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**University students' and staff's perceptions of third-party writing
assistance and plagiarism: A mixed methods study**

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Abstract

Considering plagiarism as the by-product of undeveloped and inadequate composition skills, it seems reasonable for a student to seek assistance to improve their writing. But when does writing assistance stop constituting help and start constituting plagiarism? Little research, especially in Aotearoa New Zealand, investigates perceptions about situations where students use assistance during the process of composing their assessments. This thesis uncovers the intricacies of perceived [un]acceptability of third-party writing assistance scenarios through an examination of what undergraduate students and teaching staff in Aotearoa New Zealand believe about instances of collaborating, editing, repurposing, and ghostwriting.

The study uses a convergent mixed methods design comprised of a primary qualitative track and a supplementary quantitative track. Both approaches use an original set of fictional, yet realistic, scenarios of writing assistance that vary in amount, scope, and quality. Thematic analysis of semi-structured interviews with students and descriptive statistics and quantitative content analysis of an anonymous online survey of staff provide insight into both groups' beliefs.

Themes of labour and learning included situational features participants identified as why writing assistance was acceptable or unacceptable. All students and most staff viewed scenarios where a student subverted the labour of writing, like obtaining an assessment composed by someone else, as unacceptable. Participants in both groups considered scenarios that involved collaborating acceptable when situations included an explanatory discussion, which they perceived as active and engaged learning. Between these scenarios, though, existed a distinct lack of certainty regarding the boundaries of acceptability and

plagiarism—especially when it came to instances involving editorial interventions, repurposing of text, and technology-based phrasing tools.

Contributions from the findings include confirming earlier reports of students' limited conceptions of plagiarism; illuminating an added complication in determining acceptability based on how a student operationalises assistance; and enhancing our understanding of when writing assistance constitutes plagiarism. The unique implementation of embedding scenarios into qualitative interviews contributes a fresh approach to academic integrity research. And the bespoke set of scenarios offers potential utility as a learning support tool. Implications include refocusing acceptability onto how assistance is utilised; considering cognitive offloading in response to efficiency motives; integrating direct, sustained dialogue about writing assistance into instruction; and requiring transparent declarations of use in assessments.

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For G.E.M.

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CHAPTER ONE | AN INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Take a moment and consider this scene: A university student has been assigned a research paper for the main assessment in her second-year forensic psychology course. In sitting down to write, she decides to use an online phrasebank. The free website is a collection of formulaic phrasing structures common in academic writing. Copying phrases from the website, she plugs in words that reflect the topic and content of her assignment and include these sentences in her paper.

Is this action an appropriate way to complete an assessment for marks? Is it an acceptable manoeuvre within the students' process of learning to write or an inappropriate use of text not originally from the student? Does the copying of existing words constitute plagiarism? What about if the student asks her older sibling to proofread her paper before submission and the sibling provides feedback in the form of comments, typo corrections, and rewritten sentences. Does this situation constitute formative support, using someone else's words without crediting them, or something else? What about if the source of assistance is another lecturer? Or a paid professional editor? Are these activities acceptable or unacceptable for an undergraduate student tasked with writing an assessment?

This thesis is the artefact of a mixed methods study that examines the perceptions university students and teaching staff in Aotearoa New Zealand hold about situations just like those mentioned above, plus many others. The primary purpose of the study is to excavate these perceptions to learn what students think about these types of situations. A pragmatic inquiry, the project asks how they consider the acceptability of using different forms of assistance during the process and production of a written assessment, their beliefs

about motivations behind use, and how these views fit with their constructions of plagiarism. The study also uncovers staff's perceptions about these activities, providing an opportunity to examine the two groups' views in relation to one another. Before delving into the procedures, findings, and ramifications of the study, though, it is vital to gain a sense of the research location. This study is positioned at the junction of writing studies and academic integrity research. Accordingly, this introductory chapter presents background information, a review of terminology, statements of study aim and significance, and the specific research questions that guide the project.

1.1 At the Intersection of Academic Integrity and Writing Studies

Academic integrity is fundamental to the mission of tertiary education (Miron et al., 2021) and includes the values of 'honesty, trust, fairness, respect, responsibility, and courage' (International Center for Academic Integrity, 2021, p. 4). As a concept, academic integrity 'is more than the absence of misconduct' (Christensen & McCabe, 2006, p. 51) or a way to avoid plagiarism, cheating, or other activities considered unacceptable by a university. Possessing academic integrity is conducting oneself in a manner that upholds the values of the academy when undertaking academic work. Instead of centring the negative—academic dishonesty, misconduct, or other actions deemed inappropriate—academic integrity centres the idea of operating with integrity throughout one's scholarly pursuits. For students, this means completing assessments in such a way that their integrity remains intact. This positive framing focuses more on the promotion of academic integrity which, if adhered to, then prevents engagement in dishonest practices.

Writing is also an integral part of tertiary education, with student writing holding a prominent place in ‘the centre of teaching and learning’ (Hyland, 2013, p. 55). In the area of writing studies much attention is paid to how students learn to compose academic writing, namely writing from sources. As many scholars explain, writing is a social endeavour (e.g., Heap, 1989; Murray, 2014; Roozen, 2015). According to the social practice discourse (Ivanič, 2004), the act of writing not only takes place as a process within the writer’s mind but also within social aspects like contexts and interactions. The *writing event* (Ivanič, 2004, p. 225) is surrounded by, and part of, these social aspects—inseparable from the social component. Considering writing as an inherently social act, consisting of interactions between the writer and resources, tools, other people, and social practices (Bazerman, 2015), students learn through ‘purposeful participation’ (Ivanič, 2004, p. 235). This understanding of writing as done through participation reflects a social constructionism view that knowledge is built from interactions with the social world. For students then, learning to write academically is an undertaking that requires engagement.

At the intersection of academic integrity and writing studies sits an expanse of research on plagiarism in university students’ written work. In this area there is research that focuses on plagiarism as a product of students’ attempts to write in a style they have yet to master or consider their own (Starfield, 2002). Such work posits poor or underdeveloped writing skills as the cause for improper text that commonly gets labelled plagiarism (Chandrasoma et al., 2004; Howard, 1995). There are also studies focusing on particular types or forms of plagiarism, like direct replication from others’ work, which examine attitudes about variations of the longstanding traditional image of plagiarism as a copy and paste act (Baker et al., 2008; Yeo, 2007). There is even a more recently established and

distinct segment of research that continues to gain prominence within tertiary education literature: the phenomenon of students disengaging with the work of writing and instead having someone complete their academic assignments on their behalf. Labels for such activities include *contract cheating* by Lancaster and Clarke (2008), *assignment outsourcing* by Awdry (2020), and *ghostwriting* by others (Fisher et al., 2016; Singh & Remenyi, 2016; Weber-Wulff, 2014).

But what about situations that exist between the instances of students independently appropriating texts due to a lack of academic writing experience and the instances of students taking part in subcontracting full assessments? Much less research is devoted to understanding conceptions within this space, through a lens pointed at situations where students use assistance to improve their written work. This study seeks to expand the existing research into students' perceptions and beliefs about academic writing and plagiarism through an investigation into ideas about situations characterised by some degree of assistance, where students have someone, or something, aid them in undertaking their writing assessment.

1.2 Third-party Writing Assistance and other Terms

To study students' perceptions of the space between appropriate, permissible help and unacceptable conduct or plagiarism, the current research employs the terms **writing assistance**, and more specifically **third-party writing assistance**, to label the variety of situations where students seek aid with their writing at some point during the process and production of academic work. The term *third-party* has previously been used to identify help from human sources such as professional or volunteer proofreaders (Harwood et al., 2009)

and students' friends and relatives (Bretag, Harper, Burton, Ellis, Newton, Rozenberg, et al., 2019). The term has also been used to refer to technological aids like file sharing websites (Newton & Lang, 2016) and digital machine-based sources including Grammarly¹ (Benzie & Harper, 2020), as well as other editing applications supported by artificial intelligence (AI). By logical extension, *third-party* can also refer to now readily available generative AI, like ChatGPT². In the current study, **third-party writing assistance** is used to signify the involvement of an additional entity, beyond the individual student and the lecturer who set the assignment, during a student's writing process. Included in the notion of additional entity are human sources and technological or machine sources. Employing one term to encompass various activities, ranging from basic proofreading (focused on correcting grammatical errors and formatting conventions) to subcontracting entire assessments, provides the current research with a common noun to cover and combine information presented under narrower or separate labels within existing literature.

This more expansive term has utility in discussing a variety of activities; also important, though, is an understanding of other terms used in discussions about student writing and academic integrity. This section describes how the terms in this research area are typically defined and how they are used in the current study. The term **academic dishonesty** signifies an absence of honesty in student conduct, usually in the production or submission of academic work. A related term, **academic misconduct**, conveys the unpermitted nature of dishonest practices and is often used by universities to denote breaches of a formal code of conduct. These terms cover a variety of behaviours, acts, and

¹ <https://www.grammarly.com/>

² <https://openai.com/blog/chatgpt/>

situations, all rife with conditional and circumstantial characteristics. Within the domain of academic misconduct lie cheating, plagiarising, contract cheating, and academic ghostwriting.

Cheating serves as a broad term encompassing behaviours that violate rules, standard procedures, or instructions through acts of deception or fraud in an effort to gain an advantage (Dick et al., 2002). Examples include acquiring the answer key to a multiple-choice exam or paying an individual to impersonate a student in class for attendance credit. Situations where students use sources inappropriately (e.g., verbatim replication of text or lifting fragments of computer code) have been considered a particular type of cheating that is done through the act of copying (Curtis & Vardanega, 2016; Dick et al., 2002) others' work—or as it is commonly called, plagiarising.

On a basic level, **plagiarism** is taking someone else's words or ideas, not providing adequate reference to the original source, and presenting the information as your own. There is no standard definition of plagiarism widely accepted throughout academia (Fishman, 2009; Gullifer & Tyson, 2014; Kaposi & Dell, 2012), but Carroll (2002) provides a straightforward definition: 'passing off someone else's work, whether intentionally or unintentionally, as your own for your own benefit' (p. 9). Within this seemingly succinct explanation lies a wide array of activities and situations commonly labelled as plagiarism (Wilhoit, 1994). Weber-Wulff's (2014) expansive typology illustrates the array of forms plagiarism can take, from prototypical verbatim *copy and paste*, and insufficient paraphrasing, to the reuse or resubmission of previously submitted work. The wide range of actions that have been judged as plagiarism can range from incomplete source attribution in a bibliography caused by errors in citation style format to more substantial instances like

submission of a full research paper purchased from a third party operating online, also known as contract cheating (Lancaster & Clarke, 2008, 2016).

The relatively new label of **contract cheating** focuses on illegitimate outsourcing of academic work. The term was coined by Clarke and Lancaster (2006), who initially used it to represent situations in which students put their assignment out for tender with the intention of acquiring a provider who will produce the assignment in exchange for payment. Situated within the computer science discipline, the researchers' first study investigated students' use of an auction-style website, known at the time as RentACoder, to facilitate the outsourcing of computer coding assignments (Clarke & Lancaster, 2006). Using this definition, studies have investigated students' willingness to buy completed papers from online providers (Rigby et al., 2015), as well as the potential lure among students from advertisements for custom essay writing services (Kaktinš, 2018).

Following Clarke and Lancaster's initial work on contract cheating, the term was extended to include situations where students pass assignments to a third party, online or otherwise, where contract-like formality or monetary exchange may or may not exist (Harper et al., 2019; Lancaster & Clarke, 2016; Walker & Townley, 2012). This updated definition offers a bit more flexibility in the circumstances and specifics of the situation. The nature of the exchange is still transactional; the transaction, however, does not necessarily exist in the form of financial payment. Also, the possibilities of relationship between student and third party are expanded from professional contractor or commercial provider to include family, friends, and classmates (Bretag, Harper, Burton, Ellis, Newton, Rozenberg, et al., 2019).

Expanding on Weber-Wulff's (2014) typology and other earlier categorisations (e.g., Walker, 1998), Foltýnek et al. (2019) offer a typology of plagiarism that includes **ghostwriting**: where a student retains someone else to produce written work on their behalf for which the student then takes authorial credit. As the term suggests, ghostwriting is specific in its description of action taken to produce a written work. This distinguishes it from contract cheating which could include not only the outsourcing of writing assignments, but also other types of assignments that are not typically structured as prose, like those in disciplines of computer science (Lancaster & Clarke, 2008), mathematics, or visual arts.

Also, unlike contract cheating, the notion of ghostwriting is native to society outside academia where it is used to label a legitimate form of writing service. Common examples of instances of ghostwriting considered socially acceptable are those involving celebrities-turned-autobiographers pairing up with professional writers (Sivasubramaniam et al., 2016), and politicians or business executives and their speechwriters (Fusch et al., 2017; Zheng & Cheng, 2015). Instances of ghostwriting within the academic community, however, are not well tolerated. The act is considered academic dishonesty largely due to the misrepresentation inherent in submitting work for assessment that was written by someone other than the student to be assessed—a clear 'violation of academic trust' (Singh & Remenyi, 2016, p. 3). Because of this disconnect between how the activity of ghostwriting is perceived inside and outside of academia, Bertram Gallant (2016) argues that the term is problematic when used within the context of education and student assessment.

Understanding contract cheating and academic ghostwriting to be treated by much of the academy as a subcategory of plagiarism, this research project adheres to its use to

refer to instances where students have someone assist them with the process of undertaking a writing-based assessment, be it acquired through a monetised transaction, an exchange based on favour, or some other arrangement. But what about when students seek help and receive assistance via editing or proofreading? Such situations are likely to not fall directly under the terms ghostwriting or contract cheating, but are still occasions where students use a source, be it another person or an automated tool, to conduct aspects of the writing process. Some instances, like substantial and extensive editing, may hold the potential to be considered plagiarism even if they do not meet the traditional conditions of the contract cheating, academic ghostwriting, or even plagiarism labels.

1.3 Aims of the Study

The study aims to elucidate an area of research not commonly explored: views about students seeking and receiving help during the writing process and the how and why behind students' determinations of acceptability and motivational factors for use. While some forms of assisted writing may be permissible, and even encouraged by institutions, others may be more difficult to separate from the idea of plagiarism. The intention of this project is to add to the current body of academic integrity literature by expanding on this lesser-researched area, providing knowledge about students' and staff's views of a particular subsection of writing activity in relation to the notion of plagiarism.

This study also responds to the call for more qualitative research that exposes the nuances of why students consider writing assistance and plagiarism the ways they do (Denney et al., 2020) as well as the need for more mixed methods research into students' and staff's constructions of plagiarism (Alimorad, 2018). Using a collection of scenarios which present situations that might take place within the writing process, the study gathers

rich and thick data via interviews with university students. In addition, a largely quantitative survey into teaching staff's perceptions offers complementarity to the study. This approach will further the existing research by providing more insight into the perceptions held by both groups as well as how these perceptions compare between groups.

1.4 Significance of the Study

Understanding more about students' perspectives, including their considerations of the particular space around appropriate writing assistance or inappropriate—thus potentially plagiaristic—activities, as well as how their views align or differ from those among teaching staff and universities, is vitally important. Knowing more about how students consider the possibly murky area of third-party writing assistance and what might motivate them to contemplate engaging in such activities is crucial to developing informed classroom, programme, and discipline-level responses aimed at guiding students through the process of learning to write.

The importance of this research also exists in the possibility that it holds implications for action beyond the classroom, at the academic support services level and the institutional policy level. Tertiary institutions should create and implement services and policies well-informed by empirical research. With more information on students' and staff's perspectives about the use of third-party writing assistance, universities can better tailor various academic support services to their students' needs. A deeper, more qualitative, look into perceptions can lead to the reframing and reconceiving of concepts, which are then available for guiding revisions to policy. Overall, the project will expand the existing research to include more information specific to third-party writing assistance activities thus helping to

increase the knowledge base on which academic integrity practices and student writing procedures are built.

1.5 Research Objective and Questions

The broad objective of this study is to explore students' conceptualisations of third-party writing assistance and plagiarism, including perceived acceptability and motivational factors for use. Speaking directly with university students in Aotearoa New Zealand about their experiences with various types of third-party writing assistance, and how and why they assign acceptability and consider motivations, means the research is shaped and informed by the views and beliefs of the researched population. Beyond the primary focus on students' perspectives, the study also seeks to gain information about staff's views of third-party writing assistance and plagiarism. Including this complementary staff data helps place students' responses within the larger context of their academic community, as well as provide insight into any variation between the two groups.

To gain greater understanding about students' perspectives on where the boundary between third-party writing assistance and plagiarism exists, and their views in relation to staff views, a few questions must be addressed. Three specific questions guide the exploration of perceptions about third-party writing assistance:

- What do students and staff identify as unacceptable third-party writing assistance activities and why?
- What do students believe are motivating factors for using third-party writing assistance?
- How do students' perceptions of third-party writing assistance fit with perceptions of plagiarism?

By answering these questions, the study offers insight into how students and staff view various instances of third-party writing assistance and how these views relate to students' conceptions of plagiarism.

1.6 Structure of the Thesis

The thesis is composed of eight chapters, each focusing on a particular aspect of the research study. Chapters open with a section outlining the organisation of presented information and close with a section summarising the text. This first chapter provided background information on academic integrity, plagiarism, and student writing research within higher education. Chapter One also delineated the importance this study holds as an examination into perceptions about third-party writing assistance and the aim to provide insights for data-driven improvements in practice and policy. A collection of terms used in academic integrity research was presented, along with the study's main research questions.

Moving on, Chapter Two is a review of existing literature on academic integrity, perceptions of plagiarism, and instances of third-party writing assistance in higher education. Specific attention is paid to the academy's framing of the issue and students' understandings and considerations of the notion of plagiarism. The chapter presents research into students' use of third-party writing assistance, including perceptions about the acceptability of various situations of assistance. The review also covers research literature within Aotearoa New Zealand, and what other studies have reported about students' views on writing assistance and [potentially] plagiaristic activities.

Following the background and literature review portions of the thesis, Chapter Three offers an in-depth report of the research design and the methods used in the study. The

chapter includes a discussion on pragmatism as a research stance, rationale for the use of mixed methods methodology via a convergent design, and a description of the bespoke set of scenarios created for the project. Both the main qualitative data collection and the supplementary quantitative data collection are covered, including the recruitment, interview and survey procedures, and analysis techniques for these two tracks. In addition, a section on the ethical considerations provides information about potential risks, security measures, and cultural matters related to conducting research with human participants in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Chapters Four, Five, and Six report the study results. Matching the structure of a convergent design, these chapters separately present the findings of the study before attending to a comparative review of the results. In Chapter Four, the largely qualitative results from the interviews with student participants are presented. In Chapter Five, the largely quantitative results from the survey of teaching staff participants are presented. Both chapters start with an overview of the demographics of participants, a summary of notable findings generated from the data, and the acceptability rating results for each writing assistance scenario. These chapters then go on to present the perceptions of unacceptable writing assistance and conceptions of plagiarism—held by students (in Chapter Four) and by teaching staff (in Chapter Five). Then, Chapter Six offers a comparison of the results from the two methods and discusses where students' and staff's views about third-party writing assistance scenarios converged and diverged, as well as how their constructions of plagiarism differed.

Building from the results reported in the previous chapters, Chapter Seven situates the study's findings within the context of academic integrity and plagiarism research. The

research questions introduced in Chapter One are revisited and answered for a summary-level review of the study results. Drawing links to earlier research, the chapter includes a discussion about perceptions of the space between third-party writing assistance and plagiarism. Based on some key findings from the study, the chapter then presents a section about responding to the complexity of acceptability.

Finally, Chapter Eight provides the concluding remarks for the project. The study's empirical and methodological contributions to the existing body of knowledge are discussed, including the bespoke scenario set uniquely implemented within the qualitative interviews with students. A selection of implications for practice and policy are presented and the limitations of the study are noted. A section on potential focal points for future research highlights areas stemming from this study that need further examination. Chapter Eight closes with a researcher reflection on both the outcome and the process of undertaking this research project.

CHAPTER TWO | REVIEW OF THE RELEVANT LITERATURE

Extensive research on plagiarism among university students has been undertaken at the intersection of academic integrity and writing studies. Reviewing the work in this area, Chapter Two is an account of research into how plagiarism is conceptualised by those within university communities. This chapter includes significant findings in the literature and offers an evaluative review of the body of work. In doing so, the acceptability of third-party writing assistance is identified as an area in need of further examination.

To start, section 2.1 provides a useful backdrop by describing higher education's framing of plagiarism, including three overarching discourses found in the academy. Providing insight into the student perspective, section 2.2 discusses university students' perceptions of plagiarism. Section 2.3 focuses specifically on third-party writing assistance, including aspects of the prevalence of use among students, responses from staff and universities, and students' own perceptions of certain activities. Finally, to provide local context and highlight a gap in the literature, section 2.4 reviews the limited findings from academic integrity research involving students undertaking study at tertiary institutions within Aotearoa New Zealand.

2.1 The Academy's Perceptions of Plagiarism

Plagiarism has been described as a 'dirty word' (Barry, 2006, p. 337) for the 'most common form of serious academic misconduct' (Breen & Maassen, 2005, p. 1), thought to cause 'moral panic' (Clegg & Flint, 2006, p. 373) among academic professionals in higher education. Much of the literature notes the prevalence of cheating incidents, particularly plagiarism, among university students across the globe (Hodgkinson et al., 2016; Park,

2003). Research on student behaviour indicates the pervasiveness of plagiaristic activities, with self-reported figures as high as 90% for using material without attributing the source, and 94% for allowing peers to copy one's own work (Lim & See, 2001).

While plagiarism among students is certainly not a new phenomenon, some researchers contend that technological and social changes of the last few decades have transformed the way students engage in plagiarism (Peytcheva-Forsyth et al., 2018), which has also altered the challenges it presents to academics (Pandey et al., 2015; Share, 2006). The Internet and other ubiquitous and ever-advancing technologies serve as resource tools, providing students with legitimate means to complete their assignments, but these tools also increase opportunities for cheating and aid in making plagiarism an easier undertaking (Burnett et al., 2016; MacGregor & Stuebs, 2012; O'Connor, 2014). Other features of greater society, like aggressive competitiveness, seeping into the tertiary education environment may also exacerbate academic dishonesty and plagiarism among students (Blum, 2009; Willen, 2004). It makes sense then why academics express concern about plagiarism. To better understand the issue, its nuances, and its causes, it is important to pay attention to how plagiarism is considered by the academy—including how it fits within expectations for learning.

2.1.1 The Expectation to Engage in Learning

Literature on learning notes the importance of engagement in students' expansion of their knowledge and improvement of their skills. The act of engaging in learning is comprised of multiple dimensions, often acting in concert with each other. Researchers often consider dimensions of learning engagement to include a behavioural aspect, a cognitive aspect, and an emotional or affective aspect (Alrashidi et al., 2016; Axelson & Flick,

2010). Some framings of engagement also include a socio-cultural aspect (Coates, 2007; Kahu, 2013). These dimensions overlap and interact to constitute what it is to engage in learning. One study asserted that engagement was taking place when students ‘paid attention, participated actively in discussion, and used higher order thinking’ (Lukowiak & Hunzicker, 2013, p. 59) during the composition of their assessments. Since engagement is positively correlated with academic achievement (Alrashidi et al., 2016; Delfino, 2019; Effah & Nkwantabisa, 2022), there is an expectation from the educational community that students actively engage in the task of learning (Coates, 2005). University students are expected to engage in the process of learning, including the task of learning to write according to academic style and convention.

2.1.2 Outsourcing in Student Writing

A characteristic inherent in third-party writing assistance situations is outsourcing—the act of commissioning someone to do work. But outsourcing of students’ academic writing must be thought of as not only the farming out of actual assignments and tasks (as thought of in the business-sense of the term), but also the potential passing off of learning that is otherwise expected to occur during the process of the student completing the assignment on their own. This understanding recognises the possible ‘disengagement from components of the learning process’ (Bretag, Harper, Burton, Ellis, Newton, Rozenberg, et al., 2019, p. 1848) often embedded in the act of outsourcing one’s academic work. Outsourcing of an assessment, or part of the process of writing an assessment, paired with outsourcing of the intended learning outcomes, can serve as an indicator that the act is 1) not ethically appropriate, 2) not educationally acceptable, and 3) within the parameters of

academic dishonesty. The presence of this characteristic may also help to identify the intent behind the act.

