

## Global Essay Mills Survey project summary

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**Abstract:**

The use of essay mills, peer-sharing and related-sites in higher education is considered a problem for higher education institutions, with students utilising these sites to outsource their assignments. Research has been, and continues to be, undertaken across the globe on the frequency, extent and specifics of this type of cheating. These studies have presented an array of data on use of these sites, student motivations for contract cheating and repetitive behaviours. However, existing research is largely focused in one country, university or discipline. The Global Essay Mills Survey project sought to undertake a wider exploration of this issue, globally. The study is the first known international survey undertaken to gather student feedback on these elements of outsourced cheating, and in multiple languages. Between the end of 2017 and the beginning of 2018 a survey was released to students in 22 languages, in three continents (Australasia, Europe and the Americas). The survey sought student opinion on contract cheating, their behaviour with any assignment outsourcing and their knowledge of other student's cheating behaviours, including any ramifications and outcomes for having been caught. The survey also asked students why they were at university and when they felt that it was acceptable to cheat. The presentation will provide descriptive statistics from the completed surveys, for the varying languages, and present commonalities and variations in differing types of cheating behaviours. Summary data of key items and the preliminary results suggest that the numbers of students outsourcing their assignments are far lower in some countries than others, although some behaviours (such as the use of peer-sharing sites) are common between many countries.

**Keywords:** Assignment outsourcing, contract cheating, international survey, student survey.