

## MEMORANDUM

To: Faculty, University of Toronto Scarborough  
Cc: Chairs, University of Toronto Scarborough  
Chairs Assistants  
From: Professor David Zweig, Vice-Dean Recruitment, Enrolment & Student Success  
Date: 23 May 2023  
Re: **Academic Integrity in Exams**  
Note: For distribution broadly

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In the past few months, a new form of serious academic misconduct emerged on our three campuses. Student whistleblowers alerted us to the fact that a small number of students in particular courses were using hidden cameras and earpieces connected to their phones to have offsite paid exam-writers provide them with answers to their in-person midterms and final exams.

Once we learned about this practice, the U of T Scarborough's Registrar's Office took immediate steps to maintain the integrity of exams that were identified as targets for these coordinated cheating efforts. Those steps included increased invigilation following training on detecting the use of spyware technologies, increased messaging via social media and around exam rooms about the consequences of using unauthorized aids, and direct messaging to students before the start of exams indicating that we were aware of plans to engage in coordinated cheating. **One key change in procedure was to refrain from handing out exams until after all students were seated and reminded to turn off all electronic devices.** This prevented students or hired agents from both taking photos of exams during a hectic period when students are getting settled into their seats, and from leaving the exam room with exam booklets prior to the start of the exam.

The Registrar's Office quick action maintained the academic integrity of the targeted exams and student responses to these new measures was overwhelmingly positive. U of T Scarborough's modified exam practices are now being used as a template for action on the other campuses. Very shortly, we will be finalizing our new invigilation protocols for the summer final exam season. Until then, we encourage all instructors to remain vigilant and to brief your TA's and invigilators on how to spot the use of electronic aids and what to do if they suspect a student of using an unauthorized aid during midterm exams.

Students that have been caught for using this technology have demonstrated unusual behaviour during the exam, such as:

- holding the exam paper up vertically in front of them (to take photos);
- having an unusual or seemingly misplaced black 'button' (which is the hidden camera) at the top of their shirt;
- whispering noises emanating from the student (from the earpiece);
- clearly visible earbuds, even if only in one ear (note some of these earpieces/buds are visible, but some are very hard to detect);
- making unusual and repetitive hand movements to operate a camera-activation button;
- touching one ear (where the earpiece is located) repeatedly; and
- not writing for a lengthy period of time (before the answer-provider starts dictating answers), after which they begin writing incredibly quickly.



We also want to remind all instructors that ‘pat-downs’ or any method of physical interaction with students should not occur during exams. If a disagreement arises, please just record as much information as is possible and share it with the Academic Integrity team. If required, Registrar’s Office staff and Campus Safety can assist in addressing issues during the exam.

Please refer to the [Academic Integrity - Mitigating Coordinated Cheating in Exams May 2023](#) PowerPoint presentation for more information and resources for instructors.

The university is engaging very actively in efforts to prevent and deter these types of academic offences including investigations into the service providers, strong sanctioning of students who are suspected of using unauthorized aids, and increased messaging to highlight the risks to students. We need everyone’s help in remaining vigilant and in reporting any cases to our academic integrity office - [academic.integrity.utsc@utoronto.ca](mailto:academic.integrity.utsc@utoronto.ca).

Thank you for your continued vigilance and support for our collective efforts to maintain academic integrity.

**David Zweig**

Vice-Dean Recruitment, Enrolment & Student Success