2.1.3 The Role of Intent in Plagiarism

Adding to the complexity of defining and identifying all the labels for various types of academic dishonesty, is the matter of intention. Intent can be described as the determination to act a certain way, often with the purpose of achieving a certain outcome. From a legal perspective, intent must be present for an act to be deemed deviant or criminal (Wallace & Roberson, 2001); if the intention behind an act is not clear then it is difficult to determine the most appropriate response. Establishing intent in situations of plagiarism, however, proves problematic (Yorke et al., 2009). Unlike acts that often exhibit a clear and present intent to deceive, acts within the typology of plagiarism can derive from a spectrum of degrees of intent—from accidental or inadvertent, to intentional in task but not in deceptiveness, to deliberate trickery (Pecorari, 2013). For instance, situations of fully ghostwritten material are likely to be presumed as intentional due to the deliberate planning involved in acquiring someone to write the work, and deceptive due to the fraudulent presentation of that person's work as one's own (Singh & Remenyi, 2016). Plagiarism via incorrect or missing citations in paraphrased text or plagiarism through poor paraphrasing, however, could be considered inadvertent, especially in cases where students lack academic literacy (Angelil-Carter, 2000) or experience writing from sources (Gu & Brooks, 2008; Sutherland-Smith, 2008).

As Thomas (2007) observed, there are varying ideas about the role of intent when it comes to plagiarism. It has been argued that considering intent in cases of plagiarism is critically important since it can reveal information about a student's reason(s) for behaviour,

thus dictating community or authority response (Howard, 1995). Others assign less importance to degree of intent and contend that any instance of plagiarism is by nature deliberate cheating—malicious intention is indicative of the act itself and measure of degree is irrelevant (Pecorari, 2008). Ideas about the importance of intent and distinctions between intentional and unintentional textual appropriations are embedded in the conceptualisations of plagiarism and can be seen in established discourses throughout the literature.

2.1.4 Conceptualising Discourses

The issue of plagiarism has been conceptualised and examined through multiple discourses. The most notable framings are built on either an ethical/moralistic standpoint, regulatory structures, or the intertextuality of academic writing (Adam, 2016; Adam et al., 2017; Kaposi & Dell, 2012).

In the morally focused orientation of plagiarism attention is paid to the act of plagiarising, by a plagiariser who is steered by ‘intent [that] is not simply deplorable but becomes the embodiment of evil’ (Kaposi & Dell, 2012, p. 817). Students are thought to commit plagiaristic acts because they are opportunists ‘seeking to gain advantage over others’ (Larkham & Manns, 2002, p. 348). As explained by rational choice theory, students act dishonestly after assessing the costs and benefits of doing so and then concluding that the possible reward will outweigh the potential risk (Michaels & Miethe, 1989; Sattler et al., 2013). The act of plagiarising is regarded as an impropriety in part because it is a breach of honesty but also because it is an affront to core values held by academics, such as responsible engagement in research communities and respect for intellectual originality (Kaposi & Dell, 2012; Booth, Colomb, & Williams, 1995 as cited in Walker, 1998). The use of

justice system legalese underscores the delinquency this discourse assigns plagiarism; terms like *offence*, *guilt*, and *misconduct* indicate the framing of plagiarism as a deviant act to be addressed through punitive measures (refer to Senders, 2013 for clear examples of such jargon). Because of the interpretation of plagiarism as deliberate cheating, emphasis lies in disciplinary action and other punishment-focused deterrence responses.

The regulatory discourse is marked by a shift from understanding plagiarism as intentional immoral misconduct to a breakdown in procedure-following that calls for better communicated regulations and shared responsibility in addressing the issue (e.g., Walker & White, 2014). Students may plagiarise because they are ignorant of the rules or consequences associated with it (Beasley, 2014), or because they are confused by inconsistencies in guidelines of how to avoid it (Sutherland-Smith, 2008). This framing then places an emphasis on the academy's responsibility, in addition to the student responsibility, in the matter. Scholars within this discourse assert that institutions should create clear delineations between acceptable and unacceptable writing practices and make this regulatory information readily available to students. The response to plagiarism focuses on universities and teaching staff making students aware of the definitions, guidelines, and consequences (Wright et al., 2018) so that they are able to adhere to the policies. Examples of such communication efforts include awareness campaigns and online training modules (Curtis et al., 2013; Khan et al., 2020). Emphasis is also placed on the need for lecturers to ensure regulations are consistently presented and followed (Flint et al., 2006).

Within the discourse of academic writing, plagiarism is treated as a feature of the text not as a behaviour examined through presence of intent to deceive or lack of compliance with regulations (Adam et al., 2017). Plagiarism is viewed as the product of a legitimate

phase within a students' development as a writer where *textual borrowing* (Pennycook, 1996) and *patchwriting* (Howard, 1993) often occur. Researchers use these terms to identify tactics used by students who have yet to master the intricacies of writing from sources, whereby in an attempt to paraphrase they borrow too closely or only alter certain words. According to this discourse, these tactics are likely caused by lack of practice or experience with the intertextual nature of academic writing (Chandrasoma et al., 2004; Howard, 1995), as opposed to an active appropriation of text with the intent to deceive. Based on the idea that the potential for *plagiarism* (Adam, 2016) to arise during the process of learning to write, proponents of the intertextuality of academic writing discourse emphasise the need to address plagiarism in the same way other academic skills acquisition is addressed: educationally. Instead of a punitive response to incidents or a regulatory-driven reaction, the focus is on correcting the problem through education and working to support students through the learning process (Kaposi & Dell, 2012).

2.2 Students' Perceptions of Plagiarism

The broad nature of defining and determining what constitutes plagiarism, coupled with the discursive interpretation of the problem of plagiarism (Merkel, 2021), play a role in the disparate beliefs and attitudes among students about what instances should be considered plagiarism, which types are more serious, and whether any instances are ever acceptable or justifiable.

2.2.1 The Boundaries are Murky

It appears as though undergraduate students are able to define plagiarism to a certain degree, with most identifying the key components of plagiarism as using someone else's

texts, without proper attribution, and taking credit for this other person's work (Breen & Maassen, 2005; Heckler & Forde, 2015; Yeo, 2007). When comparing definitions provided by students to an institutional definition of plagiarism presented in university policy, Sutherland-Smith (2008) found that nearly 70% of student responses aligned—either fully or partially—with the established university policy description of plagiarism. As this figure indicates though, there is still a substantial proportion of students who do not understand plagiarism in ways that correspond with institutional policy or teaching staff (Carroll, 2002; Denney et al., 2020; Sutherland-Smith, 2008).

Expanding beyond the basic definition of plagiarism as using another's words without adequate attribution has proved tough for students. As previously noted there exists a wide range of acts that might deserve the label of plagiarism; the abstract 'using someone else's work without referencing' can manifest as many different appearances in reality. Furthermore, a standard percentage threshold for the amount of words used from a source does not exist; reported institutional tolerances range from 10% to 50% (Moss et al., 2018). The variability among all the details of plagiarism is high, and students have difficulty moving from an uncomplicated theoretical definition to a more multifaceted definition that helps them identify real-life examples of plagiarism (Emerson, 2008; Mbutho & Hutchings, 2021; Roig, 1997; Yeo, 2007). Some students are less likely to identify as plagiarism situations of improperly paraphrased text or unacknowledged incorporation of another's ideas (Gullifer & Tyson, 2010) since these types of instances are not clear-cut examples of copying exact words. Other students have also questioned how much copying constitutes plagiarism—a couple words, multiple sentences, or full paragraphs? (Hayes & Introna,

2005), and how many words can be supplied by someone else before one should ‘start using quotation marks’? (Pittam et al., 2009, p. 157).

The seemingly wide-ranging nature of plagiarism may translate to students as poorly delineated, or murky, boundaries of what does and does not meet the definition of plagiarism. The lack of uniformity in what can be considered an appropriate quantified degree of textual appropriation may also leave students unsure about plagiarism. These murky boundaries could make construction of a more nuanced characterisation of plagiarism that better aligns with that of the academic community more difficult for students. Chen and Chou (2017) documented that the way students consider plagiarism and its components (i.e., some copying or unattributed text is of no consequence) differs from the way that staff and institutions of higher education may think about it (i.e., using another’s text is ‘unacceptable and unforgivable’ [p.64] cheating).

2.2.2 The Cheating–Plagiarising Disconnect

While the commonly held definitions of cheating and plagiarism signify to many academics that plagiarism and cheating overlap due to similarities in purpose or appearance (Flint et al., 2006), students’ perceptions do not always adhere to this similarity-based connection. Payne and Nantz (1994) noted that there existed a difference in students’ perceptions about ‘blatant cheating’ (e.g., cheating on exams) and other types of dishonesty (e.g., plagiarising from another student’s homework), which were considered not serious or ‘not really’ (p. 93) cheating. In fact, students may not consider plagiarism to be a form of cheating at all (Owunwanne et al., 2010). International student participants in Australian research conducted by Sutherland-Smith (2008) identified a host of plagiaristic conduct they believed did not equate to cheating, including working with peers on assignments

intended to be individual assessments and submitting as their own work that was previously written and submitted by another student.

The assertion that students make a distinction between matters of cheating and those of plagiarism is further supported by findings which highlight students' categorisations of otherwise undesirable academic conduct according to their ideas about severity of behaviour. Examination-related cheating (such as using a mobile phone during an exam or taking a crib sheet into an exam) took the top slot for severity of dishonest actions in a number of research studies (Austin et al., 2006; Higbee et al., 2011). Contract cheating appears to also be thought of by students as a more serious act. Bretag et al. (2019) found that both self-reported cheating students and non-cheating students considered obtaining an assessment for submission that was completed by someone else more wrong than two other activities: providing an assessment to someone and engaging in buying/selling/trading notes. Likewise, other research suggests that many students accept the act of purchasing a paper to submit as their own as cheating, as indicated by their ranking of it as severe misconduct (Jurdi et al., 2011, 2012).

It appears that more traditional forms of plagiarism, however, do not reach the level of what students think of as cheating, in seriousness or in underlying intent (malicious or benign). For example, students in two separate studies reported that situations of plagiarism—such as borrowing peers' work to lift ideas and copying student work from earlier semesters—were acceptable practices, not serious cheating, according to the students' own standards (Austin et al., 2006; Parameswaran & Devi, 2006). Other research has shown that some students do not consider using file sharing websites (presented as 'study help' sites) as dishonest (Harrison et al., 2020). Such activities may be thought of by

students as decoupled from cheating based on the notion that one's intention was not to deceive, but to learn through collaboration (Barrett & Cox, 2005; Sutherland-Smith, 2013) or memorisation (Devlin & Gray, 2007).

2.2.3 Considering Significance

A hierarchy of values (Aggarwal, Bates, Davies, & Khan, 2002, as cited in Austin et al., 2006) has been used to describe the way students consider the significance of various types of academic dishonesty. A lot of research has shown that students do not believe plagiarism is a grave transgression, especially when compared to other types of academic dishonesty that are considered serious, like cheating on an examination (Ashworth et al., 1997; Jurdi et al., 2012; Wilkinson, 2009). In a broad review of plagiarism literature, Park (2003) asserted that research showed many students do not seem terribly concerned with the problem of plagiarism and may not even consider plagiarism a major wrongdoing. When asked to rank scenarios of academic dishonesty by level of seriousness, students consider instances of plagiarism relatively minor. Franklyn-Stokes and Newstead (1995) noted that plagiaristic acts were considered by undergraduate students in the UK to be the least serious form of misconduct. Scenarios such as including unused or fabricated sources in a reference list, omitting used sources from a reference list, and copying or paraphrasing from sources without acknowledging the source, all rank as not serious or minimally serious by students (Jurdi et al., 2012; Lim & See, 2001). The student-held belief that plagiaristic acts are not serious is at odds with the general opinion among academic teaching staff. Decades ago, Sims (1995) found that students consistently ranked academic dishonesty situations, including instances of plagiarism, at lower mean scores for severity than lecturers' rankings

of the same situations. Brimble & Stevenson-Clarke (2005) and Wilkinson (2009) have both reported similar discord in students' and instructors' ratings of seriousness.

Even though students do not consider plagiarism as affronting as professional academics often do (Brimble & Stevenson-Clarke, 2005; East, 2010), they are aware of the significance assigned by the academic community to incidents of plagiarism (Marshall & Garry, 2005; Power, 2009). A few years ago, a study of first-year undergraduate students found that most students reported views that conform to academia's established disapproval of plagiarism (Bokosmaty et al., 2019). When presented with the survey item *plagiarism is not a big deal*, only seven and a half percent of students responded in the affirmative. This finding could be taken as a sign that regulatory-focused interventions are starting to impact how students view plagiarism, with a shift closer towards the academic community's norm of plagiarism as serious and deserving of significant educational guidelines and consequences. More likely, though, it can be considered a confirming indication that students are aware of the community's stance on plagiarism as a serious transgression, offensive to academics—as evidenced by instructor vignettes in Sutherland-Smith's (2008) work—and are replying accordingly to inquiries from researchers.

2.2.4 Forming Perceptions

While much of the research asserts there is a commonly held belief among students that many acts of plagiarism are minor misdeeds or not a form of cheating at all, there also exists evidence that many students consider the issue confusing and even fear-inducing (Adam et al., 2017; DeVoss & Rosati, 2002; Gullifer & Tyson, 2010; MacLennan, 2018). The apparent murkiness of what is and what is not plagiarism, as well as a lack of understanding

about why plagiarism is considered such a dreadful offence among academics, can impact how students view the issue of plagiarism (Gullifer & Tyson, 2010; Power, 2009).

Plagiarism is Confusing

Confusion about plagiarism is so common among students that researchers have devoted significant attention to the topic. Adam and colleagues (Adam, 2016; Adam et al., 2017) found that confusion featured so prominently in students' comments about plagiarism that it demanded to be established as one of the four discourses observed in their work. In another study, students reported confusion about paraphrasing sources acceptably as well as when and how much to quote directly from a source (Pittam et al., 2009). Thompson's (2005) case study examined knowledge construction in student writing, and included a student who reported confusion over when a reference should be incorporated (i.e., at the end of one sentence or after a number of sentences deriving from the same source). The notion of common knowledge and what information falls under this classification adds more uncertainty to the confusion (Chandrasoma et al., 2004). Additionally, students have spoken about the variation among individual lecturers and what each considered suitable source use and paraphrasing techniques as adding to the confusion over plagiarism (MacLennan, 2018; Power, 2009; Sutherland-Smith, 2008).

Forming attitudes that are based in confusion about plagiarism can lead students to be fearful about accidentally plagiarising. Students believe that they might unknowingly make errors that are then considered intentional plagiarism by teaching staff or university administration (Ashworth et al., 1997; Gullifer & Tyson, 2010). Qualitative interviews and focus groups have reported this concern among some students who fear being accused of

plagiarism when they did not hold any intention to deceive (Ashworth et al., 2003; Breen & Maassen, 2005; Gu & Brooks, 2008; Petrić, 2012).

Influences on Acceptability

Notions that students believe some forms of academic dishonesty, including plagiaristic acts, might be more acceptable under certain circumstances have been presented in the literature (Barrett & Cox, 2005; Murdock & Stephens, 2007). Students' perceptions of the acceptability of various instances of academic dishonesty have been linked to the teacher-student connection, where those with a positive relationship with their lecturer did not cheat and those with a negative or non-existent relationship were inclined to act dishonestly (Quaye, 2010). Students' remarks have implied that their poor relationship with an instructor, characterised by disinterest or neglect on the part of the teacher, contributed to their considerations of dishonesty as an acceptable way to complete their work (Beasley, 2014).

Students' considerations of the acceptability of potentially plagiaristic actions may also be impacted by their perceptions of peer behaviour (Broeckelman-Post, 2008; Lim & See, 2001; Wang, 2008). Engler et al. (2008) found that most students considered dishonest behaviour more likely to occur among their peers—a social norm error that the researchers contend leaves students believing that cheating is commonplace, even when that may not be the case. The belief that plagiarism occurs with great frequency could cause students to consider engaging in these dishonest acts, operating under the assumption that cheating is pervasive, therefore an accepted normative behaviour (Burnett et al., 2016). Specific to situations of third-party writing assistance, Awdry and Ives (2020) found that students who

reported knowing peers who used contract cheating services were more likely to engage in third-party writing assistance activities themselves.

The degree of formality in an assessment and frequency of writing assistance use can sway students to consider otherwise dishonest behaviour as acceptable. Assignments of an informal nature such as those that do not hold any effect on course marks or are presented as homework tasks were more likely to be viewed as instances where cheating is acceptable (Ashworth et al., 1997; Michaels & Miethe, 1989). Acceptability is lower when it comes to engaging in academic dishonesty to complete more formal assessments, like examinations. Cheating or plagiarising in these situations has been considered highly unacceptable by students (Dick et al., 2001). The frequency of use of writing assistance may also be a factor in students' considerations of the acceptability of plagiarism or potential plagiarism. A study in the United States aimed at exploring international students' perceptions about ghostwriting reported that acceptability of such behaviour was linked to frequency of engagement; in other words, a student considered ghostwriting acceptable if it was only utilised once or twice (Zheng & Cheng, 2015). In considering the acceptability of certain actions, some students will rationalise the use of otherwise dishonest or inappropriate actions by forming justifications for the behaviour (Curasi, 2013; MacGregor & Stuebs, 2012).

Unacceptable, but Justified

There is evidence that while students are aware of the seriousness the academic community assigns to plagiarism, they still find that certain circumstances may offer justifications for plagiarism. Much of the research into students' beliefs and attitudes in this area has been explained by the concept of neutralisation (Beasley, 2014; Curasi, 2013). Sykes and Matza (1957) developed the techniques of neutralisation theory based on their research

into juvenile delinquency. Neutralisation tactics can be grouped into five broad types of justifications: denial of responsibility, denial of injury, denial of the victim, the condemnation of the condemners, and the appeal to higher loyalties. Students' use of these techniques helps to render social controls—like the principle of honesty—less effective, thereby neutralising their values so they can rationalise cheating or plagiarising on an assessment. Neutralisation in effect increases the acceptability of these undesirable and inappropriate behaviours within certain situations. In a study of engineering undergraduates, students reported that copying laboratory reports was commonplace; they justified the misconduct by laying responsibility at the feet of instructional staff who they believed did not care about the misconduct and allowed it to continue (Parameswaran & Devi, 2006). The students' assumptions that staff knew about the copying but did nothing to stop it and were therefore responsible for it, reinforced the notion that such behaviour was justified and a reasonable way to complete an assignment.

In Bokosmaty and colleagues' research (Bokosmaty et al., 2019) almost half of the students reported believing that using another's words to present an idea or specific information was unavoidable since 'there are only so many ways to describe something' (p. 285). Similarly, a student from Thompson's (2005) study remarked about a perceived sense of ineffectiveness in contributing original material since he held the belief that everything had already been said by others. This type of belief could cause the emergence of an attitude that using another's words is inevitable, therefore it is not worth the time it takes to develop a fresh take on previously expressed ideas or attempt to synthesise texts in an original way (Bokosmaty et al., 2019).

2.3 Students and Third-party Writing Assistance

In order to examine the space which may include third-party writing assistance as potential plagiarism, it is important to consider the different aspects of the issue. In this section, presented first is a description of the modes of engagement and types of activities undertaken by students. Then, the next two sections review the prevalence of these activities and responses from the academy. Finally, insights from the existing research into university students' perceptions about these types of activities are presented.

2.3.1 Common Modes

Much like the broad typology of plagiarism, instances where students seek to use writing assistance as a way to complete some or all of their work for a written assessment exist on a continuum of behaviours. The methods of action, or modes, can vary. Students seek help from classmates or family members by speaking to them in person (Qayyum, 2018), often wanting proofreading or editing assistance (Beisler & Medaille, 2016), some of which might veer beyond what academics deem acceptable help. Likewise, students hire proofreaders or editors sometimes with the expectation that substantive editing³, to the point of rewriting, will be provided (Lines, 2016b).

Students can also rely on technologies to facilitate writing assistance; websites and applications are available where students can enter a block of text and, with the click of a button, receive an automatically paraphrased version of the original text (Rogerson & McCarthy, 2017). Students could use generative artificial intelligence similarly to how some

³ According to the Institute of Professional Editors <<http://iped-editors.org/>>, substantive editing goes beyond basic spelling, grammar, clarity, and consistency checks to also include alterations to content and structure.

have used commercial essay mills or contracted ghostwriters (Newton, 2018), having a complete assessment produced for them. Research has shown that file sharing sites can be used by students to outsource their writing (Rogerson & Basanta, 2016). These online sites serve as repositories—collections of completed assessments uploaded by students and available for others to use fully or partially as their own work (Bretag, Harper, Burton, Ellis, Newton, Rozenberg, et al., 2019; Rogerson & Basanta, 2016). In a large multi-country study organised by Awdry (2020), 61% of the students who reported outsourcing academic work to an online third party did so through the use of a file sharing site. The same or similar sites provide a space for students to post and retrieve lecture notes, assignment prompts, and other course materials (Bretag, Harper, Burton, Ellis, Newton, Rozenberg, et al., 2019) that can also lead to students submitting work they did not produce independently.

2.3.2 Prevalence of Use

Researchers have found that occurrences of students seeking and receiving assistance under the labels of academic ghostwriting or contract cheating on their academic tasks are relatively low, with earlier reports typically under the five percent mark (Curtis & Popal, 2011; McCabe, 2005) and more recent reports still below the 10% mark (Bretag, Harper, Burton, Ellis, Newton, Rozenberg, et al., 2019; Curtis & Clare, 2017). Considering the specific act of contract cheating, Australian teaching staff most often estimated prevalence to be between one and ten percent (Harper et al., 2019). But such activities, even if only discernible (or estimated to be) within a small fraction of university students, are not a trivial matter. The situation warrants concern since it holds the potential to undermine the quality of teaching and learning in higher education (Awdry & Newton, 2019) and can diminish a student's role in their own learning. There is also evidence that the availability of

ghostwriting options, such as essay writing services and online paraphrasing tools, has grown (Fisher et al., 2016; Rogerson & McCarthy, 2017) and is likely to continue to do so given advancements in artificial intelligence and the pervasiveness of such technology. And just like other forms of dubious academic conduct and more traditional cheating, ghostwriting issues appear to exist at higher education institutions across the world (as varied as Australia: Bretag et al., 2020; Czechia: Foltýnek & Králíková, 2018; the United Arab Emirates: Khan et al., 2020; and Nigeria: Okoroafor et al., 2016).

Sixty-eight percent of teaching staff in Harper et al.'s (2019) study reported receiving an assessment they perceived to have been written by someone other than the submitting student. Nearly 40% of these instructors reported receiving suspected outsourced assessments multiple times (i.e., more than five instances). The possibility of recidivism was presented by Curtis and Clare (2017) during their review of a multi-study dataset compiled from research into contract cheating, in which they discovered that 63% of students who reported actively contract cheating also reported engaging in the activity on more than one occasion.

When examining academic dishonesty among undergraduate students in Australia, Bretag et al. (2019) found that 37% of students who engaged in cheating (by their own admission) reported acquiring a completed assessment with the intention of submitting it as their own work. Even more commonly reported by students were activities like buying, selling, or trading lecture notes and sharing assignments with peers. In fact, much of the outsourced work students sought was from those known to them—their peers, friends, and relatives. Such outsourcing was also seen in Awdry's (2020) study, where 94% of self-reported informal third-party writing assistance activities included friends or family

members. The reliance on one's social circle as a source for getting assessments done has also been presented elsewhere, including a study by Ellis et al. (2019) where non-monetised ghostwriting involving a student's friends or family members exceeded instances of monetised contract cheating involving other sources.

2.3.3 Response from the Academy

Researchers have argued that various forms of third-party writing assistance by students is a growing concern for the academic community (Aitchison & Mowbray, 2016; Fisher et al., 2016; Kong et al., 2019), but it appears as though the response has mainly focused on adjusting the design of assessments. Multiple literature reviews (including Morris, 2018; Newton & Lang, 2016) identified assessment design as a consistently presented recommendation to combat plagiarism issues. Notable studies have found design aspects that appear to reduce the potential for plagiarism like ghostwriting by reducing the opportunity to cheat, such as implementing a viva voce or oral component into assessments (Bretag, Harper, Burton, Ellis, Newton, van Haeringen, et al., 2019), or building real-world authenticity (practical tasks reflective of professional or trade settings) into assignments (Sutherland-Smith, 2008). Other studies highlight features of assessment design, like structuring assessments in phases and scaffolding tasks, which were reported to increase motivation and interest among students (Hale, 2018) and help students feel more confident in their ability to avoid plagiarising (Leung & Cheng, 2017). It is important to note that improving the design of assessments may help reduce academic dishonesty among some students, but as evidenced by findings from Ellis et al. (2019), it will not make assessments cheat-proof. Therefore, assessment redesign should not be expected to provide full

assurance against ghostwriting, contract cheating, or other instances deemed plagiarism by universities.

