerplate' (predictable and boring but necessary code)

Even for boilerplate, quite error-prone

- So necessary for professional programmer to be able to read and fix code line by line, and write it from scratch when AI proves hopeless

AI-produced code

We do not discourage you from experimenting with available technologies, especially those that real programmers use!

- Generative AI use acceptable, with clear citation, for assignments

But you need to learn – and we therefore need to assess – the ability to write, read, and fix line-by-line code yourself

- No access to generative AI in final exam (70% of final mark, hurdle)
- Strong encouragement *not* to use AI for attempting lab work or midsemester quiz