In addition to educatively-focused design efforts that emphasise setting more relatable and engaging assessments, literature also presents a reply from the regulatory discourse. Direct communication and the development of an open dialogue with students about contract cheating and potentially inappropriate editing assistance has been highlighted as a necessary action in the response to the problem (Rogerson & McCarthy, 2017). It appears this strategy has yet to be widely implemented. An evaluation of the academic integrity programmes at Australian and Aotearoa New Zealand universities that provide students, and sometimes staff, with information about academic integrity issues, showed that multiple programmes lacked prominent content about the outsourcing of academic work (Sefcik et al., 2020). This lack of information about forms of third-party writing assistance was also reflected in results from other studies that found less than 25% of students reported their lecturers spending time discussing contract cheating during class (Bretag, Harper, Burton, Ellis, Newton, Rozenberg, et al., 2019) and less than 40% of teaching staff confirming that they spent time explaining contract cheating to students (Harper et al., 2019). Evidence of inadequacies in the university-level information directed at students as well as lacking communication from teaching staff about outsourcing both suggest that students are likely ill-equipped to fully understand the issues around third-party writing assistance.

While many scholars call for deemphasising punitive measures to address potential or verified academic dishonesty, deterrence still features as a response to plagiarism and incidents deemed academic misconduct by universities. Responses reliant on deterrence are

particularly evident as higher education institutional administration and teaching staff grapple with the perceived threats to academic integrity from essay mills and ghostwriting services. Efforts include removing online access to known sources of third-party writing assistance considered cheating by a university (Seeland et al., 2020) and warning students of the potential risks involved in contracting out assignments, such as low quality or inaccurate work, data privacy violations, and blackmail (Draper et al., 2021; Sutherland-Smith & Dullaghan, 2019). An emphasis on detection is also common in approaches to deterrence. Many universities embed text-matching software, like Turnitin, Urkund, and iThenticate, into assessment submission procedures. Some staff believe that such efforts have a deterrent effect on students engaging in plagiaristic acts (Rees & Emerson, 2009), but research shows mixed results (Do Ba et al., 2017). A response of deterrence alone is unlikely to fully address students' use of third-party writing assistance.

2.3.4 Perceptions Held by Students

Although not as extensive as the literature on students' perceptions of prototypical plagiarism and cheating within higher education, there are some studies that offer insight into how students consider third-party writing assistance activities. A survey of students attending a university in the southern United States revealed that 90% of respondents reported believing that both receiving unpermitted writing assistance on their assignments and working on an assessment for another student were not serious acts of cheating (Baker et al., 2008). McCabe's (2005) collection of survey data from students in the United States and Canada revealed that only 44% of undergraduates considered unpermitted help with a writing assignment to be moderate or serious academic misconduct. A similar act—

receiving unauthorised help from a non-university affiliated professional—was considered not cheating by nearly a quarter of respondents in a more recent study (Deale et al., 2019).

Students have also thought third-party writing assistance situations that are inherently collaborative are acceptable. In two separate studies on perceptions of activities undertaken while completing university coursework, most students believed the following situations were not cheating: instances of having friends proofread an assessment, discussing topic ideas for papers, asking a peer how to do a task, and working together on homework (Higbee et al., 2011; Higbee & Thomas, 2002). When it came to group work, students in a study by Sutherland-Smith (2013) felt the distinction between collaboration and collusion was not evident to them—it felt like a ‘mythical line’ (p. 55) as one participant noted. Another study showed that most students thought a scenario that described colluding among peers on individually written assessments was acceptable and not a case of plagiarism (Palmer et al., 2017).

While these studies indicated that students do not identify some editing, collaborating, and ghostwriting activities with the notions of cheating and plagiarism, another study observed that students were concerned that their fellow students would turn to technology (e.g., retrieving term papers from the Internet; using paraphrasing tools) to complete their writing even when directed by staff that such activities were inappropriate (Burnett et al., 2016). Technologies that provide editing assistance to complete part of the process of writing an assessment could be perceived as creating an uneven playing field. MacGregor and Stuebs (2012) concluded that a sense of unfairness exacerbates the issue of academic dishonesty, as students who feel that their peers have an unfair advantage use this perception to then rationalise their own inappropriate behaviour.

Based on the extent of confusion among students about plagiarism in general, as evidenced by multiple studies (including Adam, 2016; Adam et al., 2017; Pittam et al., 2009), it seems logical to expect similar perceptions among students regarding the murky areas of assistance in their attempt to produce academic writing. Finding the demarcation line between the acceptable strategies for learning to write by producing writing and the inappropriate tactics of plagiarism may be hard for students to delineate. It may also affect how students consider third-party writing assistance and motivations for seeking editing assistance and other activities characterised by some degree of outsourcing.

2.4 Within the Aotearoa New Zealand Context

The literature on plagiarism among students within Aotearoa New Zealand has largely focused on prevalence, perceptions, and prevention. Researchers have studied the frequency and extent of plagiarism according to students (Walker, 2010) and staff (de Lambert et al., 2006; Walker, 1998), views and attitudes about plagiarism held by students (Adam, 2016; Adam et al., 2017; Tran et al., 2022), students' understanding of plagiarism and possible factors of influence on beliefs (Kuntz & Butler, 2014; Marshall & Garry, 2005, 2006), as well as detection and prevention (Emerson, 2008; Emerson et al., 2005; Sefcik et al., 2020). The contributions from these researchers exist in a larger conversation about student plagiarism in higher education that has been happening across the globe. An absence among these contributions also exposes an area within Aotearoa New Zealand-produced plagiarism research that demands exploration: undergraduate students' use of writing assistance, including instances of ghostwriting, collaborating, editing, and repurposing. This topic (often presented under the label of contract cheating) has garnered more attention lately in other countries, most notably Australia (e.g., Bretag, Harper,

Burton, Ellis, Newton, Rozenberg, et al., 2019; Curtis & Clare, 2017; Ellis et al., 2019; Harper et al., 2019; Lines, 2016a) and the UK (e.g., Amigud & Lancaster, 2019; Clarke & Lancaster, 2006; Lancaster & Clarke, 2008, 2016). There is little in comparison from Aotearoa New Zealand.

The research into students' views about the phenomenon of plagiarism is wide in scope but, as explained above, lacks work that has been dedicated to identifying student-held beliefs and attitudes about activities undertaken during the process of writing—like seeking editing assistance from a friend or using technological aids to complete assignments. A few research studies examining academic dishonesty among students in Aotearoa New Zealand included one or two survey questions about behaviours fitting the ghostwriting or contract cheating labels, or briefly noted information related to such activities (e.g., de Lambert et al., 2006; Marshall & Garry, 2005). Situated within the literature's wider focus on students and plagiarism in general, these small glimpses of students' ideas about having someone else work on parts of their assessment serve as a base for which to expand the research by aiming to better identify and understand Aotearoa New Zealand students' beliefs and attitudes about other third-party writing assistance activities.

Walker's (2010) study on the amount and range of plagiarism among undergraduates at one university included reports of low engagement in a behaviour that could potentially be considered ghostwriting ('submitting an assignment that is substantially, or entirely, the work of another student' [p. 46]). While a low level of self-reported engagement among students in Aotearoa New Zealand fits with the results from Australian and American studies reporting various occurrence rates under 10%, Walker's study was limited by its reliance on Turnitin originality reports to supply data on instances of plagiarism. Although

sourcing a dataset through the course-embedded use of text-matching software was reasonable for the central focus of the study (patterns of textual plagiarism), the software was not, at that time, built to detect artefacts of ghostwriting since custom-made works would not, by design, match any existing texts found elsewhere (Lancaster & Clarke, 2016). It is possible that ghostwritten papers were not detected as such, thus not identified accordingly in the study.

Another study explored ghostwriting behaviours, as reported by alumni from two universities in Aotearoa New Zealand (Li, 2017). Small sample size notwithstanding, this research provides first-hand insights from students about their sources of ghostwritten material. Study participants reported providing ghostwriting services through an underground (not overtly advertised) custom-order process fronted as academic support from an immigration consultancy service, as well as through independent university graduates working as ghostwriters. Like the findings in Bretag and colleagues' work (Bretag, Harper, Burton, Ellis, Newton, Rozenberg, et al., 2019; Ellis et al., 2019) that pointed to students' social circles as the likely source of most outsourced work, participants in Li's (2017) study who used ghostwriting reported having their partners, colleagues, or family members write an entire or partial assignment for them. The study focused specifically on Chinese postgraduate students; as such it does not provide information on how undergraduate students—beyond that of one racial or cultural subpopulation—consider writing assistance from third parties.

According to Marshall and Garry's (2005) examination into how well students in Aotearoa New Zealand understand the construct of plagiarism, the majority of students believed purchasing work completed by someone else was a form of plagiarism. This

suggests it is possible that some students consider monetised ghostwriting, or prototypical contract cheating, a type of plagiarism—an act that seems serious enough to avoid during their academic studies. But what about third-party assistance that falls under a broader definition, where students organise their friends, family, or others in their social circle to work on parts of their assessment by way of less formal or moneyless transactions?

Beyond ghostwriting activities, there is a clear absence of research that has thoroughly investigated perceptions about other forms of third-party writing assistance like those involving collaborating or editing. Quantifying students' views about a range of writing activities and plagiarism, Paynter and Mills (2004) did ask university students about the acceptability of collaborating with other students to complete individual assessments. Fifty-one percent of the surveyed students believed this form of writing assistance was acceptable. Students' perceptions about such situations may be influenced by the learning environments they experience. Based on a collaborative learning approach, some of the country's tertiary institutions developed peer-led learning support (e.g., Bernard, 2017) and peer-aided writing programmes (e.g., Pocock, 2017). Given the value placed on collaboration by services like these, it could be that university students in Aotearoa New Zealand perceive scenarios of collaborating more favourably than other instances of third-party writing assistance. Lacking in the research, though, is an in-depth qualitative look into how students consider the acceptability of activities of a collaborative (or colluding) nature. Also, missing from all this Aotearoa New Zealand research is what students think about situations involving various kinds of editing assistance from third parties. More research is needed to gain an understanding of what students think is and is not acceptable when it comes to having others assist with editing their assessments.

2.5 Chapter Summary

The research on plagiarism among university students provides a wealth of knowledge about how it is regarded within higher education. The way the academy views plagiarism manifests in three main discourses that frame it as an ethical/moralistic concern, a regulatory matter, or a part of the intertextuality of academic writing. What is clear from the research is that students' perceptions of plagiarism involve misunderstanding and confusion about the notion itself, as well as the acceptability of varying situations or activities. While it appears easier for students to recognise that scenarios of contract cheating and ghostwriting are not acceptable in their academic work, less is known about their perceptions of other instances of third-party writing assistance and what aspects of these activities indicate [un]acceptability. There are numerous modes for seeking and receiving writing assistance from third parties; and research suggests that usage will continue as students keep looking to their social circles for support, and even increase as technological tools improve.

What emerges from the review of literature in this chapter is the need for more research concentrated on how university students and teaching staff, in Aotearoa New Zealand, consider a full range of third-party writing assistance activities. Addressing the need for more information, this study investigates what students and staff perceive about these activities' boundaries and shades of acceptability. The next chapter explains the study design as well as data collection and analysis methods for seeking this information.

CHAPTER THREE | RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

Chapter Two provided a review of the existing research and exposed gaps in the literature. We turn now, in this chapter, to the research design and rationale for the methods employed in this study. Important to understanding the mechanics of the project, this chapter details all aspects of designing the study and undertaking the data collection and analysis. A review of pragmatism is presented first, as this research stance served as the base for the development and implementation of the study. Then, in section 3.2, the study's mixed methods methodology is discussed, with attention paid to the research design elements and the construction of the original scenarios. Sections 3.2.4 and 3.2.5 describe the implementation of the study methods and instruments according to study design: track I with student participants and track II with staff participants. Following that, section 3.3 provides insight into the research setting, with reviews of the ethical and cultural considerations incorporated into the study.

3.1 Pragmatism: Inquiry-led, Outcome-focused

Pragmatism as a research stance circumvents the ontological arguments about truth and reality (Feilzer, 2010; Kaushik & Walsh, 2019). While the view allows for reality to be a socially constructed element where meaning is dependent on context (Kaushik & Walsh, 2019), it concerns itself less with the question of what is real and more with the process of developing useful knowledge. The pragmatist's viewpoint is based upon the idea of practicality, as seen through the importance placed on consequences—as opposed to an adherence to a particular ontological assumption (Allmark & Machaczek, 2018). This outcome-focused position is seen in the framing of research as an activity with the goal of

producing information that holds utility in the form of practical applications that improve real-world problems (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; Kaushik & Walsh, 2019).

A central tenet of pragmatism is the notion that the research questions drive the research (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; Kaushik & Walsh, 2019); whatever will produce the most useful information to answer the research questions is what should be used in the research process (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). This idea of *what works best* can provide a space for perspectives or aspects of perspectives from more than one established philosophical assumption—allowing for a more balanced view that combines qualities of both positivism and interpretivism. Pragmatism allows for knowledge to be ‘both constructed *and* based on the reality of the world’ (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p. 18) as experienced by people. The flexibility this stance affords a researcher means that they are able to consider the subjective construction of meaning-making by individuals as well as the appearance of a more fixed reality through an *intersubjective objective* view (Giere, 2006; Tebes, 2012). As presented by Giere (2006), one can understand objective reality to be that which is a reliable commonly agreed upon element within society—shared among people, thus established as a truth. Since objectivity and subjectivity are not mutually exclusive as evidenced by intersubjectivity, the methods of inquiry for both values are not incompatible (as would be argued by pure positivists or pure constructivists). The notion of intersubjectivity can extend to the way in which research is conducted, advocating for a mixture of approaches when exploring behaviour and perspectives (Tebes, 2012).

Because pragmatism values both objective and subjective knowledge and promotes the use of *what works* in collecting, analysing, and applying data, the paradigm does not assert one specific method or practice (Feilzer, 2010; Maxcy, 2003 as cited in Kaushik &

Walsh, 2019). Not having an edict of one particular or sole method, the position of pragmatism contends that the choice of method should be based upon the nature of the research itself, the questions being investigated, and the ability to produce useful information (Allmark & Machaczek, 2018; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). As such, pragmatism has commonly been connected to mixed methods research (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). In fact, Kaushik and Walsh (2019) considered it a favoured view when conducting mixed methods research. Steckler et al. (1992) reasoned that an application of pragmatism's emphasis on using measures most appropriate for a study meant that a mixture of methods could be implemented that complement each other, therefore strengthening the research itself.

This project was devised and conducted from a stance of pragmatism. A focus on practicality of design was implemented; methodology and methods were chosen in direct response to the research questions. Both qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis techniques were used, not only because the individual approaches held an ability to provide the most appropriate and reasonable path to answer these research questions, but also because the combination of both approaches supported an effort to produce a more comprehensive study.

3.2 Mixed Methods Methodology

Mixed methods methodology consists of the 'intentional mixture of both qualitative and quantitative approaches' (Shannon-Baker, 2016, p. 321) within one study, creating research bolstered by the combination of the individual strengths of each data type. Purposefully combining qualitative and quantitative methods provides space for both the examination of nuances within thick and rich data, and the succinctness of quantified

information—strengths in each form of inquiry that also happen to complement each other (Shannon-Baker, 2016; Steckler et al., 1992).

This research project called for an exploration into views about third-party writing assistance as an issue of potential plagiarism in students' assessments. Using a convergent design (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018) for mixed methods studies, the project comprised both qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis techniques that occurred separately. Data collection happened concurrently, but the approaches operated independent of each other. Only after the two datasets were individually analysed were all the data from both methods integrated for joint presentation.

3.2.1 Rationale for Use

The use of mixed methods methodology in the study hinged on three main advantages it offered. First was that this methodology was best suited to answer the project's research questions, thus adhering to a core principle of pragmatism. Second was the built-in concept of complementarity, which adds value to research. Third was the benefit a multifaceted approach can have on the analysis and interpretation of results.

Based on a structure advocated by various mixed methods researchers, such as Creswell (2009), this study included an overarching question supported by a few specific qualitative and quantitative inquiries. In seeking to gain a better understanding about how students and staff perceive third-party writing assistance and plagiarism, specific sub-questions needed to be addressed. A query into which types of activities teaching staff considered [un]acceptable would be best administered as a quantitative question that would provide categorical and ordinal data. A query into students' opinions of acceptability and the possible motivations behind engaging in writing assistance activities would be best suited as

a qualitative approach, allowing for the collection of in-depth information through open-ended questions that probed for details which would likely remain uncovered in fixed quantitatively structured questions. The nature of the research questions and how they would best be addressed justified the use of mixed methods, as it called for both qualitative and quantitative investigations.

The use of mixed methods also provided a level of complementarity to the research, which is a longstanding argument for the use of such a design. According to Greene et al. (1989), using a mixture of methods to measure different aspects or levels of a phenomenon can produce complementary results that both increase the meaningfulness of the data and enrich understanding of findings. Complementarity enhances or elaborates through the use of different methods (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Designed in a *complementary fashion* (Roberts, 2002), the current study employed a narrative-producing method to examine how students perceive third-party writing assistance activities—including their conceptions of what is and is not acceptable and what motivates engagement—while integrating a complementary number-generating method when measuring staffs' rating of the degree of acceptability of various situations. The supplemental data from teaching staff was included to supply clear numerical depiction of perceptions possibly held by the wider academic community (represented by university teaching staff) in which students exist. The complementarity of such a design provided a 'more complete picture' (Plano Clark & Ivankova, 2016, p. 85) of the research topic.

The deliberate use of a multifaceted approach can provide a deeper layer of understanding through the joint presentation and analysis of these methods (Scoles et al., 2014; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998). The convergent design of this study meant that the

analysis of data was conducted in parallel, analysed separately during roughly the same time. After the qualitative and quantitative datasets were analysed independently, the results were combined. This integration allows for the review of convergences and divergences between the separate datasets (Plano Clark & Ivankova, 2016). This joint examination of results produces an additional layer of detail and nuance within the interpretation of study findings.

3.2.2 Study Design Elements

A mixed methods study design offers four elements that were of particular importance to the current study. Each of these elements helped to create a study that aligned with the pragmatic stance of building a suitable path of inquiry for answering the research questions. The elements were multilevel, priority, timing, and collection. This section includes a description of the role each element had in the study design.

The design of this mixed methods study was *multilevel* (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998, p. 48), featuring the collection of data from two distinct levels within a social environment: the student level and the teaching staff level. The intention in using a multilevel approach was to conduct a more comprehensive examination, aided by perspectives from more than just one role-based group, which allowed for the complexity of the phenomenon to be reflected in the research.

In accordance with the study's emphasis on better understanding students' perspectives of third-party writing assistance and plagiarism, the methods retained different levels of status within the research process. The student-focused inquiry was intentionally placed at the forefront of the study, making its qualitative method the primary

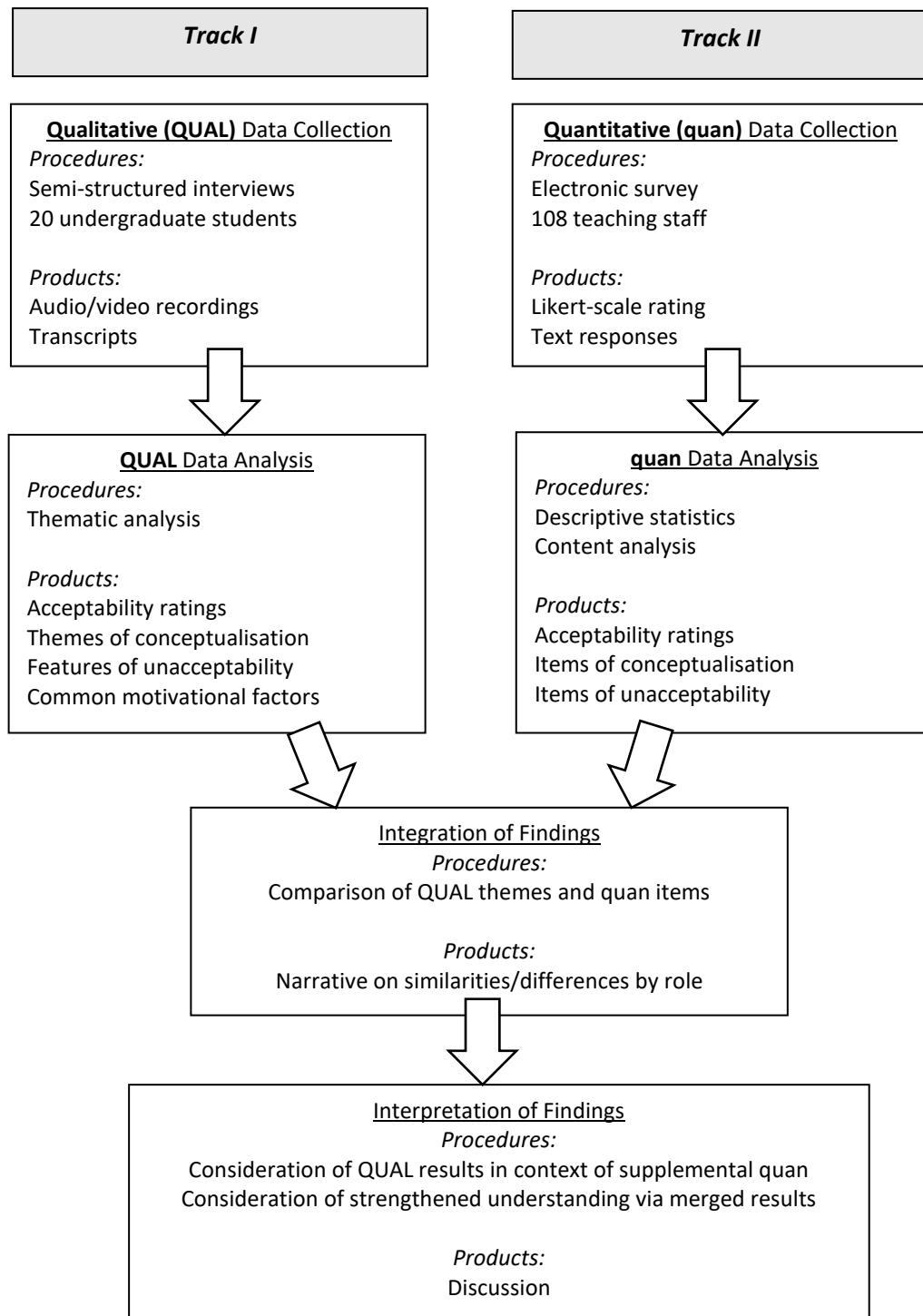
methodological approach. This *prioritisation* (Creswell, 2009, pp. 206-207) helped to base the investigation on the way in which the researched population interpreted, believed, and judged the phenomenon under study (Richards & Morse, 2007). Given priority in the study design, the qualitative method was then supported by the quantitative method which served to expand the data by providing another layer of information from an additional level, or role, involved in the social environment. Distinction of priority among the methods used in this study has been displayed (in Figure 1) according to the common notation QUAL+quan, where capitalisation signifies prioritisation of qualitative data and the plus symbol denotes concurrent timing of collection (Creswell, 2009; Morse, 1991).

Based on the multilevel structure and the prioritisation of methods, the study was arranged into two distinct tracks. Adhering to Creswell and Plano Clark's (2018) convergent design (known as convergent parallel design in an earlier iteration of their work), these tracks were scheduled to occur independent of one another. With this structure of the *timing*, both tracks included a data collection period that ran from March to September 2021. The qualitative interviewing of students happened during the initial months of both Semester 1 and Semester 2 and the quantitative survey of teaching staff occurred for four consecutive months within this same period.

Within the study's QUAL+quan convergent design, the *collection* of data occurred in two separate, parallel tracks. Qualitative interviews were conducted with undergraduate students and an online survey collecting mostly quantitative data was administered to teaching staff. This use of multiple data sources and multiple methods served as a way of incorporating different forms of data to produce a more comprehensive study and establish validity, as well as a means of complementarity to enhance the findings through the

inclusion of supplementary results. The following sections include an overview of the development and use of a set of scenarios that served as the framework for both tracks (the qualitative interview schedule and the quantitative survey) of the study, as well as details about the methods and respective analyses used during both tracks. It is important to remember that the nomenclature of track I and II was not intended to imply that one preceded or was dependent upon the other; it is merely a labelling tool used to present information in an organised manner. The study design, along with the procedures and products specific to each track, is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Study Design



Note. Adapted from Creswell and Plano Clark (2018).

3.2.3 Scenarios

Twenty-four scenarios were used in the study. Based on the premise of an undergraduate student tasked with a 4000-word research paper worth 70% of his mark in one course, each scenario described a situation that included some type of third-party writing assistance. The scenarios presented a student seeking and receiving assistance from a third party via activities all varying by source of assistance, quantity of assistance, and quality of assistance. Based on a review of literature examining student writing activities, including legitimate help seeking (e.g., Beisler & Medaille, 2016; Winder et al., 2016), and potentially plagiaristic situations (e.g., Bretag, Harper, Burton, Ellis, Newton, Rozenberg, et al., 2019; Rogerson & McCarthy, 2017; Walker, 2010), a bespoke set of scenarios was created to reflect a wide array of third-party writing assistance activities. Previous research that made use of a similar vignette-based method to solicit information from research participants was also consulted, including Barrett and Cox (2005); Dick et al. (2001); and Kim and LaBianca (2018). When devising the scenarios for the current project, the researcher made an intentional choice to disregard preconceptions of the appropriateness or acceptability of all activities. The scenarios were not written as a set of fictionalised instances of plagiarism or academic misconduct. Rather, they were written as a set of hypothetical situations describing a student's use of third-party writing assistance and were developed to avoid suggesting presuppositions or prescribed judgements based on moral or ethical value. Unlike much of the previous research investigating students' and staff's perceptions of these types of situations, the current study did not explicitly present the scenarios to participants as instances of plagiarism, cheating, misconduct, or any other value-laden terms.

The scenario set included a variety of sources of third-party writing assistance. Several scenarios depicted situations where someone in the student's social circle served as the third party, which research has confirmed as a common source students turn to for help (Awdry, 2020; Bretag, Harper, Burton, Ellis, Newton, Rozenberg, et al., 2019; Conrad, 2020; Ellis et al., 2019). Some scenarios described situations where the student requested help from a parent, sibling, friend, or someone else personally known to them. Other scenarios included the involvement of individuals who could be considered by students to be potential resources of help: a professional editor, a lecturer from another course (other than the lecturer who set the assessment), or a learning advisor at the student's university. Also included were scenarios that presented instances where the student used a technology-based source of writing assistance, such as a grammar checker, an online essay mill, or phrasing tools like an automated paraphrasing aid or a phrasebank website.

The set of twenty-four scenarios was designed to cover four broad categories of third-party writing assistance: collaborating, editing, ghostwriting, and repurposing (refer to Appendix F for the complete list of scenarios). While the scenarios were not presented to study participants according to these terms, or any other specific labels, the categorisation is used here to systematically discuss the wide range of situations covered by the set of scenarios.

Collaborating Scenarios

Five scenarios presented activities that involved some sort of collaborative action between the student and another party, such as a family member, friend, or classmate. Each scenario was slightly different, presenting nuances in the degree of engagement by the student to complete his assessment. These scenarios were included based on research that

showed perceptions of what collaboration among students looks like can be inconsistent, both among and between students and teaching staff (Barrett & Cox, 2005; Deale et al., 2019; Sutherland-Smith, 2013).

Editing Scenarios

The literature on student use of editing assistance has presented an area ripe for differences in perceptions of acceptability, with findings that editing from a third party is sometimes recommended by instructors (Conrad, 2019) but could also be considered an inappropriate act that constitutes plagiarism (Lines, 2016b). Nine scenarios were based on various situations of editing and ranged from the student having a peer or relative proofread their paper for spelling and grammatical errors to paying a professional editor to review and improve the clarity of his writing. Two scenarios focused on writing assistance sources that typically exist on-campus: lecturers in the classroom and learning advisors in a writing centre, library, or other learning support service. Another editing scenario included the use of technological tools implemented during the writing process, specifically a popular software application that conducts spelling, grammar, and punctuation checks and offers corrective recommendations. Each of these scenarios presented third-party writing assistance that occurred when a third party provided different amounts of assistance, ranging from minor suggestions for the student to consider making to his work through to substantive textual interventions completed by the third party instead of by the student.

Ghostwriting Scenarios

Five scenarios included activities of ghostwriting, where the student had a third party complete some or all of the writing assessment for him. Scenarios of contract cheating, both

through the use of a commercial website and through the leveraging of a favour from a friend, were included in the study. Including separate scenarios that made explicit the presence or absence of a monetary transaction was based on the reporting from various studies that found student engagement in both types of situations (Amigud & Lancaster, 2020; Bretag, Harper, Burton, Ellis, Newton, Rozenberg, et al., 2019). Also included in the scenario set was a situation describing the use of an automated paraphrasing tool, where the student used an online aid to paraphrase a section of text he sourced from a reference—a third-party writing assistance activity that research indicates some students appear to engage in during their writing process (Prentice & Kinden, 2018; Rogerson & McCarthy, 2017).

Repurposing Scenarios

The final five scenarios presented incidents where the student repurposed work or engaged in some level of patchwriting. Repurposing scenarios included the use of the student's previous work made to fit his current assessment task or the repurposing of another's work, such as that of a friend enrolled in the course during a previous semester. It can be argued that recycling one's own work is not a true instance of *third-party* writing assistance. After all, the assistance in completing the student's current assessment derives from his previous assessment, not someone else's work. Inclusion of such a scenario in the current study was, however, warranted. With contentions among scholars around the acceptability of reusing text from one's previous writing in published research (Horbach & Halffman, 2019), doing so has been considered favourable by some and self-plagiarism by others. Research indicates that even though reusing assessments is often not permitted by universities (Halupa, 2019), students do not always consider activities like recycling

previously submitted work unacceptable (Bokosmaty et al., 2019; Ehrich et al., 2016; Palmer et al., 2019). Other scenarios of patchwriting presented the utilisation of technological aids like a file sharing site, a phrasebank of expressions or wordings common to scholarly writing, or a thesaurus/synonym replacer tool. These scenarios were included since some researchers argue that activities involving patchwriting are not wholly unreasonable given the developmental process of learning to write (Howard, 1993, 1995; Jamieson & Howard, 2013; Pecorari, 2003).

3.2.4 Track I: Student Interviews

The study's use of qualitative interviews is based on the belief that focused and direct communication with individuals offers access to their perspective of certain situations, environments, experiences in their own words—on a deeper and more detailed level than other methods can achieve (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2018; Rubin & Rubin, 2005). For this project, interviews were semi-structured and included the same two parts: an interactive exercise and a set of standard questions. These two parts of the interview schedule were based on the study's original set of scenarios covering different third-party writing assistance activities. The full set included 24 cards, each of which described a hypothetical but true-to-life situation in which a student sought and received some form of assistance during the process of writing a required assessment (specifically, a 4000-word research paper) for a university course. Smaller subsets of cards were used during interviews, allowing for more time to be spent discussing the various situations presented. These subsets were grouped according to similarities within the described situations. This grouping was used to help provide space for the possibility of any variances that might exist between similar activities that might seem only slight in difference.

At the start of each interview, the participants reviewed a subset (containing either four or five scenarios) of laminated cards and categorised the cards according to their own ideas about each activity's level of acceptability. Students were asked to identify the scenarios they deemed as *acceptable*, those that they considered *unacceptable*, or those they were *not sure* about, thus indeterminable. Following this short exercise, the participants were then asked a set of open-ended questions. The questions elicited participants' views about what aspects of the scenarios signified acceptability, in other words: what features of the specific activities presented in the scenarios did the participant identify as details that influenced their labelling of the scenarios as appropriate (or inappropriate) ways to conduct the writing process. Other questions sought to gather participants' reflections on any personal experiences similar to the scenarios. Providing participants the opportunity to discuss their experiences can provide insight into their *reconstruction* (Bearman, 2019) of events and allows researchers to delve further into a participant's perceptions and what helps create these perceptions. Student participants were also asked to discuss their ideas about motivations behind engaging in the activities presented in the scenario cards. The questions in this part of the interview, however, were not posed solely based on the disclosure of personal experiences. Participants were also encouraged to discuss their ideas about the motivations behind other students' engagement in such activities, be it actual (instances known to them) or potential (circumstances or reasons the participant thought were likely motivational factors).

In addition to the scenario card categorisation and discussion portion of the interview, each interview included an inquiry into participants' conceptualisations of plagiarism. Participants were asked to speak about how they define plagiarism and their

perceptions of any similarities or differences between plagiarism and the set of scenarios. The semi-structured nature of the interview schedule allowed for additional, unscripted questions that typically developed from follow-up questions and probes designed to reach deeper into initially provided responses. As a result, all participants were asked the planned schedule of questions, but most participants were also asked additional questions which were not uniformly asked of other participants.

Student Recruitment

Track I of the study relied on voluntary participation of current undergraduate students enrolled in an academic programme at a university in Aotearoa New Zealand. A combination of tactics was used to advertise the study and recruit students. Initial recruitment efforts consisted of targeting students in specific on-campus courses at Massey University (herein referred to as Massey). To maximise reach to participants, courses with large enrolment counts were selected across a wide range of disciplines. During the first weeks of both Semester 1 and Semester 2, the researcher visited business courses, sciences courses, and a compulsory core course for all students earning a Bachelor of Arts. A concise one-minute presentation informed students about the study, what participating in the study involved, and the researcher's contact details.

In addition to in-person class visits, a flyer was used to announce the call for participants. The flyer provided a brief introduction on the study, listed the eligibility criteria for participants, and included a QR code and email address to contact for full details. A digital version of the flyer was sent to Massey lecturers with a request to distribute the information within their on-campus and distance courses. The lecturers were also asked to share the flyer with colleagues who taught at other tertiary institutions within Aotearoa New

Zealand. This same digital flyer was also posted online via university social media (including a university's student association) and multiple public and private Facebook groups created by and for university students in Aotearoa New Zealand. Paper flyers were displayed in numerous locations across Massey's Manawatū campus. Through all these efforts, students were invited to contact the researcher via a study email address with their interest in participating in a 30- to 45-minute interview.

Interview Procedure

All emails received from students expressing their interest in participating were sent a reply seeking to confirm the student's eligibility (through a few short questions) and instructions to review an attached Study Info Sheet. Students were asked to respond with any questions about the study or the process of participating. After any such questions were answered and the student agreed to participate, a day and time for their interview was scheduled. Those with in-person interviews were sent a meeting reminder two days prior to their scheduled appointment; those with virtual interviews were sent a meeting reminder containing a Zoom URL and password the day before their interview.

At the start of each interview the researcher once again provided the student with the Study Info Sheet. This step was done to ensure that the student had read the information. It also served as another opportunity to review, with the researcher, the section outlining participant rights. Students then had another chance to ask any questions they had about participating. Once all questions were answered, explicit consent was obtained via a formal informed consent form and the student became a participant. This form included dedicated areas for consent to be recorded and for consent to the data being archived for future use.

After their interview, each student participant was given the opportunity to choose a pseudonym for use in the reporting of findings. Most participants provided a false name. For those who were uninterested or unwilling to choose a name themselves, the researcher assigned a pseudonym. This assignment was based on the self-reported ethnicity and/or nationality of the participant cross-referenced with a public list of common first names according to gender and country (*List of Most Popular Given Names, 2021*).

The researcher transcribed each interview, and each participant was given the opportunity to review the transcript from their individual interview. This step in the process provided participants the chance to read and amend the transcript, within reason, to ensure that the discussion was accurately transcribed. No participants had questions or comments about their transcript. Participants were also asked to supply their consent for the transcribed interview to be included in the research, by signing a standard Authority for Release consent form. This specific consent form affirmed that a participant permitted the researcher to use the information documented in the interview transcript as part of the research and any subsequent reports or publications.

Transcripts were then prepped for uploading into NVivo where a project file was created to hold all qualitative data for the study. Reformatting changes included replacing participant ID numbers with pseudonyms, adjusting to paragraph style spacing with uniform headings specific to scenario sets used and speakers' names, and the removal of page numbers. Most of this was done to facilitate the software automatically creating a code for which scenario set was used during each interview. Similarly, the participant demographic data file was reformatted for uploading into NVivo. Data were cleaned to ensure uniformity in responses (spelling, capitalisation, etc.) and recodes were done for both

the ethnicity variable and the first-generation variable. Variable names were renamed to reflect the question-form of the data point.

Interview Data Analysis

The qualitative data collected through track I were analysed and interpreted through an inductive identification of themes based on recurring points in students' responses about level of acceptability, notions about what aspects indicate unacceptability, and ideas about motivating factors of engagement. Braun and Clarke (2006) contend that this 'identifying, analysing, and reporting [of] patterns' (p. 79) across a dataset—commonly referred to as thematic analysis—is robust enough to produce thick and rich descriptions and interpretations of participant perceptions (Lochmiller, 2021). Thematic analysis was used because, as a tool for organising, examining, and interpreting data, it provides a researcher the flexibility to use the process as a guide rather than requiring adherence to a specific theoretical underpinning (King & Brooks, 2018) or a rigid order of steps (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Since thematic analysis is not tied to one particular philosophy (Braun & Clarke, 2022; Clarke & Braun, 2017; King & Brooks, 2018), its flexibility is similar to that of pragmatism, thus well suited for the qualitative piece of a mixed method study.

The analysis procedure applied to the study's qualitative data was based in generic thematic analysis (King & Brooks, 2018) and incorporated the use of a simple codebook as well as the creation of data visualisations per Attride-Stirling's (2001) thematic networks approach. The analysis occurred in five phases: familiarisation with the data; coding of the data, including the documentation of codes in a codebook; reviewing and revising of codes;

categorising the codes; and generating themes, through the development of thematic networks.

The familiarisation phase started during the preparation of the transcripts for use within NVivo and continued with the reading and rereading of each document once it was a file housed in NVivo. This phase of analysis is common across most versions of thematic analysis (e.g., Braun & Clarke, 2012; Braun & Clarke, 2013; Brooks et al., 2015; Lochmiller, 2021; Maguire & Delahunt, 2017), underscoring the importance of developing an intimate knowledge of the data—in this case, the textual record of what participants spoke about during their interview.

The coding phase was inductive, with codes created directly from the data and exhaustive, with the entire dataset reviewed. All the text within each transcript was coded, following Saldaña's (2021) recommendation that researchers new to qualitative research code all collected data. Coding everything in the transcripts helped ensure rigour in the initial step of this phase since the effort itself produced a thorough review of the data regardless of any initial assumptions of relevance to the study's focus. To track the development of codes, a codebook was made. As they were created, the name and description of each code was added to the codebook. This codebook was not used to restrict the number of codes developed nor dictate the use of an initial set of codes be applied to subsequent textual segments of data. Rather, it was used as a repository of the growing collection of codes made during reviews of each transcript. Serving as a reminder of what codes were established and how they were applied to the dataset, this pragmatic tool helped maintain consistency during the rigorous task of coding.

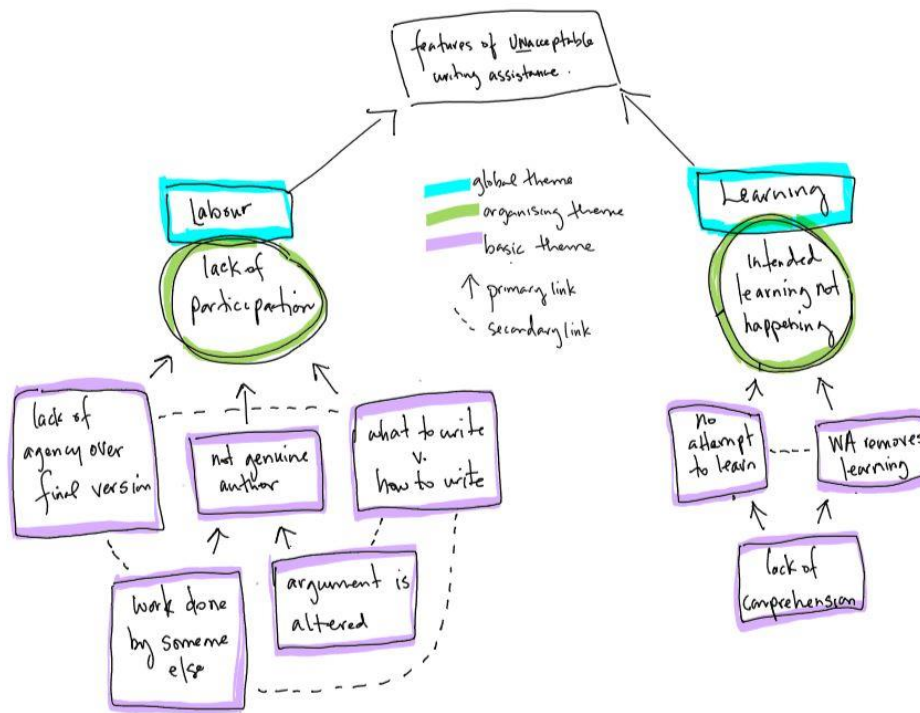
Following this primary coding phase was a review of all the codes. During this process, codes were revisited to check for duplication or instances where multiple codes essentially conveyed the same idea and tagged the same segments of data. Other situations that led to revisions of the coding during this review phase were instances where the overlap between a pair of codes was too great, multiple versions of the same code existed, or where there were misallocations of codes. This phase resulted in 361 codes, most of which appeared pertinent to one or more of the study's main research questions. Others were set aside for most of the analysis (e.g., the code 'fillers' which was used to tag words or vocalisations used to fill space like, 'um', 'er', 'hmm').

A categorisation task was done to make the large set of codes more manageable during interpretation to generate themes. Using the study's three main research questions as a basic structure, the codes were grouped together based on their relation to the questions: ideas about writing assistance and plagiarism (referred to as conceptions), views on acceptability of third-party writing assistance scenarios (acceptability), and ideas about possible motivational factors leading to the use of third-party writing assistance (motivations). These groups were not mutually exclusive since some codes related to more than one research question area and were placed in multiple groups. However, the categorisation of codes allowed for the large collection of codes to be organised into three smaller collections. Having these three question-based categories made further analysis more manageable. Each category listed the relevant codes (much less than the full set of 361) for review when building themes related to each of the research questions. The conceptions category included 53 codes, the acceptability category held 86 codes, and 97 codes were in

the motivations category. Each collection of codes was reviewed, with codes being revised (combined or connected) as the analysis continued.

The codes within each of the three categories were reviewed for patterns that indicated shared meaning and were interpreted as central concepts, or themes. The construction of maps, or thematic networks (Attride-Stirling, 2001), was used to determine not only the themes themselves, but also the structure and relationship between themes. Basic themes were identified based on the interpretation of commonly mentioned ideas present in the codes. These basic themes were then reviewed and grouped by organising themes. Encompassing a set of basic themes, organising themes presented broader concepts and provided structure to the story forming from the data. A review of the organising themes then led to the development of a global theme that served to present an overarching assertion based on the previous two levels of themes. The task of making a thematic network, essentially a visual representation of codes and themes, aided in interpreting the data. This entire process was done for each of the three categories: conceptions, acceptability, and motivations. Included here as an example, Figure 2 displays an early draft of the thematic network built during the analysis of the acceptability category of codes.

Figure 2: Thematic Network for Students' Acceptability Views



3.2.5 Track II: Staff Survey

While the primary method of the project was qualitative, an element of quantitative data collection was incorporated to provide numerically measurable insights into the views and beliefs of teaching staff. The inclusion of quantifiable responses from these individuals was designed to supplement the information gathered from the interviews with students. The survey included the exact same scenarios as those used in student interviews. Survey respondents were asked to rate the acceptability of each scenario on a five-point Likert scale, as well as identify aspects that they thought signified the acceptability of the described writing assistance activities in each scenario. These data were intended to serve as insight into the standpoint of academics in the same university community as student participants, collected to help contextualise the data provided by students; it also provided opportunities

to converge the role-based sets of data, comparing and contrasting findings from the two groups.

A small pilot test was conducted on the instrument to check readability, ensure functionality of display/skip logic, and confirm comprehensiveness of response options. The ten volunteer respondents included teaching staff from various disciplines, staff serving on Massey's Academic Integrity Committee, and two PhD students with teaching experience—a native English-speaker who completed undergraduate studies in Aotearoa New Zealand and a non-native English speaker who completed undergraduate studies in Iran. The feedback received during this pilot informed the revision of the instrument prior to its distribution to potential study participants.

Teaching Staff Recruitment

For track II, current Massey staff were sent an email about the research study; the message was a call for survey participants and included basic information about the study, the researcher, and a direct link to the online survey. Staff who worked in some type of teaching capacity were recruited, with a focus on individuals teaching within the College of Humanities and Social Sciences, College of Health, College of Sciences, and the Business School. Snowball recruiting was also used. Massey staff were asked to share the survey link with any higher education colleagues in Aotearoa New Zealand they felt might be interested in contributing responses to the survey.

Survey Procedure

The survey was built in Qualtrics and distributed using an anonymous link sent in the aforementioned message to university staff. The email was initially distributed April

2021 and then followed by reminder requests in both May and July 2021. The survey was made available to potential respondents mid-April 2021 and remained open for 17 weeks. The survey was closed 31 August 2021.

The survey included the initial Study Info and consent section, a section with questions pertaining to plagiarism, a section containing the 24 scenarios and related subsequent questions, and a demographics section at the end of the survey. The scenarios section of the instrument was divided into two separate blocks, both containing 12 scenarios. This block structure was used to collect responses about all 24 scenarios while allowing for a shorter time to completion, thus potentially reducing respondent fatigue (Ben-Nun, 2008). A randomisation element within the display logic of the survey ensured that respondents were presented with one of the two scenario set blocks at random. The element also ensured that each block was presented evenly among the entire respondent group. Respondents were asked to rate a scenario and, depending on their response, indicate in a subsequent question any reasons for their rating. The response options for these subsequent questions were based on literature about staff's views on writing activities and student conduct. Respondents could select multiple response options in the event they had multiple reasons behind their rating of a scenario. Each of these questions also included an *other* option with a write-in field in case respondents wanted to provide an answer that was not covered by the provided list of response options.

The route for obtaining informed consent from survey participants was different to that used with interview participants. The variation in process was due to the nature of the anonymous survey since the use of a separate informed consent form would in effect identify an otherwise anonymous respondent. An implied consent procedure was therefore

used, with the submission of a survey indicating consent to be involved in the study. To ensure staff participants understood this agreement, a clear statement explaining that submission included consent appeared in the introductory Study Information section at the beginning of the survey. Using this type of consent served as an appropriate way of ensuring informed agreement to participate while also maintaining the concealment of the participant's identity.

Survey Data Analysis

Survey data from track II were analysed both quantitatively and qualitatively depending on question format and data variables. Analysis of the larger quantitative portion of the survey data focused on descriptive information, with particular attention paid to the acceptability ratings of scenarios and the frequency of reasons for these acceptability ratings. In addition, a content analysis was conducted on the smaller collection of open-ended survey questions. Differing from the thematic analysis done with the interview data in track I, this content analysis was a more surface-level review done to quantify the narrative responses to select questions about the notion of plagiarism.

Both Microsoft Excel and the statistical analysis programme SPSS were used to examine the data collected from survey participants. After the survey was closed to respondents, the full dataset was exported from Qualtrics and imported into SPSS. Once in SPSS, the dataset was cleaned to identify inaccuracies, correct typographical errors, and ensure uniformity with response options. Data transformation, such as recalculations of variables, was also done during initial review of the dataset. The frequencies of ratings were determined for each scenario, providing the percentage of respondents who believed the scenario was fully acceptable, somewhat acceptable, somewhat unacceptable, fully

unacceptable, a case of not sure, or a case of it depends. This five-point scale for acceptability was also aggregated to reflect a three-point scale: *acceptable*, *unacceptable*, and *not sure/it depends*. Nonparametric tests were run on select demographic variables to determine if any statistically significant associations were present in respondents' scenario acceptability ratings. Frequencies of multiple response questions were also calculated to obtain the counts and percentages of respondents' reasons why a scenario was given its acceptability rating. This calculation was done for each scenario as well as across the full set of scenarios.

In addition to the numeric-based data, open-ended responses were imported into NVivo to aid with a frequency-focused content analysis. In particular, the survey item requesting respondents provide their definition of plagiarism was inductively coded according to the recurrence of concepts within the answers. Queries within NVivo, including text search, word clouds, and hierarchy charts, aided with this review of data. The analysis revealed both the most discussed aspects of respondents' ideas about what plagiarism was and provided frequency counts for each aspect identified via the coding.

3.3 The Research Setting

To provide important context to the environment in which the study was conducted, this section offers a brief overview of higher education within Aotearoa New Zealand and the universities' academic integrity policies. In 1870 the University of New Zealand was created as the sole degree-granting body over an existing university and three subsequently established colleges in the country. In the early 1960s these colleges became independent universities autonomously granting undergraduate, graduate, and postgraduate level qualifications (Universities New Zealand – Te Pōkai Tara, n.d.). Additional public

universities were established through the years. Today there are eight universities in Aotearoa New Zealand. According to official government statistics, there were 177,495 students attending these universities in 2022; over 68% of these students were enrolled in bachelor-level programmes (Education Counts, 2023).

The universities in Aotearoa New Zealand address plagiarism in official academic integrity and academic misconduct policies. These documents typically include a definition of plagiarism and list activities the institution treats as plagiarism, along with other acts deemed breaches of conduct (Möller, 2022). In relation to third-party writing assistance, activities like academic ghostwriting, contract cheating, resubmission of peers' assessments, and other versions of obtaining and submitting assessments completely outsourced, are labelled in policy as misconduct and not permitted. Other forms of third-party writing assistance, however, are rarely as visible in academic integrity policy. For example, situations in which a student uses a professional editor to aid in revision of text or an online phrasing tool are not always explicitly addressed in these formal policy documents. Individuals' awareness or understanding of university policy was beyond the scope of the current study. This information is provided here as context for the environment in which the participants operate in their roles as either students or staff.

3.3.1 Ethical Considerations

As with any fair and conscientious research that depends on human subjects, the current study adhered to ethical principles established to protect all parties involved. In accordance with the requirements set by Massey's Code of Ethical Conduct (2017) for research involving human participants, the researcher submitted a risk assessment to the

institution's Research Ethics Office. The project was considered low risk, and therefore exempt from a full review by Massey's Human Ethics Committee. Nevertheless, an application for full review was submitted. Preparing for, and submitting to, a complete assessment by the Committee served as an opportunity for practical research training; the involvement with formal ethics procedures at the institutional level provided important exposure and further experience to the complete research study process. The study gained full approval from the Ethics Committee December 2020 (refer to Appendix A). The remainder of this section presents the ethical considerations addressed for this project.

Data Security

Confidentiality of participant information was maintained throughout the study. Interview data used pseudonyms to conceal identities. Survey responses were not linked to any participant contact details. No real names or identifying characteristics of individual participants were included in this document nor any other related report or presentation of the research.

Both survey and interview data were kept in a secure electronic location, with password-protected access limited to the researcher. Specifically, survey data were housed in Qualtrics within the researcher's individual account on the institution's secure server. The import and output of data, using Microsoft Excel and SPSS, during the analysis stage of the research was conducted with an adherence to data security procedures. Audio recordings from interviews were housed in password-protected folders on the researcher's network drive space on a computer in a university office with restricted access. Likewise, interview transcripts and related notes were also kept in password-protected folders before being imported into NVivo for analysis on the same restricted-access computer. Encrypted backup

versions of both survey and interview data were housed on an external drive as well as a cloud-based storage space accessible to only the researcher. Archived data retained for future research, completely de-identified, was encrypted and password-protected on an external drive. Scanned copies of in-person interview informed consent forms and the electronic forms from online interviews were retained in a password-protected folder, separate from project data. All data from the one participant who did not consent to data archiving will be securely destroyed at the end of the 7-year retention period as stipulated by section 13 of the General Disposal Authority (Massey University, n.d.).

Minimising the Risks

While the study was designed with a conscious effort to reduce or eliminate harm to participants, there were potential minor risks in involvement. As common with all research conducted with human participants, there existed the possible risk of a leak in identifiable information. For example, the demographic information provided by students and staff could pose a risk of identification in the event of a confidentiality breach. However, given the anonymous nature of the survey as well as the measures in place to secure all forms of data, such a breach was highly unlikely.

A risk particular to interview participants was the possibility for discomfort or a sense of distress while discussing activities that could be considered socially undesirable or morally inappropriate, like seeking help with writing or engaging in potentially plagiaristic activities. This risk was one of the reasons the study's interview schedule was designed around a set of fictionalised scenarios. Using these hypothetical scenarios served as a gentler entrance to discussing experiences, as opposed to starting interviews with direct questions about personal actions or behaviours. Structuring interviews around scenarios offered a way

to learn about students' perceptions and beliefs while reducing discomfort in those less inclined to share when directly asked to divulge specific personal incidents—which may be interpreted as confronting (Jenkins et al., 2010). An additional planned measure to lessen uneasiness in the event a participant was distressed by a specific scenario, was to substitute the problematic scenario with an alternative scenario.

Cultural Matters

Given the location of this project, in Aotearoa New Zealand, ethical principles of the indigenous culture were considered during the development and implementation of the study. A Māori Cultural Advisor was consulted during the design and ethical review phases of the study. The researcher received advice regarding cultural consciousness and a provision for further guidance if needed throughout the duration of the study. Having expert advice helped ensure that the project was culturally responsive and that it maintained the cultural safety of participants.

As a matter of respect, the project was devised to adhere to ethical research values based on principles implicit in Te Tiriti o Waitangi, the Treaty of Waitangi. The notion of he kanohi kitea, or the importance of meeting people face to face (Smith, 2005), was embedded in the recruitment and interviewing of students. The researcher visited classrooms during lecture sessions, giving a short talk that introduced the research and requested participation from interested students. Interviews with students were conducted in-person or online via a video conferencing application, starting again with an introduction of the researcher and the study before moving into reviewing the necessary paperwork (i.e., study information and informed consent documents).

A number of Māori values, including manaakitanga⁴, aroha ki te tangata⁵, and kaula e mahaki⁶, were incorporated into the study with the aim of maintaining a polite, open, respectful, and astute presence—free of arrogance and judgement—whilst seeking and receiving information from participants (Smith, 2005). The project, though, was not specifically situated within Te Ao Māori since it used a mainstream approach with all forms of recruitment, informed consent, and data collection appropriate for all participants regardless of ethnic or cultural identities. Inherent in this inclusive approach existed the potential that the study’s participant population could include students or staff who happened to identify as Māori. In anticipation of this possibility, the study’s Māori Cultural Advisor agreed to serve as a resource for any participants who made a request to be connected to Māori support. At no point in the study, however, did a participant express a desire for such support.

3.4 Chapter Summary

This chapter presented an in-depth review of the research design and methods employed in the study. Designed according to a pragmatic research stance, the study was constructed with a focus on practicality and intent to use methods considered most appropriate to address the research questions. The convergent mixed method design allowed for two parallel tracks of data collection and analysis to be concurrently and independently conducted, prior to an examination integrating the data from both tracks.

⁴ Manaakitanga describes being hospitable, generous, and ‘careful how others are treated’ (Mead, 2003, p. 29, as cited in Woller, 2013).

⁵ Aroha ki te tangata is having respect for people (Cram, 2001).

⁶ Kaula e mahaki refers to being humble and sharing knowledge without boasting or flaunting (Cram, 2001).

Track I was the use of semi-structured interviews with undergraduate students. This method provided a largely qualitative dataset. Track II was an online and anonymous survey of university teaching staff that resulted in a largely quantitative dataset. This chapter also outlined how, and why, the study methods were used. Next, a set of findings chapters present the results obtained using these study methods. Chapter Four describes what was discovered through the student interviews and Chapter Five provides the results of the staff survey. Later, Chapter Six combines these two sets of results in a discussion about the convergences and divergences within the integrated dataset.

CHAPTER FOUR | STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF THIRD-PARTY WRITING ASSISTANCE SCENARIOS AND PLAGIARISM

This chapter details the results from the semi-structured qualitative interviews with 20 undergraduate students. To offer insight into who this group of students were, the chapter first presents the demographic characteristics of the interviewed participants. As noted in Chapter Three, interviews consisted of a scenario rating exercise and a subsequent discussion regarding the participants' beliefs and perceptions about third-party writing assistance activities and plagiarism. Based on this interview structure, the empirical findings are presented in separate sections. An initial section sets the stage for what was generated during analysis by introducing three notable findings. These include the themes of labour and learning in unacceptable scenarios, the conception of plagiarism as textual similarity, and the belief that unacceptable writing assistance was not always tantamount to plagiarism. There are then two, more detailed, sections that report the findings according to the two parts of the interviews. Section 4.3 presents the results from the scenario rating exercise each student participant completed at the beginning of their interview. Section 4.4 delves into the results from the thematic analysis conducted on the discussions that took place during these interviews, offering a deeper examination of the data on which the notable findings were developed.

Because of the perception that a rating of unacceptable was not always commensurate with plagiarism, findings related to the concept of plagiarism comprise a separate section. The chapter's fifth section focuses on the students' ideas about plagiarism; it includes participants' considerations of plagiarism as a moral issue and their constructions

of plagiarism as replicating, not acknowledging, and appropriating source materials. Also discussed in the section are the specific scenarios rated as unacceptable that were also considered plagiarism by students, which were more often connected to ideas of labour than learning. Finally, section 4.6 details the three most discussed motivational factors interviewed participants believed could lead to students undertaking the activities described in the scenarios—providing further insight into how students conceptualise third-party writing assistance and plagiarism.

4.1 Demographic Characteristics of Interviewed Students

A total of 20 undergraduate students were individually interviewed for the study. These participants were mostly on-campus second-year students who were working towards a bachelor-level degree. The most common primary disciplines of study among them were within the natural sciences, business, and social sciences. Interview participants ranged in age from 19 to 44, with half reporting an ethnicity of New Zealand European⁷. Table 1 details the demographic backgrounds of each student participant.

⁷ Ethnicity classification was based on the ethnic groups used by the Aotearoa New Zealand Census in 2023. New Zealand European refers to people of European decent (including, but not limited to, English, Irish, and Dutch).

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Students

Pseudonym	Age	Gender	Ethnicity	Study Year	Study Mode ^a	(Primary) Discipline
Willow	29	Female	European - New Zealand	2	OC	Veterinary Science
Harry	20	Male	European - Canadian	2	OC	Veterinary Science
George	37	Male	European - New Zealand	2	OC	Business
Abby	29	Female	European - American	2	OC	Veterinary Science
Phil	19	Male	European - New Zealand	2	OC	Business
Ava	26	Female	European - New Zealand	2	OC	Business
Hao	20	Male	Asian - Chinese	2	OC	Education
Emily	22	Female	European - New Zealand	3	OC	Accountancy
Violet	20	Female	European - New Zealand	2	OC	Business
Chih-ming	29	Male	Asian - Chinese	2	OC	Veterinary Science
Jeannie	19	Female	Asian - Chinese	2	OC	Business
Adrian	18	Male	European - New Zealand	2	OC	Psychology ^b
Liv	28	Female	European - Australian	2	OC	Veterinary Science
Mateo	37	Male	Māori	2	OC	History
Alex	19	Female	European - New Zealand	2	OC	Engineering
Isla	43	Female	European - New Zealand	2	OC	Aviation Management
Jill	44	Female	Māori	3	Dist	History
Zoe	42	Female	Asian - Chinese	2	Dist	Educational Psychology
Harriet	19	Female	European - New Zealand	1	OC	Educational Psychology ^c
Ji-woo	20	Female	Asian - Korean	3	OC	Veterinary Science

^aStudy Mode: OC = on-campus; Dist = distance (online)

^bAdrian also studies Computer Science

^cHarriet also studies Criminology and Political Science

4.2 Notable Findings About Students' Views

4.2.1 Unacceptability of Writing Assistance was Based on Ideas About Labour and Learning

Examining interview participants' conceptions across the entire set of scenarios led to the identification of two main lenses through which observations of third-party writing assistance were viewed by students: labour and learning. The labour lens largely focused on how much effort a student invested into their writing assessment indicating the student's contribution to the writing. Considering the assistance through this lens included participant views that were generally focused on issues of participation, agency, and authorship. The learning lens specifically related to the acquisition of knowledge or skills. Perceptions about writing assistance from this lens were exhibited by participants who were focused on whether a writing assistance activity provided an opportunity for learning, the student made an attempt to learn, and if understanding or comprehension was gained via the assistance. The manifestation of these two drivers of perspective was evident in participants' explanations for why they considered various situations of third-party writing assistance acceptable or unacceptable. Perceptions of unacceptability based upon insufficient labour were seen in participants' constructions of plagiarism, more so than the absence of learning. Participants' beliefs about what likely motivated students to use writing assistance (both activities deemed acceptable and unacceptable) also reflected this labour lens.

4.2.2 Conception of Plagiarism was Linked to Notions of Replication and Textual

Similarity

Overall, participants understood plagiarism as the use of someone else's work, often without properly citing the original source of the work, and sometimes deliberately taking credit for this work as one's own. The most commonly held notion regarding plagiarism, though, was the idea that plagiarism was copying—either exact replication of others' work or use of text that was too similar to the original source. This view was often explicit in participants' definitions of what the term plagiarism represented to them. Cutting and pasting text, directly copying someone else's work, using words from a source and only changing one or two were examples participants described when asked to define plagiarism. Sometimes an understanding of plagiarism that was built upon ideas about replication appeared to play a part in how participants perceived unacceptable forms of third-party writing assistance.

4.2.3 Unacceptable Writing Assistance was Not Always Tantamount to Plagiarism

The interviews with participants revealed that perceiving a writing assistance scenario as unacceptable did not always mean it was believed to be an act of plagiarism. While much of the time unacceptable and plagiarism were considered congruently, more than a quarter of the time participants rated a scenario as unacceptable but also provided an explanation as to why the activity was not, in their opinion, plagiarism. Some forms of third-party writing assistance were thought of as unacceptable activities to do during the process of composing an assessment but did not conform to participants' definitions of plagiarism. This was the case for four scenarios that involved some form of editing, three that involved

repurposing, one collaborating scenario, and one ghostwriting scenario—all of which had at least one participant who rated the situation as unacceptable but did not think it was plagiarism.

Sometimes this distinction between unacceptable and plagiarism was due to participants' conception of plagiarism as direct replication of text. Examples include writing assistance that took the form of using a peer's paper as an exemplar and rewriting every sentence into a new assessment, and using an online tool to provide common phrases or synonyms for select words. These instances were deemed unacceptable by some participants based on their view that the student was not putting forth enough effort to craft his own writing. But they did not believe these activities were plagiarism. The participants' constructions of plagiarism were based on the replication of others' words, often thought of in terms of text similarity. According to these participants even though the student used a less than acceptable form of writing assistance, if the resulting assessment did not use the exact words of a source or reference then it was not a direct copy of text, thus it could not be considered plagiarism.

Among participants who viewed writing assistance unacceptability through a lens focused on the lack of intended learning, there were some who felt scenarios were unacceptable but reasoned that this did not mean the writing assistance was an instance of plagiarism. For example, a few participants felt that situations in which the student did not understand the reason behind corrections made during the writing assistance meant the assistance was not acceptable. This lack of learning, however, did not connect to their idea of plagiarism. The participants voiced concerns about the assistance not improving the

student's comprehension, but they explained that this only made the situation detrimental to the student's academic growth; it did not constitute plagiarism.

4.3 Students' Ratings of Acceptability of Writing Assistance Scenarios

Each interview started with the interactive exercise of rating each scenario within a set of four or five situations of writing assistance⁸. Participants were asked to review and categorise the scenarios according to their ideas about the situations' acceptability—whether they considered the activities or practices as appropriate in a student's writing process and production of an assessment. Ratings were *acceptable*, *unacceptable*, or *not sure* (for instances they felt too uncertain to determine as acceptable or unacceptable). Ratings were typically determined by participants as they categorised the scenarios during the exercise at the start of their interview, prior to any follow-up discussion about their perceptions of the activities described in the scenarios. There were, however, occasions where participants' responses to interview questions led them to reconsider their initial rating choices. In reality, the collection of acceptability ratings and individual beliefs and attitudes about the situational features of the scenarios were intertwined in the entire interview, during the rating exercise as well as during the discussion resulting from the semi-structured questions. Participants had access to the laminated scenario cards throughout the interview, allowing for rereading of the described events as they thought through their responses to questions.

⁸ As outlined in Chapter Three, the 20 student participants were given at least one set of scenarios to review, rate, and discuss. Each set included either four or five scenarios of writing assistance.

Also presented in this section are the main reasons participants gave for why they assigned the ratings they did. These data derived from the questions asked after participants completed the scenario rating exercise at the beginning of their interview. Later, in section 4.4, these reasons are discussed in more detail through an interpretive thematic analysis into what participants believed made the third-party writing assistance activities unacceptable. The tables in this section provide each scenario number and exact description of the activity, followed by the count and percentage of participants who considered the scenario *acceptable*, *not sure*, or *unacceptable*. The results are organised by the subsets used to group scenarios during the interviews: collaborating, editing, ghostwriting, and repurposing. A combined table displaying all scenarios listed in order ranging from unanimously acceptable to unanimously unacceptable can be found in Appendix J.

Two main drivers of perspectives emerged from participants' ratings and their explanations for the ratings: one focused on labour and another focused on learning. Both views appeared to shape participants' perceptions about the acceptability of various scenarios of third-party writing assistance. These viewpoints are mentioned within the presentation of acceptability ratings of each subset of scenarios through examples of participants' reasonings for assigned ratings. The connection between labour or learning views and participants ideas about writing assistance are, however, examined more deeply in the subsequent section 4.4 describing the thematic findings regarding participants' perceptions about situational features that indicate a third-party writing assistance activity as unacceptable.

4.3.1 Ghostwriting Scenarios

Of all the subsets of third-party writing assistance situations, the ghostwriting scenarios were most often considered unacceptable by participants. As seen in Table 2, four of the five scenarios were unanimously deemed *unacceptable*. The remaining scenario was also largely agreed upon as a situation that was not acceptable, but it was not uniformly considered unacceptable, receiving one rating of *not sure*. These results indicate that participants were largely in agreement as to the unacceptability of the ghostwriting scenarios. They were also largely in agreement about the reason why the scenarios were unacceptable.

Table 2: Students' Ratings of Ghostwriting Scenarios

No.	Scenario	Acceptable		Not sure		Unacceptable	
		C	%	C	%	C	%
VII	Renier gets a paper written by someone he does not know from a website. He purchases the paper and pays through the website.	0	0	0	0	4	100
XI	Renier gets a paper written by his friend who owes him a favour. He did not pay for the paper.	0	0	0	0	4	100
XV	Renier gets a paper written by someone he does not know from a website. He did not pay for the paper.	0	0	0	0	4	100
II	Renier starts writing but feels he cannot seem to get going. He takes what he has written to a friend and asks them for help. The friend corrects the spelling, grammar, and sentence structure of what Renier wrote. The friend also writes additional sections of the paper for Renier.	0	0	0	0	4	100
III	Renier copies a passage from a journal and pastes it into a paraphrase tool website, like Quillbot, that then provides a paraphrased version of the original text. Renier puts this paraphrased text in his paper and cites the original reference according to APA style.	0	0	1	25	3	75

Participants believed it was important that an assessment be the student's own work—something that was genuinely authored by the student. Among all the scenarios in this subset, participants were concerned about the lack of contribution put forth by the student to produce his own writing. Situations where the student had used third-party writing assistance to write part, or all, of his assessment for him meant that the student had not done the labour of writing the assessment. Without the student investing that effort and authoring the work himself, the writing assistance could not be considered an acceptable practice.

In this subset of scenarios there was no disagreement about the scenarios being not acceptable, although one participant did voice uncertainty regarding whether scenario III should be considered wholly unacceptable. While acknowledging that the activity described insufficient effort from the student to write the assessment and noting their belief that this aspect was unacceptable, the perception that scenario III was less serious and 'not quite as bad' (Phil) as the other scenarios led the participant to rate the situation as *not sure*.

4.3.2 Collaborating Scenarios

Regarding situations involving activities of collaboration (refer to Table 3), participants agreed on the acceptability of three scenarios. As seen in the discussions about ghostwriting scenarios, participants considered the apparent amount of labour the student exerted in authoring the assessment in their determination of scenario acceptability. The universal rating of scenario XXIV as *unacceptable* and scenario XXII as *acceptable* were based on participants' belief that a student should be the one writing their work. Additionally, most participants believed the focus of the alterations coming out of a writing assistance activity could also dictate acceptability. Scenarios XIII and XXII included

assistance in the form of alterations to matters of writing mechanics (e.g., spelling, grammar, punctuation), which participants generally considered as reasonable and appropriate help.

Table 3: Students' Ratings of Collaborating Scenarios

No.	Scenario	Acceptable		Not sure		Unacceptable	
		C	%	C	%	C	%
XXII	Renier drafts a paper and asks a friend to proofread it. The friend reviews his paper and circles all the spelling and grammatical errors that Renier should correct, as well as offering ideas on additional content to support Renier's argument in the paper. Renier goes through and makes changes to his paper, correcting errors and adding supporting information his friend told him about.	4	100	0	0	0	0
XII	Renier starts writing his paper and asks for help from his father. Renier and his father talk about Renier's ideas for the paper, including topic choice, organisation, and possible references. Renier reflects upon the discussion with his father and returns to writing his paper.	3	75	1	25	0	0
XIII	Renier and a classmate get together to work on their papers. They discuss their topics and ideas about what to write. They share references. They draft their papers independently and review each other's work making corrections to spelling and grammar.	3	75	0	0	1	25
XXI	Renier asks to see a classmate's paper to get an idea about what they are expected to do for the assessment. The classmate provides their paper to Renier to review. Later, Renier writes his own paper based on what he liked and remembered from the classmate's paper.	2	50	0	0	2	50
XXIV	Renier and a classmate get together to work on their papers. They divide up the task between themselves, with Renier writing his sections and the classmate writing their sections. They then combine the sections into one paper, each editing their own copy.	0	0	0	0	4	100

Disagreement among participants regarding acceptability was most apparent with scenario XXI, which involved using a peer's paper as an example assessment. Participants who rated the situation as *acceptable* did so based on a learning-focused view that the activity was a task grounded in guidance and supported learning. Participants who rated the scenario as *unacceptable*, however, employed a labour lens and felt the situation was a case of insufficient contribution from the student who, they perceived, was in effect replicating the peer's work instead of writing his own work. Only one scenario in this subset received a *not sure* rating (refer to scenario XII in Table 3), which was due to the participant feeling unable to consider the situation acceptable without having more information about the qualifications of the source of writing assistance.

4.3.3 Editing Scenarios

Participants were largely in agreement when it came to the acceptability of four of the nine editing scenarios discussed during interviews, listed in the top rows of Table 4. These situations all presented writing assistance which participants regarded as being focused on the mechanics of how to write academically. Similarly seen in some collaborating scenarios rating results, participants reviewing editing scenarios viewed instances where the student received help with these types of writing mechanics matters as *acceptable* (including scenarios VXIII and XXIII displayed in Table 4). Participants also believed that students should be engaged through reflective judgement regarding the corrective alterations or suggestions they receive via writing assistance. This idea about agency within the student's labour of writing his assessment was taken into account as participants rated the acceptability of scenarios. When they perceived the student was putting in the effort, the situations were *acceptable* (e.g., VI, XVIII, and XXIII). Scenarios where they thought the

student was not exercising this level of agency were *unacceptable* (e.g., VIII) or *not sure* when they reported being unable to determine if the student had contemplated the received edits before accepting them into his writing (e.g., scenario I).

Unlike in ghostwriting and collaborating scenarios, participants reviewing editing scenarios exhibited varying beliefs about whether the incorporation of writing done by someone other than the student impacted the student's status as author of the assessment. Disagreement in the acceptability of situations where the student had sentences rewritten by the source of writing assistance could be seen in the ratings of scenarios X and XIX (refer to Table 4). Participants' perceptions of acceptability appeared to be shaped by either a learning-focused view or a labour-focused view. Those displaying the former view considered the student's use of the rewritten sentences to be part of what they perceived as feedback and educational support. Those displaying the latter view considered the activity to be appropriating someone else's words by the student who was not putting in the effort to write in his own words.

Uncertainty regarding the acceptability of scenarios in this subset typically came from learning-focused views about if the writing assistance provided an opportunity to learn or the student gained knowledge during the activity. Ratings of *not sure* for scenarios I, VIII, and XVI were reported from participants who spoke about not knowing whether the student in the scenario actually learned the intended knowledge or skills through the assistance. A lack of learning on the student's behalf was thought to make a situation unacceptable, while a student who appeared to learn from the assistance made a situation acceptable. Participants' inability to discern either the presence or absence of learning in a given scenario made them rate the scenarios *not sure*.

Table 4: Students' Ratings of Editing Scenarios

No.	Scenario	Acceptable		Not sure		Unacceptable	
		C	%	C	%	C	%
XVIII	Renier takes his drafted paper to the Centre for Teaching and Learning. A Learning Advisor suggests changes to grammar and structure and explains the comments to Renier. Renier sits at the computer and makes edits based on the Learning Advisor's comments.	5	100	0	0	0	0
VI	Renier asks his older sister to help him by proofreading his drafted paper. She sits with him, pointing out mistakes she says he needs to address. Through their discussion, Renier understands all the comments she makes. Renier then sits at the computer and revises his paper.	5	100	0	0	0	0
XXIII	Renier drafts a paper and asks a friend to edit it. The friend reviews his paper and circles all the spelling and grammatical errors that Renier should correct. Renier goes through and makes corrections to his paper.	5	100	0	0	0	0
XIV	Renier pays a professional editor to review his drafted paper. The editor corrects spelling, grammar, and punctuation. The editor also recommends changes to improve the clarity of Renier's statements through comments written in the margins. Renier discusses the comments with the editor and changes his writing based on the comments.	4	80	1	20	0	0
X	Renier takes his drafted paper to another lecturer to review before submitting it to his course instructor. The lecturer provides Renier with feedback in the form of both comments and rewritten sentences. Renier revises his paper to include the rewritten sentences.	3	60	0	0	2	40
I	Renier writes a draft and puts it through Grammarly, making all the changes the programme suggests.	2	40	3	60	0	0
XIX	Renier pays a professional editor to review his drafted paper. The editor corrects spelling, grammar, and punctuation. The editor also recommends changes to improve the clarity of Renier's statements and provides rewritten sentences via Word's track changes mode. The editor emails the paper back to Renier and they do not discuss the comments. Renier accepts all the changes made.	2	40	1	20	2	40
VIII	Renier asks his flatmate to help him by proofreading his drafted paper. The flatmate sits at the computer and changes grammar, sentence structure, and the organisation of the paper. Renier is not sure why some of the changes were made.	1	20	1	20	3	60
XVI	Renier asks his mother to proofread his drafted paper before he submits it. She makes corrections to spelling and punctuation. She makes adjustments to the content and the wording that alters Renier's argument in the paper.	0	0	2	40	3	60

4.3.4 Repurposing Scenarios

Of the repurposing scenarios, only one (refer to scenario V in Table 5) was unanimously rated as *unacceptable* by participants. This was another instance exhibiting participants' views about labour and the student needing to be the author of his assessment. There was also general agreement regarding insufficient effort perceived in situations where a student used a previous assessment as a form of writing assistance (as in scenario XX).

Table 5: Students' Ratings of Repurposing Scenarios

No.	Scenario	Acceptable		Not sure		Unacceptable	
		C	%	C	%	C	%
IX	Renier tries to paraphrase part of a reference he wants to include in his paper but feels like it is not working. He uses the thesaurus/synonym tool in Word to replace certain words in the source text with similar words.	3	75	0	0	1	25
IV	While writing his paper, Renier uses the University of Manchester's Academic Phrasebank to help make his writing sound more scholarly. He copies phrases from the phrasebank into his paper, plugging in his topic words.	2	50	1	25	1	25
XVII	Renier locates a paper he previously wrote and submitted for a different course. Since the assessment prompt was similar, he updates the title page to reflect the current course and instructor name.	1	25	1	25	2	50
XX	Renier gets permission from a friend to use their marked paper from an earlier semester. Renier rewords each sentence so that the wording is different while the original meaning is retained.	0	0	1	25	3	75
V	Renier visits a student file sharing site where he has previously found helpful lecture notes from class sessions he was unable to attend. He finds assessments similar to his assigned research paper. Adding to his draft, he takes short sections from multiple papers and inserts them into his paper, rewriting some of them.	0	0	0	0	4	100

Disagreement about whether repurposing situations were acceptable or unacceptable was seen among participants' considerations of scenarios that involved the use of text generated from or for another source. As noted in previous scenario subsets, participants based their ratings on ideas about labour and learning. This distinction persisted among those who reviewed repurposing scenarios. For scenarios IV and IX, ratings of *not sure* and *unacceptable* came from participants' concerns about the lack of labour and agency exhibited by the student. Conversely, the scenario was rated *acceptable* by those who viewed the writing assistance source as a legitimate learning tool that provided aid to the student as he wrote his paper. There was also a sense of uncertainty among some participants (refer to scenarios IV and XVII) based on ideas about authorship and whether the student had invested enough labour into writing, contributed to the assessment in his own words and as requested by the assignment prompt.

4.4 Situational Features of Unacceptable Third-party Writing Assistance

Both participants' acceptability ratings of each scenario and the discussions that followed served as the dataset for a thematic analysis into their views about what particular features of writing assistance situations signified a scenario was unacceptable. This section first reports the situational features of unacceptable third-party writing assistance as identified by participants who viewed the scenarios through a lens focused on labour. These were features which conveyed insufficient effort or compromised contribution from the student, due to his passive participation in composing his assessment, lack of agency in decision-making, and not being the genuine author of the assessment. Following these sections which detail the labour-focused views for unacceptability of writing assistance, section 4.4.2 describes the situational features of unacceptable writing assistance identified

as such by participants' learning-focused views, including the removal of an opportunity to undertake the intended learning and a lack of improvement in the student's knowledge or comprehension.

4.4.1 Unacceptable Based on Student's Insufficient Labour in Writing the Assessment

Participant responses indicated that a lack of labour from the student could make writing assistance unacceptable. When 'someone else has done all the work for you' (Ava), it means that the student is not actually putting forth the effort to do the tasks necessary to complete the assessment. Common among participant explanations for rating scenarios as *unacceptable* were statements like, 'he hasn't written the paper or put any effort into writing the paper' (Mateo), 'he hasn't done any of the work himself' (Ava), and 'he's not putting his own work into it' (Violet). The view was particularly evident among participants discussing scenarios where the student had his assessment written, completely or partly, by someone else (such as scenarios XV⁹ and II¹⁰). The belief that the student in such situations was not doing the task of writing meant there was insufficient effort on his part in completing the assessment. Even scenarios where the student wrote the assessment, though, were considered unacceptable when participants perceived the writing assistance to outweigh the student's own contribution to complete the assessment. This was demonstrated by Hao's comments regarding situations where a student does not exert enough effort during the

⁹ Scenario XV: Renier gets a paper written by someone he does not know from a website. He did not pay for the paper.

¹⁰ Scenario II: Renier starts writing but feels he cannot seem to get going. He takes what he has written to a friend and asks them for help. The friend corrects the spelling, grammar, and sentence structure of what Renier wrote. The friend also writes additional sections of the paper for Renier.

writing process, like dividing up sections of an assessment as described in scenario XXIV¹¹. Hao explained, ‘the content itself [was] researched by another person...so you're basically copying from his point of view and putting it as your point of view’. Many participants appeared to hold the belief that the student should be the person exerting the most effort when getting assistance, thus an active and engaged participant during any assistance received from third parties.

Student is a Passive Participant in the Writing Composition

The expectation among participants was that a student should be an active and engaged participant during the writing assistance, otherwise their efforts could be considered insufficient or lacking. The participants who discussed their views on student participation all thought that there should be sincere interaction between a student and the source of writing assistance, demonstrated by active involvement within the assistance activity and the labour of producing the assessment. The apparent absence of this active participation was conceived by participants as passive participation, a situational feature that indicated the writing assistance activity was unacceptable due to the student’s insufficient effort. Being a passive participant during third-party writing assistance seemed to serve as evidence to participants that a student was not putting forth the effort into the writing process to create their assessment.

A commonly identified signifier of participation was the occurrence (or absence) of a discussion during editing-based forms of writing assistance in the scenarios. Nearly all the

¹¹ Scenario XXIV: Renier and a classmate get together to work on their papers. They divide up the task between themselves, with Renier writing his sections and the classmate writing their sections. They then combine the sections into one paper, each editing their own copy.

interviewed participants spoke positively about writing assistance that included a discussion between a student and the source of assistance. A discussion served as evidence that a student was making an effort to actively engage with the writing assistance. When considering two scenarios, one that mentioned a discussion occurring and one that did not, Alex spoke about the difference she felt a discussion had on a scenario's acceptability:

This way [scenario VI¹²] it is a bit more that he's actively thinking the whole time, he's able through a discussion to justify himself for the reason why he put it this way instead of...just sending it away to someone, they're interpreting it in their way and then making a correction.

Conversely, the lack of a discussion between parties was viewed negatively since it indicated that the student was not adequately participating during the writing assistance, thus not employing enough effort in producing his assessment. When discussing the scenario where the student hires a professional editor to review his work and accepts all the changes without discussion (scenario XIX¹³), Adrian explained that because '[the student] wasn't critiquing the advice he'd been given' he was not as engaged as he should have been, thus exhibiting passive participation during the writing assistance activity. Ji-woo also talked about this passive participation as evidenced by the absence of a discussion while recalling the actions of some of her peers. She reported that friends had used an editor in an attempt

¹² Scenario VI: Renier asks his older sister to help him by proofreading his drafted paper. She sits with him, pointing out mistakes she says he needs to address. Through their discussion, Renier understands all the comments she makes. Renier then sits at the computer and revises his paper.

¹³ Scenario XIX: Renier pays a professional editor to review his drafted paper. The editor corrects spelling, grammar, and punctuation. The editor also recommends changes to improve the clarity of Renier's statements and provides rewritten sentences via Word's track changes mode. The editor emails the paper back to Renier and they do not discuss the comments. Renier accepts all the changes made.

to improve their work: 'they'd just do what [the student in the scenario XIX] does, they don't discuss the comments and just accepted the final changes that the editor provides'. She considered this to be an inadequate amount of labour since her friends were passively accepting the editor's alterations. Not having a discussion about suggestions or corrections provided during editing scenarios implied that a student was likely just receiving the assistance without reflection or contemplation. And, for participants, that meant the student was not actively participating and not sufficiently contributing to his writing process.

Student Demonstrates no Agency in Decision-making

Another aspect of writing assistance identified by participants as an indicator a situation was unacceptable was the apparent lack of agency exhibited by the student, typically related to reviewing and acting on alterations that were suggested or made during the writing assistance. The notion that the student did not contemplate each alteration to make his own decision as to whether he should incorporate the edit meant that he was not the arbiter regarding the final version of the writing in his assessment. Abby, Adrian, and Isla all discussed what they saw in the scenarios as a student 'blindly' accepting changes to his writing made by a source of writing assistance. This automatic acceptance of any alterations was perceived as an absence of thoughtful review on the part of the student, who participants thought needed to devote attention to each alteration prior to including it in his writing. Adrian's explanation as to how he navigates this aspect of writing assistance provides insight into the importance of a student exercising the final say over changes suggested or made to their writing:

I would need to look through every comment that [the writing assistance] had made to make sure that they apply- that it is myself deciding whether this- it is my own writing skill that's determining the results rather than somebody else's writing.

Many participants discussed how a student should be in charge of determining whether to accept an edit received via writing assistance. As Alex explained during her review of scenario XXIII¹⁴, '[The student] still has opportunity to see what has been circled by the friend and still make the decision himself if it is- if the change should be made or not so it still stays his own work'. She also commented on this sense of independent final say when reviewing scenario VI, in which the student made his own alterations based off a discussion with the source of writing assistance, underscoring the importance she placed on this situational feature when judging acceptability. Similarly, George highlighted his focus on the student sitting down at the computer by himself (in scenario XVIII¹⁵) since that meant he was 'left to come up with his own wording'. George considered that detail as evidence of the student's participation and effort in writing the assessment. The value of agency in the process of writing an assessment was also seen in discussions about scenario XXI¹⁶. Both Harry and Jeannie perceived the student's close emulation of a classmate's paper as not using his own critical thinking skills to determine what to write about in his paper.

¹⁴ Scenario XXIII: Renier drafts a paper and asks a friend to edit it. The friend reviews his paper and circles all the spelling and grammatical errors that Renier should correct. Renier goes through and makes corrections to his paper.

¹⁵ Scenario XVIII: Renier takes his drafted paper to the Centre for Teaching and Learning. A Learning Advisor suggests changes to grammar and structure and explains the comments to Renier. Renier sits at the computer and makes edits based on the Learning Advisor's comments.

¹⁶ Scenario XXI: Renier asks to see a classmate's paper to get an idea about what they are expected to do for the assessment. The classmate provides their paper to Renier to review. Later, Renier writes his own paper based on what he liked and remembered from the classmate's paper.

For these two participants, the student was not autonomous enough in producing his assessment, indicating his level of contribution was lacking. Remarks like these reflected the participants' belief that a student should review any changes made during writing assistance activities and be the one who makes the determination and takes action as to whether the alteration is made. Not retaining final say over adjustments to his writing meant that the student was not fully engaged in investing the necessary effort nor able to be considered the genuine author of the assessment.

Student is Not the Genuine Author of Their Assessment

Participants' view of insufficient labour during the use of third-party writing assistance was also evidenced by activities that led to a student not being the genuine author of their assessment. At its most basic, being the genuine author of their work meant that a student was the primary origin of the newly written material and the main contributor to the assessment. If a writing assistance scenario included an aspect that was perceived to remove a student's status as genuine 'authentic author' (Alex) of the assessment, that writing assistance was considered an unacceptable writing practice. Situational aspects of writing assistance that threatened the authenticity of the student as author were often considered as the reason a scenario was deemed unacceptable. These situational aspects, as revealed in discussions with participants, existed in two general forms of third-party writing assistance. The first was instances where the student had his assessment completely, or partially, written by someone else. The second was situations where suggested textual alterations were impacting the subject-matter content of the student's assessment instead of providing writing mechanics corrections.

Student has Their Assessment Written by Someone Else

The importance of the notion that a student needs to invest effort necessary into writing their own assessment was most clearly seen in the discussions about scenarios where the student outsourced the entire production of his assessment to someone else (scenarios VII¹⁷, XI¹⁸, and XV¹⁹). Reviewing these scenarios, participants talked about what they saw as the simple fact that the assessment was not authored by the student. This meant the document produced was not the student's original work, therefore it could not rightfully stand as an artefact of the student's labour. Regardless of whether payment was made to obtain the assessment or who provided the assessment—be it someone within or beyond the student's social circle—using work that was completed by someone other than the student to whom it was assigned was identified by participants as a primary reason such incidents were inappropriate.

Perceptions of scenarios detailing third-party writing assistance that produced an assessment that was partially written by someone other than the student were also deemed unacceptable based on the student then not being the authentic author of the work. For example, a student divvying up the task of writing his assessment with a peer (as in scenario XXIV²⁰) was viewed by participants as an assessment not written by the student since half

¹⁷ Scenario VII: Renier gets a paper written by someone he does not know from a website. He purchases the paper and pays through the website.

¹⁸ Scenario XI: Renier gets a paper written by his friend who owes him a favour. He did not pay for the paper.

¹⁹ Scenario XV: Renier gets a paper written by someone he does not know from a website. He did not pay for the paper.

²⁰ Scenario XXIV: Renier and a classmate get together to work on their papers. They divide up the task between themselves, with Renier writing his sections and the classmate writing their sections. They then combine the sections into one paper, each editing their own copy.

the work was completed by someone else. Similar concerns were expressed about scenarios II²¹ and V²², which involved the incorporation of written materials sourced from a third party into the student's assessment. Just as in the previously mentioned situations, the basis for unacceptability appeared to be participants' judgement that the assessment was not fully written by the student. Much like their views about scenarios VII, XI, XV, and XXIV, participants believed that the student's assessment in scenarios II and V should not be considered the student's work. According to participants, including sections written by a friend meant the assessment did not wholly derive from the student. This meant that the student could not claim authorship over the whole paper.

Some participants talked about the distortion inherent in such situations. Several participants considered a student's use of work partly or completely written by someone else as a deliberate misrepresentation of that student's abilities:

Taking someone else's work and passing it off as your own, which to me is not okay...you're not meant to imply that something is your own wording and thoughts if it's not. (Ava)

You're supposed to do the work to demonstrate that you know and understand the topic and if you haven't done the work then it just comes down to cheating. (Mateo)

A student passing off work that they did not do as their own signalled to participants that the type of writing assistance fuelled a misrepresentation of what the student could do as

²¹ Scenario II: Renier starts writing but feels he cannot seem to get going. He takes what he has written to a friend and asks them for help. The friend corrects the spelling, grammar, and sentence structure of what Renier wrote. The friend also writes additional sections of the paper for Renier.

²² Scenario V: Renier visits a student file sharing site where he has previously found helpful lecture notes from class sessions he was unable to attend. He finds assessments similar to his assigned research paper. Adding to his draft, he takes short sections from multiple papers and inserts them into his paper, rewriting some of them.

well as what they actually did to produce the assessment. Writing assistance in the form of creating or obtaining an assessment written by someone other than the student was considered deceptive and morally wrong, crossing a boundary into intentional plagiarism. According to participants, if a student's use of third-party writing assistance means that they are not performing the labour needed to write their own assessment—as evidenced by the student's contribution to the text—then that assistance is unacceptable.

Alterations to Subject-matter Content

In considering scenarios of third-party writing assistance, participants made a distinction between assistance in the form of alterations concerned with the mechanics of writing and assistance in the form of alterations to the subject matter content of the assessment. Writing assistance that revolved around the mechanics of formal writing included corrections to spelling, grammar, syntax, punctuation, as well as adjustments based on the conventions of academic writing, such as creating a scholarly tone absent of slang and conjunctions, could be considered help with '*how to write*' (Harriet). These aspects of writing were generally conceptualised by participants as existing somewhat separately from the process of delivering the content, or answer, requested by an assignment prompt. Writing assistance that revolved around the subject or topic of the written material included corrections related to the accuracy of presented information and quality of position or argument could be considered help with *what to write*.

When participants perceived the writing assistance to provide help beyond a writing mechanics focus, they expressed disapproval and considered such scenarios as unacceptable since the assistance produced direct changes to the subject matter content of the student's writing. The crossing over from *how to write* into *what to write* meant the assistance was

seen as a red flag that signalled to participants that the aid was no longer acceptable. During their interviews, multiple participants spoke specifically about the move into unacceptable territory:

The fact that the lecturer provides him with rewritten sentences, so maybe changing the content rather than just the grammar then I would say that's unacceptable. I think if anyone's changing content, I think [that's] not very good. (Emily)

They're [the source of writing assistance] creating the original content; they're not just correcting his grammar or stuff like that. (Liv)

I was saying with these ones- ((*tapping cards I and XVIII*)) these ones are mostly about grammar- the acceptable ones, but this one ((*gesturing to card XVI*)) actually pertains to the content in the wording so they will completely change the argument... so I think that's why that one is [unacceptable]. (Harriet)

As highlighted in the above quotes, changes to the subject-matter content presented by a student were of particular concern when contemplating the acceptability of writing assistance. One reason for this concern was the view that changes that altered a student's argument or 'gave them the answer' (Emily) made it so that the assessment was no longer an artefact genuinely authored by the student. Liv also noted this when talking about situations in which text written by someone else was added to the student's assessment, in effect changing the content that was presented. Third-party writing assistance that resulted in such alterations to the subject-matter content were seen as work done not by the student. As such, the student could not be considered the genuine author of the assessment.

4.4.2 Unacceptable Based on Lack of Intended Learning Done by the Student

Multiple participants appeared to use a learning lens when considering the acceptability of writing assistance. Their concept of what was and was not acceptable depended on whether a writing assistance scenario supported or aided learning. The belief that writing assistance activities which supported a student's learning indicated the activity was an acceptable practice was evident among participants who reviewed and discussed all four types of scenarios, especially editing scenarios. Considering the scenarios Isla classified as acceptable, she explained, 'I think the fact that he is learning, which is the whole point of university- is that you're gaining something- you're actually taking something away from [the assistance]'. This conception of acceptability was, in part, built upon the notion that the purpose behind attending university and completing coursework was to grow one's intellect and develop skills to use for future scholarly or professional pursuits. Any third-party writing assistance that did not serve this purpose would then be an inappropriate way to write and produce an assessment. According to participants, situational features that indicated third-party writing assistance was unacceptable due to learning-related issues, included assistance that did not facilitate the intended learning expected by the set assessment and a student who did not gain knowledge (intended learning outcomes or otherwise) from the activity.

Intended Learning Opportunity is Removed by Writing Assistance

Writing assistance was considered unacceptable by participants when it appeared to remove the opportunity for a student to learn. Situations where a student was no longer the individual producing the assessment, such as those where someone or something else has

written the text (as in scenarios VII²³ and XI²⁴), were not only regarded negatively due to the lack of effort on the student's part, but also because it meant the task of learning had been subverted by the use of the writing assistance. Participants' disapproval of writing assistance activities which removed intended learning could be heard through remarks, like that from Harriet, about such writing assistance activities being regarded as a replacement of learning: '[the assistance] is not suggesting stimulating brain stuff, you know, it's not making you think it's just writing it for you'. If the writing assistance from the third-party removed the opportunity for intended learning to happen, a student would reach the output (i.e., the produced written assessment) without exposure to the learning that happens along the way during the process of writing.

Student Does Not Gain Knowledge or Improve Comprehension

A student who did not appear to learn from third-party writing assistance was another situational feature identified as conveying the unacceptability of an activity. When participants perceived that the student in the scenarios 'walked away without understanding why changes were suggested or made to his work' (Isla), they felt as though the assistance was not benefiting the student's growth in learning. For example, in considering scenario VIII²⁵ participants believed that because the student was not sure why alterations were made 'or how the changes have affected the paper' (Harriet), the student had 'not gain[ed] any

²³ Scenario VII: Renier gets a paper written by someone he does not know from a website. He purchases the paper and pays through the website.

²⁴ Scenario XI: Renier gets a paper written by his friend who owes him a favour. He did not pay for the paper.

²⁵ Scenario VIII: Renier asks his flatmate to help him by proofreading his drafted paper. The flatmate sits at the computer and changes grammar, sentence structure, and the organisation of the paper. Renier is not sure why some of the changes were made.

knowledge' (Isla) from the activity. Similarly, when discussing the use of an online editing tool like that in scenario I²⁶, Adrian voiced concern since it was unclear to him 'that each change was being understood' by the student. Based on their apparent belief that the purpose of seeking assistance was to learn, participants like Isla, Harriet, and Adrian, felt writing assistance that did not sufficiently develop a student's comprehension was then unacceptable, or at risk of being unacceptable.

Participants who considered scenarios where the student received writing assistance in the form of text written by a third party as unacceptable did so due to their perception the student made no attempt to acquire the knowledge expected from doing the assessment, effectively not learning. Mateo noted that such assistance was 'not constructive and it doesn't help you improve' since it 'just does something for you' as opposed to helping a student grow their knowledge and skills. This included instances where the student's friend provided editing support by writing extra sections of text in the paper (scenario II²⁷) and the use of a paraphrasing tool that rephrased source text which the student then put in his assessment (scenario III²⁸). When discussing these scenarios, Violet explained that she classified them as unacceptable based on her perception that '[the student]'s not actually learning any of the stuff that he's meant to be writing about' (Violet). The apparent lack of

²⁶ Scenario I: Renier writes a draft and puts it through Grammarly, making all the changes the programme suggests.

²⁷ Scenario II: Renier starts writing but feels he cannot seem to get going. He takes what he has written to a friend and asks them for help. The friend corrects the spelling, grammar, and sentence structure of what Renier wrote. The friend also writes additional sections of the paper for Renier.

²⁸ Scenario III: Renier copies a passage from a journal and pastes it into a paraphrase tool website, like Quillbot, that then provides a paraphrased version of the original text. Renier puts this paraphrased text in his paper and cites the original reference according to APA style.

learning on the student's end meant he was not gaining any new subject-matter or academic writing knowledge nor improving his comprehension of the assessment topic through the writing assistance.

The flip side of situations where the student did not comprehend the aid received was instances where the student did appear to learn from the writing assistance. Such scenarios (including XVIII²⁹ and VI³⁰) were considered acceptable based on the perception that the student had learned during the writing assistance activity. According to participant concerns, the learning that occurred could lead to the acquisition of knowledge aligned with the learning outcomes of the assignment, as demonstrated by Alex and her attitude regarding her own experience with editing scenarios: 'I will use those words [in suggested textual edits] to broaden my own knowledge and then explain how I understand it...I can always use someone else's perspective to broaden my own'. Although, specificity in what was learned was not as important to all participants. Some believed that as long as the student was 'learning something...taking something away from' (Isla) the episode of assistance, then it could be considered an acceptable practice in one's writing process. Most often this broader view was based on the perception that the student gained understanding about some aspect(s) of academic writing. In sharing his thoughts about scenario XVIII (where the student received assistance from a university teaching and learning centre), Adrian spoke about how the student was 'learning everything he needs to know to better his

²⁹ Scenario XVIII: Renier takes his drafted paper to the Centre for Teaching and Learning. A Learning Advisor suggests changes to grammar and structure and explains the comments to Renier. Renier sits at the computer and makes edits based on the Learning Advisor's comments.

³⁰ Scenario VI: Renier asks his older sister to help him by proofreading his drafted paper. She sits with him, pointing out mistakes she says he needs to address. Through their discussion, Renier understands all the comments she makes. Renier then sits at the computer and revises his paper.

writing...advancing his own learning of grammar and structure' through the use of the third-party writing assistance. As in the determination of what scenarios were unacceptable, a learning lens was clearly observed in how some participants identified scenarios of acceptable third-party writing assistance.

4.5 Students' Conceptions of Plagiarism

The interviews with participants revealed that students' conceptions of plagiarism were more closely linked to ideas relating to labour than ideas relating to learning. The connection between perceptions of plagiarism and views about students' labour exertion are seen in the concepts underlying what participants talked about when asked to share their thoughts on plagiarism, including how they defined it and what actions or activities they believed it encompassed. Participants' perspectives on plagiarism revolved around the issue of morality and doing—or not doing—the labour needed to produce a genuinely self-authored piece of work. Overall, interview participants' considerations of plagiarism were not about the absence of learning; it was about the absence of labour, where students were not investing energy into writing their own assessments or doing what was considered necessary to produce an academic piece of writing. Reviewing how participants considered the various scenarios of third-party writing assistance, there were signs of this labour lens conceptualisation of plagiarism. Scenarios that were considered unacceptable due to concerns about effort were often also considered scenarios of plagiarism, while scenarios that were considered unacceptable due to concerns about learning were less often considered plagiarism by participants.

This section presents the results of participants' conceptualisations of plagiarism. The first part is a review of their framing of the notion of plagiarism as an issue of morality.

Following that, the second part details their perceptions of the elements that comprise a plagiaristic act. Finally, sections 4.5.3 and 4.5.4 discuss participants' tendency to apply the label of plagiarism to writing assistance deemed unacceptable due to labour-focused issues, but not to scenarios deemed unacceptable due to learning-focused issues.

4.5.1 *Plagiarism as a Moral Issue*

Conceptualisations of plagiarism revealed that participants often thought of plagiarism in terms of right and wrong, led by both personal concerns about the morality of actions and views that some actions overstepped ethical boundaries. When sharing how they understood plagiarism as an action, several participants used legal or punitive language. Violet thought of plagiarism as 'stealing'. Others invoked ideas about penalties and guilt in their definitions. The 'danger' (Adrian) of plagiarism was also a focus, as some participants framed the issue by punitive characteristics like getting caught doing something prohibited and being punished for 'breaking the rules' (Ava). Many participants expressed disapproval of plagiarism, citing their personal moral stance or desire to conform to ethical standards as the basis for their attitude. A student engaging in an activity considered 'unethical' (Mateo), 'immoral' (Chih-ming), or just 'not right...the wrong decision' (Jeannie) led participants to assign the label of plagiarism to the scenario. Overall, three-quarters of the participants (n=15) explained that their consideration of specific scenarios as plagiarism was due to moral or ethical concerns they had about the actions of the student in the scenario.

4.5.2 *Plagiarism Constructed as Replication, Not Referencing, and Appropriation*

Participants' definitions of plagiarism revealed their views regarding three main elements that constituted plagiarism: replication, attribution, and appropriation. When

discussing what plagiarism was, most participants explained that it was the act of a student incorporating others' work into their own assessment. This was often thought of in terms of replication, where the student was copying something originally written by another person. Some participants felt that plagiarism was using someone else's work plus not referencing the original source, such as when an in-text citation was omitted or quotation marks were not used to denote borrowed text. A smaller group of participants discussed the notion of deliberate appropriation when describing how they defined plagiarism. A closer look into participants' beliefs within each of these elements provides further insight into their conceptions of plagiarism.

Replicating Others' Work

The most commonly noted feature of plagiarism among participants was that plagiarism meant using someone else's work. Most participants (n=15) discussed the use of others' work in terms of using text, with a few participants also considering a broader concept of work to include not only words but also ideas. This definition was largely presented through participants' association of plagiarism as replication through the act of copying. Plagiarism was often seen as 'copying someone else's work' (George) being accomplished by 'someone who just copy and pastes' (Ji-woo) the written words of others. Within this construction of plagiarism were concerns over textual similarity, often based on a notion of exactness. This was typically expressed through the idea that plagiarising was 'directly copying somebody's work' (Jill) or 'literally copy and pasting someone else's words' (Liv) which would result in the student's text being too similar to the original text. The belief that plagiarism was the exact duplication of another's work persisted throughout participant interviews. To many participants, plagiarism was copying.

The conceptualisation of plagiarism as replicating via copying was also observed when participants talked about actions they thought did not constitute plagiarism. When the words used by a student were not exactly the same as the words in an original text or as provided by a source of third-party writing assistance, it was often considered to be not plagiarism—even if the specific scenario was considered unacceptable. The importance of exactness was seen in Zoe’s understanding of plagiarism during her review of scenario XX³¹, where the student acquired a friend’s marked paper and rewrote each sentence to form his own paper. Her belief centred on the fact that ‘he rewords each sentence’ thus it was not a case of copying, ‘so that wouldn’t be plagiarism’ (Zoe). Similarly, Violet explained her reasoning as to why using an online paraphrasing tool, as in scenario III³², was not an act of plagiarism:

Violet: That's tricky ((*holding card III*)) because this Quillbot thing was made to avoid plagiarism right?

Int: Why do you say that Quillbot is made to avoid plagiarism?

Violet: Because it does what you're told to do- take the notes, put them in your own words, and then use the ideas, and it's cited. Then it's not a quote, so technically it's not plagiarism.

The fact that the writing assistance activity appeared to produce something that was not an exact copy of the original text but instead a rephrased version, meant that copying had not

³¹ Scenario XX: Renier gets permission from a friend to use their marked paper from an earlier semester. Renier rewords each sentence so that the wording is different while the original meaning is retained.

³² Scenario III: Renier copies a passage from a journal and pastes it into a paraphrase tool website, like Quillbot, that then provides a paraphrased version of the original text. Renier puts this paraphrased text in his paper and cites the original reference according to APA style.

occurred and textual similarity was low. Since they saw the new text as not a direct copy or quotation of the original, Zoe and Violet felt that the process in which it was created was not a case of plagiarism.

Less common, but still evident among some participants was the belief that the act of plagiarism was to 'copy someone else's work either directly or just change a couple [or a] few words' (Jeannie). On display here was a slightly wider conception of replication, in that 'changes [to] a few verbs and nouns' (Hao) within a piece of text was still plagiarism, even though the outcome was then not an exact duplication. Both Jill and Chih-ming believed that making select alterations to text in an attempt to make the writing different from the source text was still plagiarism. Ava's perception of scenario XX followed this conception of the issue. She labelled the situation plagiarism 'even though it's not the exact words' being used, implying that whilst rewriting was done by the student the activity could still be considered replication of someone else's work. The idea being presented here by these participants was that making substitutions in word choice to reduce textual similarity was still essentially copying someone else's work. A student could 'do some rewording but basically it's still plagiarism' (Chih-ming). For these participants, plagiarism was not limited to copying and pasting to make an exact duplication; the replication of another's work could happen even with slight adjustments to wording.

Not Giving Credit When Using Others' Work

Beyond the belief that plagiarism was the use of someone else's work, more than half (n=12) of the participants mentioned an element of attribution in their discussion about plagiarism. This feature was largely represented as not giving credit to the person or people whose work was used. Typically, attribution was presented as an addition to the conception

of replication, as seen in Phil's response to the question of how he defines plagiarism: 'anything that I've copied...and hasn't been referenced'. As expressed in Phil's comment, attribution was generally associated with the task of referencing, by either quotations or citations.

The notion of referencing was an important aspect to how participants perceived what was and was not plagiarism. Generally, participants understood referencing to be presenting source text as a quotation versus presenting text without indication that it was a quotation. Some participants defined plagiarism as the lack of quoting a source that was included in an assessment: 'using other people's sources and not quoting them' (Abby) or 'using a direct quote but people still don't reference where they got the information' (Willow). Others considered plagiarism to include the misquoting of source text or misrepresentation of the source's intended message: 'getting...quotes and just not quoting them correctly' (Emily). In both forms, participants' beliefs that using quoted text as a way to communicate attribution was connected to their conceptions about plagiarism.

The role of referencing in the conceptualisation of plagiarism was also seen through participants' ideas about the incorporation of citations. 'Using somebody else's ideas within your own work without properly citing them' (Adrian) was considered by many participants to be a large part of what constituted plagiarism. The prominent role of referencing was particularly evident during Ava's interview. Throughout her discussions about the acceptability of scenarios and her views on plagiarism, Ava talked about the importance of referencing through citation. She stated, 'I'm pretty sure that plagiarism occurs when you don't reference' and asserted that due to this fact 'anything that you insert [into your

assessment] that's taken from somewhere either directly or implied is meant to be referenced'.

On more than one occasion, the presence or absence of referencing in a student's writing was used as a litmus test that indicated if the incident constituted plagiarism. When discussing scenario IX³³, where the student used Microsoft Word's synonym tool to change words in the source text of a reference he wanted to use in his assessment, Ava considered this form of writing assistance acceptable and not plagiarism because the alterations were happening 'inside some text that he's referencing'. The inclusion of citations that properly referenced used materials even informed how Ava perceived scenarios she initially labelled as plagiarism. In her remarks about scenario V³⁴ (the student's incorporation into his assessment parts of others' papers from a file share site), she reflected on the possibility that even if the source text being used was another student's paper, including a citation for the source might suggest that the activity was an acceptable practice. These perceptions about referencing show that absence of referencing was viewed as plagiaristic, while referencing—through the inclusion of citations or attributed quotations—was seen as a way to avoid plagiarism.

Appropriating Work to Pass Off as Your Own

While not as commonly discussed as the features of replication and attribution, a few participants (n=5) talked about the notion of passing off others' work as one's own work.

³³ Scenario IX: Renier tries to paraphrase part of a reference he wants to include in his paper but feels like it is not working. He uses the thesaurus/synonym tool in Word to replace certain words in the source text with similar words.

³⁴ Scenario V: Renier visits a student file sharing site where he has previously found helpful lecture notes from class sessions he was unable to attend. He finds assessments similar to his assigned research paper. Adding to his draft, he takes short sections from multiple papers and inserts them into his paper, rewriting some of them.

This was typically discussed as an additional aspect, accompanying the conception of plagiarism as using someone else's work and not attributing the original source. This perspective revolved around the appropriation of text to purposefully give the impression that the student did the work. For these participants, plagiarism was 'taking someone else's words as your own' (Alex) with the implication that one was 'passing it off as your own work' (Mateo). Views regarding the appropriation of others' work largely revolved around the idea that plagiarism included the intentional deception of deliberately presenting the use of uncited sources or writing by someone else as a piece of work completed by the student. This was most clearly seen in the way Mateo and Violet spoke about the writing assistance scenarios that involved ghostwriting. Mateo considered all the situations where the student sought to use a completed assessment acquired from a person or website as his own assessment (scenarios VII³⁵, XI³⁶, and XV³⁷) as plagiarism precisely because 'he's taking someone else's work and he's passing it off as his'. In her discussion of the same scenarios, Violet noted that the student was 'handing in somebody else's words under the guise of it being his own work'. The belief that appropriating work by another in order to present it as something produced by oneself played a part in these participants' conceptualisations of plagiarism.

³⁵ Scenario VII: Renier gets a paper written by someone he does not know from a website. He purchases the paper and pays through the website.

³⁶ Scenario XI: Renier gets a paper written by his friend who owes him a favour. He did not pay for the paper.

³⁷ Scenario XV: Renier gets a paper written by someone he does not know from a website. He did not pay for the paper.

4.5.3 The Strong Tie Between Plagiarism and Labour-based Unacceptable Scenarios

Writing assistance activities that were considered unacceptable because of reasons related to insufficient contribution from the student, such as being a passive and disengaged receiver of the aid provided, not exercising agency over the final version of their assessment, or not being the genuine author of their own assessment, were often also considered acts of plagiarism. Scenarios that were considered unacceptable because of reasons related to a lack of learning, however, were not typically considered acts of plagiarism. This reflected a conceptualisation of plagiarism, as related to situations of writing assistance, which was built more on ideas about the insufficient labour done by the student to produce an assessment written by them, and less on concerns that the student was not learning from the instance of writing assistance. Table 6 provides the scenarios that all, or at least half, of the participants labelled as acts of plagiarism. While ghostwriting scenarios appeared to be routinely considered plagiarism, situations of repurposing and collaborating writing assistance were also deemed to be plagiarism. Explanations for why these instances of third-party writing assistance were plagiarism conformed with the labour lens considerations of what made scenarios unacceptable: concerns about insufficient contribution and authorship.

Third-party writing assistance activities which participants perceived to convey a lack of labour from the student were thought of as plagiarism. Both Zoe and Ava rated scenario XVII³⁸ as unacceptable, given an absence of new textual contribution displayed through his repurposing of an earlier assessment into his currently assigned assessment. This insufficient

³⁸ Scenario XVII: Renier locates a paper he previously wrote and submitted for a different course. Since the assessment prompt was similar, he updates the title page to reflect the current course and instructor name.

effort was also the reason they labelled the scenario as plagiarism; it was viewed as the replication of existing work without adequate effort to write an assessment. When discussing his views on what he considered the unacceptable scenario XX³⁹, Chih-ming noted that even though the student had reworded each sentence of his peer's assessment, the original meaning of the peer's work remained. He believed this was an indication that the student had not exerted enough effort into composing his own assessment. Ava articulated the same view as to why this form of assistance was plagiarism. She explained that 'you're not doing any of this research yourself, you're not taking the time to do the assessment...even if you are rewriting some of it'. This comment further highlighted participants' connection between labour and plagiarism.

Instances of third-party writing assistance where a student had their assessment completely or partially written by someone else were considered acts of plagiarism, largely due to the perception that the student was not the genuine author of the assessment. This included scenarios like VII, XI, and XV where a student obtains a paper written by someone else (a peer or an unknown individual) and scenarios like XXIV⁴⁰ and V⁴¹, where a student has written portions of their assessment and incorporated portions written by at least one other student. These forms of writing assistance were viewed by participants as a way of

³⁹ Scenario XX: Renier gets permission from a friend to use their marked paper from an earlier semester. Renier rewords each sentence so that the wording is different while the original meaning is retained.

⁴⁰ Scenario XXIV: Renier and a classmate get together to work on their papers. They divide up the task between themselves, with Renier writing his sections and the classmate writing their sections. They then combine the sections into one paper, each editing their own copy.

⁴¹ Scenario V: Renier visits a student file sharing site where he has previously found helpful lecture notes from class sessions he was unable to attend. He finds assessments similar to his assigned research paper. Adding to his draft, he takes short sections from multiple papers and inserts them into his paper, rewriting some of them.

bypassing the actual work of writing an assessment. Participants believed that this avoidance by the student to put forth the labour necessary to write all his assessment himself meant that he was not the true author of his assessment.

Table 6: Scenarios Labelled Plagiarism by Students

Situation Type	No.	Scenario	Plagiarism	
			C	%
Ghostwriting	II	Renier starts writing but feels he cannot seem to get going. He takes what he has written to a friend and asks them for help. The friend corrects the spelling, grammar, and sentence structure of what Renier wrote. The friend also writes additional sections of the paper for Renier.	4	100
Ghostwriting	VII	Renier gets a paper written by someone he does not know from a website. He purchases the paper and pays through the website.	4	100
Ghostwriting	XI	Renier gets a paper written by his friend who owes him a favour. He did not pay for the paper.	4	100
Ghostwriting	XV	Renier gets a paper written by someone he does not know from a website. He did not pay for the paper.	4	100
Repurposing	V	Renier visits a student file sharing site where he has previously found helpful lecture notes from class sessions he was unable to attend. He finds assessments similar to his assigned research paper. Adding to his draft, he takes short sections from multiple papers and inserts them into his paper, rewriting some of them.	4	100
Collaborating	XXIV	Renier and a classmate get together to work on their papers. They divide up the task between themselves, with Renier writing his sections and the classmate writing their sections. They then combine the sections into one paper, each editing their own copy.	4	100
Ghostwriting	III	Renier copies a passage from a journal and pastes it into a paraphrase tool website, like Quillbot, that then provides a paraphrased version of the original text. Renier puts this paraphrased text in his paper and cites the original reference according to APA style.	2	50
Repurposing	XVII	Renier locates a paper he previously wrote and submitted for a different course. Since the assessment prompt was similar, he updates the title page to reflect the current course and instructor name.	2	50
Repurposing	XX	Renier gets permission from a friend to use their marked paper from an earlier semester. Renier rewords each sentence so that the wording is different while the original meaning is retained.	2	50

In addition to students not being the genuine author of their assessment, participants' labelling of such scenarios as plagiarism often included the notion of appropriation and the presentation of the assessment as a student's own work. Participants' perceptions of the ghostwriting activities (scenarios VII, XI, and XV) as plagiarism was compounded by this idea that the student was passing off this entirely outsourced product as his own work—an act they considered dishonest and warranted the label of 'cheating' (Mateo). This appropriation element of plagiarism was also noted in some participants' discussions about collaborating and editing scenarios. Jill explained her view that the student in the collaborating scenario XXIV could not be considered the author of the assessment since he did not write all the sections, rhetorically asking, 'is he handing in the paper as "me and my mates wrote this" or is he handing it in as "I wrote this"', implying that the latter was indication that the student was appropriating work of others and taking credit for it instead of genuinely authoring the assessment on his own. Regarding editing scenario XIX⁴², Alex noted that 'full sentences were changed' due to the editor's rewriting of sentences which the student then included in his assessment; this was assistance that she felt was plagiarism because the student was not the author of all the work but presented the assessment as his work.

4.5.4 The Weak Tie Between Plagiarism and Learning-based Unacceptable Scenarios

Certain forms of third-party writing assistance were thought of by participants as less than suitable practices given the lack, or absence, of intended learning; based on this view

⁴² Scenario XIX: Renier pays a professional editor to review his drafted paper. The editor corrects spelling, grammar, and punctuation. The editor also recommends changes to improve the clarity of Renier's statements and provides rewritten sentences via Word's track changes mode. The editor emails the paper back to Renier and they do not discuss the comments. Renier accepts all the changes made.

these scenarios were rated *unacceptable*. That, however, did not always mean that the activities were also considered plagiarism. There were a few instances when participants deemed a scenario unacceptable but then explained why they believed the activity would not be a case of plagiarism. Often this was because a lack of learning did not fit within participants' constructions of what constituted plagiarism. Other times it was because the concern over lack of intended learning was outshined by the perceived good intentions of the writing assistance.

One example of this distinction was in Jeannie's discussion about scenario XXI⁴³, which she felt was unacceptable because the student was remembering 'the best points' of his friend's paper and using that as a basis for his own assessment, 'not really critically thinking' about what he needed to write himself. At one point Jeannie even stated that the writing assistance activity was 'kind of like almost cheating', although she was not convinced that was the case and she did not consider the scenario plagiarism. Her ideas about the lack of learning within the activity were enough to deem the assistance unacceptable, but not enough to deem it plagiarism. This was likely influenced by her construction of plagiarism as 'copying someone else's work' and the notion of exactness in this replication. In providing her thought process regarding the scenario, Jeannie made a distinction in what denoted plagiarism: if instead of using the peer's main points to write their own assessment, the student regurgitated whole sentences from the peer's assessment, then that would be plagiarism since the assessment would be an exact replication of another's work.

⁴³ Scenario XXI: Renier asks to see a classmate's paper to get an idea about what they are expected to do for the assessment. The classmate provides their paper to Renier to review. Later, Renier writes his own paper based on what he liked and remembered from the classmate's paper.

When participants thought it was unclear as to whether a student learned something from the aid received, it sometimes left them uncertain about the acceptability of the writing assistance. Abby, Adrian, and Isla felt unable to determine if the student's acceptance of the textual alterations provided by Grammarly (scenario I⁴⁴) meant that he actually understood the reasoning for each suggested change. This learning-focused concern was not, however, enough to consider this type of activity as plagiarism. Because the third-party writing assistance was perceived to be 'just grammar help' (Adrian) and not a situation that was perceived as problematic due to labour-based concerns, it did not fit within participants' constructions of plagiarism.

Additionally, there were situations of writing assistance that participants acknowledged as examples of a student using someone else's writing instead of their own, which they explained was unacceptable. Labelling the scenario as plagiarism, however, was not something all participants were totally willing to do.

I'd probably consider that one ((*touching card XVI*)) closest to it, the one with his mum changing wording- I don't know whether I necessarily call that plagiarism but I guess that- well I guess that is what I'm saying, using someone else's ideas—which is his mum's—and not using your own, but I say that probably wouldn't really fit into what I was saying so that would be the closest but I don't think that would be typically- I wouldn't probably define that as plagiarism. (Harriet)

Harriet considered the writing assistance to 'change the content and wording' of the student's assessment and explained that the aid received was likely not 'making [the

⁴⁴ Scenario I: Renier writes a draft and puts it through Grammarly, making all the changes the programme suggests.

student] think' for themselves. But even with the learning-focused concern that the student was not being supported to think through writing the assessment, she was reluctant to label the scenario as plagiarism. Harriet did not think that the scenario was plagiarism but was unable to fully explain this view. Another participant, though, succinctly provided her reasoning behind refraining from deeming the scenario plagiarism. Abby explained that she believed the assistance was more in the realm of 'helping you make sure that your English [was] conveying to your audience correctly what your intent was'. Even though she felt the scenario was unacceptable, her perception that the writing assistance was supposed to aid the student in successfully conveying his message meant the activity did not deserve to be labelled plagiarism. This conception of third-party writing assistance was informed by a learning lens, in that the aid received was offering the student an opportunity to improve his expression and language use in presenting an intended message.

4.6 Perceptions of Motivational Factors Leading to the Use of Writing Assistance

An array of potential reasons, as perceived by interview participants, existed behind student engagement with third-party writing assistance. These reasons were distilled into three broad motivational factors. The first was a preoccupation with receiving decent marks. The second was a desire to cover (either to rectify or conceal) one's academic deficiencies. The third was a lack of time and/or effort. Discussed in this section are these three motivational factors, as well as each factor's reflection of the labour lens of third-party writing assistance acceptability.

4.6.1 Being Focused on Receiving Decent Marks

The motivating factor most frequently discussed by participants had to do with students' desires to receive decent course marks. The notion that students engaged in

writing assistance for the marks was most often discussed in relation to scenarios of editing but was also mentioned by participants who reviewed scenarios of repurposing, ghostwriting, and collaborating. Across the spectrum of these activities, including both acceptable and unacceptable practices, participants spoke about their perceptions that students engaged in writing assistance to get a better grade on the assessment and improve their mark for the course. When discussing scenarios they considered acceptable, such as situations of writing mechanics editing, participants talked about the motivation to get ‘that little extra edge in a hope of getting better marks’ (Adrian). When discussing scenarios they considered unacceptable, such as situations of ghostwriting, participants believed students would be motivated by the ‘need to desperately pass a compulsory paper’ (Phil) because they ‘just want to pass the course’ (Isla).

Within the perception that students engage with writing assistance based on a motivation to achieve better marks, was the belief that students may feel as though using writing assistance was ‘the only way’ (Jeannie) to pass their assessment. A number of participants felt students might use third-party writing assistance as an ‘absolute last option’ (Liv) brought on by frustration and desperation of thinking, or knowing, failure was imminent and they would not otherwise be able to achieve a satisfactory mark. This view was discussed more often when participants were talking about scenarios which they classified as unacceptable. When thinking about what circumstances, if any, he would have to be in to consider engaging in what he deemed unacceptable writing assistance, George spoke about the risk of poor marks looming large as a potential motivator. He explained that if ‘I knew that I was borderline gonna fail it, yeah I’d be pretty tempted’ to use writing assistance he felt was not entirely appropriate. Facing negative consequences like unsuitable

marks could cause students to engage in activities they would not otherwise consider. The belief was that students would be driven by the desire for better marks and, especially in situations where they believed themselves to be out of ways to achieve those marks, would resort to unacceptable forms of writing assistance.

In participants' perceptions of this preoccupation with marks as a motivator, it appears as though concerns about learning during the process of writing and receiving assistance from a third-party were rarely present. Participants considered their peers to have 'the grade and the marks as the end goal' (Alex), with less concern about whether they learn and grow intellectually as a result of writing the assessment. This perception of why students used third-party writing assistance reflects a labour-focused view in that students are to do the work of producing an assessment, sometimes through unacceptable practices, to reach the goal of acquiring better marks. This motivating factor conveyed a higher value in the outcome or product (i.e., the final marks received for the assessment) than in the learning process. With a prioritisation on getting decent marks, focus shifts away from completing an assessment task as a way to further develop one's academic skills and knowledge.

4.6.2 *The Desire to Cover One's Deficiencies*

Another motivating factor identified by participants was students' concerns over their own academic deficiencies. Some participants believed that students considered themselves as deficient in some way, lacking the knowledge or skills needed to write their assessment, and that was what led students to seek and receive writing assistance. Motivation to use writing assistance was then thought to arise from a student's attempt to compensate for these perceived or real gaps in their ability. This motivation was considered

a possible reason students would engage in various forms of writing assistance, both those deemed acceptable and those considered unacceptable by interview participants. Within this theme of covering deficiencies were several reasons participants mentioned when considering why students engage within third-party writing assistance, including a student's

- lack of writing skills,
- lack of subject knowledge,
- lack of understanding of academic integrity,
- anxiety about their abilities,
- perfectionism,
- self-doubt, and
- dissatisfaction with their work.

Wanting to cover one's academic deficiencies was discussed by participants as a motivating factor in instances of both acceptable and unacceptable writing assistance. There were, however, distinctions in the reasons that participants believed laid behind this motivation. Participants took a more reasonable and understandable tone when discussing being motivated to cover deficiencies when they believed students were attempting to reduce potential flaws in their writing caused by a weak spot in their abilities. Participants believed that students wanted to make sure they correctly understood the language they used, had not missed any errors, or needed reassurance their intended points were conveyed. Abby demonstrated this view when she discussed her own motivation for seeking writing assistance from a third party:

I'm usually not good at articulating words plus usually when you've seen something a bagillion times you may overlook some pivotal points that you think makes sense but

it doesn't to others, so it helps with getting that perspective and making sure you get the intended point across.

This framing of covering deficiencies was more often talked about in relation to scenarios where the writing assistance provided suggestions to correct or improve grammatical issues. Scenarios that participants deemed acceptable, often because they were seen as situations focused on writing mechanics alterations, were linked to the idea that students' motivation for using third-party writing assistance was to compensate for their real or perceived academic deficiencies.

Third-party writing assistance motivated by a self-perception of inadequate knowledge or skills was also reflected in the way participants spoke about sources of assistance they commonly used, or were most likely to use, in their experience as university students. Many reported seeking and receiving writing assistance from friends, family, and learning advisors or lecturers specifically because these individuals had particular knowledge about a topic or superior scholastic abilities. This was typically evidenced by a source's qualifications (e.g., a postgraduate degree) or a known skill relevant to academic writing (e.g., being good at catching grammatical errors). Participants spoke about getting help from writing assistance sources who they felt were able to counteract or reduce their own shortcomings when it came to writing an assessment. For example, George discussed how, while studying for an undergraduate diploma, he 'was struggling like anything' with using punctuation correctly. Due to this self-identified deficiency in his writing ability, George sought 'help from people that I know are really good with punctuation', using the writing assistance he received to compensate for what he felt was a subpar aspect of his writing.

There were also perceptions among participants that a desire to cover up inadequate abilities could be motivation for the use of what they considered unacceptable writing assistance. This was the case according to Liv, who spoke about peers she knew who had relied on others to write part or all of their assessments (like scenarios II⁴⁵ and XI⁴⁶). She believed that students who engaged in such activities were motivated to do so 'because they're just so anxious that they haven't been able to complete the work...or they don't want to get it wrong'. Ideas about this motivation in relation to unacceptable scenarios were thought to be because students were dealing with anxiety and self-doubt caused by insufficient abilities. The drive behind covering these deficiencies was then thought to come from a student's lack of confidence in their skills. Thinking about scenarios V⁴⁷ and XX⁴⁸, where the student repurposed others' assessments into his own assessment, Ava considered students' motives: 'people aren't confident that they fully understand or know what they're doing so if they know someone's already done something and done well, they'll go "aw [] I can just try and rejig this".' Ava's comment was an example of how participants spoke about students wanting to mask their academic deficiencies and engaging in writing assistance activities to do so.

⁴⁵ Scenario II: Renier starts writing but feels he cannot seem to get going. He takes what he has written to a friend and asks them for help. The friend corrects the spelling, grammar, and sentence structure of what Renier wrote. The friend also writes additional sections of the paper for Renier.

⁴⁶ Scenario XI: Renier gets a paper written by his friend who owes him a favour. He did not pay for the paper.

⁴⁷ Scenario V: Renier visits a student file sharing site where he has previously found helpful lecture notes from class sessions he was unable to attend. He finds assessments similar to his assigned research paper. Adding to his draft, he takes short sections from multiple papers and inserts them into his paper, rewriting some of them.

⁴⁸ Scenario XX: Renier gets permission from a friend to use their marked paper from an earlier semester. Renier rewords each sentence so that the wording is different while the original meaning is retained.

While the motivation to compensate for one's weak skills or gaps in competencies could reflect a learning-focused viewpoint, views about labour existed more often in the way participants spoke about unacceptable third-party writing assistance being motivated by a desire to conceal a student's academic deficiencies. Participants described reasons for using writing assistance based on students lacking confidence and using inappropriate assistance instead of just doing the work of contributing writing to the assessment themselves. They also considered potential underlying causes like anxiety and stress, where a student's desire to cover up their inabilities or weaknesses via the use of unacceptable assistance would likely reduce the amount of labour they need to do during the process of writing an assessment. Participants who believed students were motivated to use unacceptable writing assistance by their desire to conceal academic deficiencies framed this reason as a way students could complete an assessment with less effort exerted, as opposed to a way students were seeking to achieve the intended learning set as the outcome of the assessment.

4.6.3 A Lack of Time and/or Effort

When considering why students might partake in writing assistance activities, particularly those involving ghostwriting and repurposing, participants identified issues relating to time and effort. Specific to time were a lack of adequate time management and the use of assistance as a time-on-task reduction tactic. Related to these time issues, motivations based on effort were discussed, notably the desire to minimise exertion during the production of an assessment.

Participants discussed the possibility that students could have poor time management skills leading them to rely on third-party writing assistance to complete their

work. Among some participants there existed the notion that students were time poor and might run out of time to complete their assessment on their own. In those cases, students may then seek the aid of writing assistance to finish their work before a fast-approaching deadline. Some participants believed this time scarcity was due to students juggling too many responsibilities. Not being able to manage one's time 'when you got so much else going on' (Liv) and ending up 'really close to a deadline' (Ji-woo) was considered a motivational factor for seeking and receiving writing assistance, particularly for situations deemed unacceptable by participants. Third-party writing assistance may then be seen as a way to complete an assessment despite one's poor time management skills.

In addition to ideas about students not having enough time or not managing their time sufficiently, participants believed students could be motivated by the appeal to reduce the amount of time spent to complete an assessment. Reflecting on the reason students would use writing assistance activities like those presented in scenario V and scenario XX, in which a student uses others' work (via a friend's already marked paper or documents from a file share site), Ava felt that time issues played a role. She explained that because of the amount of time it took to locate, read, and understand the material necessary to successfully write about a topic, students may look for alternatives—ways to reduce the time commitment required in producing a written assessment. The assertion that engaging in writing assistance activities could serve as a route to minimise the amount of time spent on writing an assessment was mentioned by others as well. Mateo described his view on why a student might use an online paraphrasing tool, a form of writing assistance he classified as not acceptable: 'you've done some research and things but you're in a time crunch and you don't think you can write it, I think people might look at that as a shortcut'. Chih-ming

discussed his personal motivation to save time by reusing his own previously submitted work (such as in scenario XVII⁴⁹): ‘I’m just sort of lazy and I’m not too industrious actually, so it’s just like a time efficiency thing because if I got 10 hours left I don’t want to spend all of that time on a single project’. With this explanation of his actions, Chih-ming exemplified student engagement in writing assistance activities as a tactic to reduce time-on-task.

Accompanying time-related motivations, participants believed that students were motivated to use as little effort as possible to get their assessments done. Adrian explained this as, ‘kind of like a minimal force technique where you only do- you only expend as much effort as you need to’. Participants talked about the attempt to actively reduce the amount of effort spent labouring through writing an assessment. Ideas about doing the bare minimum or taking the easiest route due to a desire to not have to exert energy to write an assessment (typically referred to as being lazy) were what participants thought fuelled students’ effort-based motivations to use third-party writing assistance. Liv spent time discussing a few of her friends who she knew had engaged in what she believed were unacceptable writing assistance activities, including those presented in ghostwriting scenarios II, VII⁵⁰, and XI. She considered their involvement motivated by laziness since ‘they literally just can’t be bothered to write the paper’. The idea of students being motivated by indolence and a desire to not put forth effort was also considered by Phil to be a possible reason for acquiring an

⁴⁹ Scenario XVII: Renier locates a paper he previously wrote and submitted for a different course. Since the assessment prompt was similar, he updates the title page to reflect the current course and instructor name.

⁵⁰ Scenario VII: Renier gets a paper written by someone he does not know from a website. He purchases the paper and pays through the website.

already written assessment from someone online (as described in scenarios VII and XV⁵¹) and by Liv as a reason behind engaging with a file sharing site (as described in scenario V). Harry suggested that some students would think, ‘why put in all this effort if it can be done an easier way?’ when contemplating a division of labour to write their assessment (as described in scenario XXIV⁵²). These perceptions reflect a labour-focused view, where students are likely to use third-party writing assistance to reduce the work they themselves have to undertake.

4.7 Chapter Summary

Results from the interviews with undergraduate participants showed that students’ definitions of plagiarism often included replicating others’ work without attributing the source. In addition to these aspects, some students noted that a student passing others’ work off and appropriating it as their own was another element of plagiarism. The basis of many students’ perceptions of plagiarism was using someone else’s words, often thought of by the participants in terms of copying text that was then deemed too similar to be considered original work. Underneath their reported definitions of plagiarism, participants’ constructions of the notion of plagiarism were built upon the conviction that the assessment a student writes should be just that—written by the student. Replicating others’ writing or

⁵¹ Scenario XV: Renier gets a paper written by someone he does not know from a website. He did not pay for the paper.

⁵² Scenario XXIV: Renier and a classmate get together to work on their papers. They divide up the task between themselves, with Renier writing his sections and the classmate writing their sections. They then combine the sections into one paper, each editing their own copy.

incorporating the work of someone else without attributing it to them were seen as ways in which a student was not composing the assessment themselves.

The students' perceptions about which scenarios were unacceptable revealed two broad lenses through which they viewed writing assistance: one that was based on the labour of doing the assessment by the student and another based on the perceived learning achieved by the student. The lens focused on labour was exemplified by considerations of a scenario as unacceptable due to compromised contribution, identified by participants as a lack of participation, agency, or authorship. The lens focused on learning included considerations of a scenario as unacceptable due to a lack of intended learning by the student, identified by participants as the absence of a learning opportunity or the lack of knowledge gained by the student. When scenarios were rated unacceptable by participants due to labour issues, like a lack of agency or genuine authorship, they were more likely to also be viewed as plagiarism. This was particularly evident in writing assistance sought through ghostwriting as well as some of the repurposing scenarios. Third-party writing assistance that involved full assessment outsourcing, inadequate or disingenuous effort from the student, or other labour related issues was rated unacceptable and believed to be plagiarism by most participants.

Like their considerations of unacceptable third-party writing assistance, the perceptions among interview participants regarding what motivated students to engage in these types of activities also reflected a labour-focused view. Beliefs about why students used writing assistance uncovered three motivational factors. Most frequently, participants believed students sought and received writing assistance from third parties because of a preoccupation with receiving better marks, which participants thought was common among

their peers. Additional motivations commonly discussed by participants included students' desire to cover their academic deficiencies and issues with time—including the lack of adequate time management and a drive to minimise time-on-task.

The track I interview results reported in this chapter revealed that students' perceptions of third-party writing assistance were based on ideas about labour and learning, and they considered participation to be an important situational feature in determining acceptability. Can the same be said for university teaching staff—what are their thoughts on third-party writing assistance? The next chapter describes the results from the track II survey that asked staff how they construct plagiarism and what they think about the acceptability of these same scenarios of third-party writing assistance.

CHAPTER FIVE | STAFF'S PERCEPTIONS OF THIRD-PARTY WRITING

ASSISTANCE SCENARIOS AND PLAGIARISM

The results from the survey of teaching staff are shared in this chapter to provide insight into what types of third-party writing assistance activities respondents believed to be acceptable or unacceptable. These supplementary data add to the findings from the student interviews reported in the previous chapter by providing a complementary layer to the investigation of perceptions around writing assistance and plagiarism. Responses shed light on common features of scenarios that staff identified as reasons why they deemed the acceptability of situations the way they did. This chapter starts with a summary of the demographic composition of the respondents to provide a backdrop of who completed the survey. Second, notable findings outline common situational features of scenarios that indicate acceptability based on the majority-rated acceptable and majority-rated unacceptable scenarios. Moving into the calculated results that support these notable findings, section 5.3 shows the acceptability ratings and most frequently reported reasons behind these ratings, organised by the study's four subsets of third-party writing assistance. Finally, staff conceptualisations of plagiarism are presented in section 5.4 which describe the results of a content analysis of respondents' definitions of the term plagiarism.

5.1 Demographic Characteristics of Surveyed Staff

A total of 108 academic teaching staff responded to the survey, the vast majority (99%⁵³) of whom worked for Massey. Responses from staff employed by a different

⁵³ As a matter of convenience in the presentation of survey results, all figures are rounded to the nearest percent.

university were the result of the snowball recruitment method that requested Massey staff share the survey link with their colleagues at other tertiary institutions in Aotearoa New Zealand. A simple review of the demography of these respondents is provided to contextualise the findings later discussed in this chapter. Due to variation in response rates for different survey questions, sample size (n) is provided when variables did not include an answer from every survey respondent. This section presents the demographic composition of the respondent population. Reported first are cultural background characteristics, including ethnicity, language, and gender. Second, professional characteristics including general discipline affiliation, years of experience, and teaching role are presented.

Survey participants were individuals currently employed in a teaching capacity in higher education in Aotearoa New Zealand. Regarding cultural background (ethnicity, language, and gender) the respondent group was largely homogenous. Most respondents identified as New Zealand European (76%), while the remainder of respondents reported other ethnicities such as Australian, Chinese, Indian, and Samoan. English was the first language of 96% of respondents, implying a certain level of familiarity among respondents with the dominant language of instruction at the universities represented in this study. Of those who provided their gender (n=89), more than half, or 62%, identified as female and 38% identified as male.

The largest portion of the respondents (72%) reported their general disciplinary area as within humanities and social sciences. Of those who reported their primary field of study (n=87) within their discipline, the three most represented subject fields were humanities (e.g., history, languages, media and communication) with 30%, psychology with 25%, and education with 12%. While this discipline area demographic variable indicated a survey

population skewed to humanities and social science fields, other disciplines were represented in the sample albeit in smaller numbers. These other areas included sciences (25%), such as agriculture, veterinary studies, and computational science; and business (3%). Both the extent of teaching experience and the teaching role staff currently held were collected as indicators of the experience respondents had with teaching at the university level. The amount of teaching experience held by respondents ranged from less than one year to more than 21 years. Figure 3 displays the years of teaching experience as reported by staff.

Figure 3: Teaching Experience of Staff

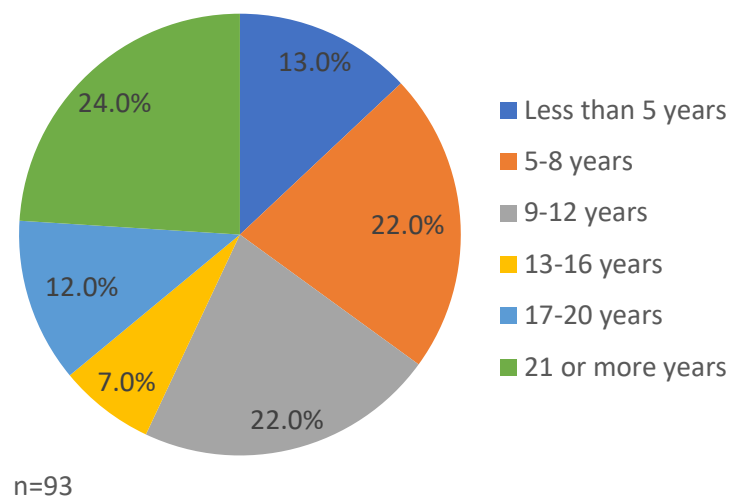
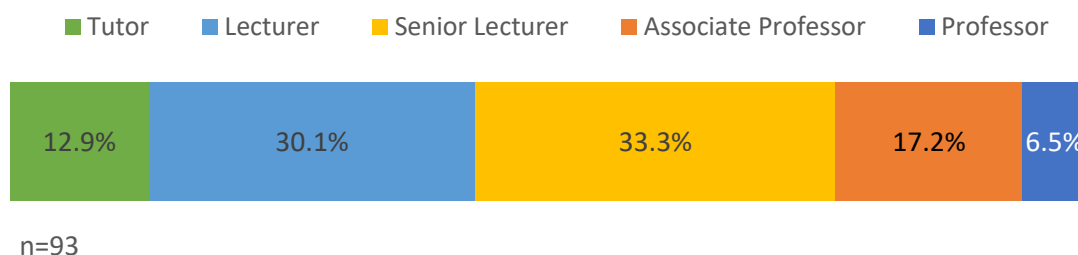


Figure 4: Teaching Roles of Staff



Thirteen percent of respondents reported having less than five years of experience as an educator. The majority of respondents, or 44%, had between five and twelve years of teaching experience. Seven percent reported 13 to 16 years, and 12% reported 17 to 20 years of experience. The final 24% of respondents reported having 21 or more years of teaching experience. Most respondents (n=93) reported their teaching role position, providing insight into the rank of surveyed staff⁵⁴. As shown in Figure 4, senior lecturers were the largest group of respondents. The second largest was lecturer (30%), followed by associate professor (17%). Bookending the roles held by respondents, 13% were tutors and 7% were professors.

Due to the limited size and variation within survey respondent backgrounds, only two of the demographic characteristics were suitable for significance testing of potential relationships with respondents' acceptability ratings of scenarios. The first variable was gender, with female and male categories. The second was years of teaching experience, with

⁵⁴ Academic staff classifications in Aotearoa New Zealand's higher education system derive from the British university system and differ to the titles commonly used in North America. For instance, lecturer in Aotearoa New Zealand is equivalent to assistant professor in Canada and the United States. Senior lecturer is equivalent to associate professor in North America, while associate professor would typically be considered professor in Canada and the United States. In Aotearoa New Zealand, tutor is a fixed-term instructional appointment and equivalent to adjunct or sessional in North America.

calculated categories of 0-8 years, 9-16 years, and 17 or more years. The data did not follow a normal distribution, so nonparametric tests were used for analysis. Results showed no significant connection ($p < .05$) between gender and acceptability ratings of writing assistance scenarios; Mann-Whitney U tests reported p-values that ranged between 1.00 and .058. There was also no relationship between years of experience and acceptability ratings, with Kruskal-Wallis results that reported p-values of 1.00 to .101.

Given the lack of statistically significant relation between these demographic characteristics and acceptability ratings, the survey results reported in this chapter focus on the acceptability ratings and related reasons reported by all respondents without disaggregation based on various demographic characteristics. Instead, the percentage of respondents rating each scenario are provided, along with the most frequently identified reasons for the ratings. Before reviewing the specific results for each writing assistance scenario, select findings are discussed to provide insight into the general conclusions drawn from the staff survey results.

5.2 Notable Findings About Staff's Views

5.2.1 Acceptable Writing Assistance Often Featured an Informative Discussion and Student Agency

The scenarios rated as acceptable by a majority of respondents included instances of collaborating and editing writing assistance. Several situations were rated acceptable by more than 90% of the survey participants. Only one scenario, however, was rated as acceptable by 100% of respondents. The scenario described the student discussing with his father the student's 'ideas for...topic choice, organisation, and possible references', following

which the student returned to writing his assessment. This instance of assistance, and other scenarios rated as acceptable by most respondents, include characteristics of third-party writing assistance that potentially signify that the activity is reasonable and appropriate.

There were two main similarities among the scenarios rated as acceptable by the majority of the respondents: the presence of a discussion and a sense of agency exhibited by the student. The occurrence of an informative or explanatory discussion between the student and the third party existed in almost every scenario deemed acceptable by the majority of respondents. Student agency also featured in these scenarios, as depicted through a description of situations that involved informative assistance which was then operationalised by the student, as opposed to activities of assistance that equated to someone other than the student doing the assessment writing. In most of the scenarios rated acceptable by the majority of respondents, the student used the writing assistance received via a discussion to inform his writing process, completing the actual revisions to his assessment on his own. The only scenario that might not as clearly reflect these features but was still majority-rated acceptable was the use of an online editing tool typically used to correct grammar, punctuation, and other language presentation issues.

5.2.2 Unacceptable Writing Assistance Often Featured a Lack of Active Participation

The majority-rated unacceptable scenarios included instances from all four subsets of third-party writing assistance—collaborating, editing, ghostwriting, and repurposing. Scenarios that described variations of an instance in which the student acquired a paper written by someone else to serve as his own assessment were rated unacceptable by over 86% or more of the respondents. Scenarios where writing assistance took the form of a third

party providing rewritten sentences/sections or additionally written material as well as situations in which the student reused earlier assessments by his peers or himself were also deemed unacceptable by half or more of the respondents. In fact, the situation that was rated unacceptable by a preponderance of respondents (at 96%) was assistance in the form of a friend's marked assessment, rewritten by the student into different words but with the original meaning retained. Common across all these scenarios was a lack of active participation and genuine contribution to the written text by the student seeking and receiving the writing assistance.

When respondents were asked to identify the reasons for which they rated these scenarios as unacceptable, the most frequently reported reason was how little or insufficient the student's participation was during the task of writing his assessment. Such lack of participation was the most commonly identified reason for unacceptability in situations where the student obtained an assessment written by someone else or had someone write his entire assessment, but also for situations where part of the student's assessment was written or rewritten during the assistance activity. Additionally, the respondents who considered instances where the student repurposed his own or someone else's previously marked work as unacceptable, reported lack of participation most often among features that indicated to them such actions were not acceptable. Staff also frequently noted concern about inadequate active participation as a reason why writing assistance involving corrections to grammar and organisation that were not understood by the student was unacceptable.

5.2.3 The Murky Area of Tech-based and Professional Writing Assistance

Beyond the majority-rated acceptable and unacceptable scenarios, existed four scenarios that indicated greater division among respondents' regard for acceptability of writing assistance. Situations that involved the use of technology-based writing aids, like the thesaurus tool in a word processing programme or an online bank of phrases commonly used in scholarly prose, split respondents on whether such activities were acceptable for students to engage in whilst composing their assessment. Likewise, the rating results of scenarios where the student sought help from a qualified professional that resulted in written feedback and rewritten sentences also suggested a lack of uniformity in how staff considered these instances of assistance. These scenarios appeared to exist in a particularly murky area, with acceptability results far less definitive than other scenarios rated by the respondents. For example, over 27% of respondents were undecided about whether writing assistance in the form of an online phrasebank was acceptable, reporting that they were not sure about acceptability or felt it depended on circumstance. Situations where the writing assistance was sought and received from a professional, like a lecturer or a paid editor, who included rewritten suggestions within the feedback also showed a divergence of thought among respondents considering acceptability. Respondents' considerations of these particular scenarios indicated that the activities may yield disparate categorisations regarding what writing assistance students should and should not engage in as they complete their assessment.

5.3 Staff's Ratings of Acceptability of Writing Assistance Scenarios

This section provides a closer review of the specific numeric results from survey participants' ratings of third-party writing assistance. As stated in Section 3.2.5 of Chapter Three, the scenario portion of the survey consisted of two separate blocks, one of which was randomly presented to each respondent. Since respondents then completed either the first 12 or the second 12 scenarios instead of all 24 scenarios, the number of responses to scenario-related questions was roughly half of the total respondent sample size. The rating question for each scenario was a 5-point Likert scale, where five was *fully acceptable* and one was *fully unacceptable*, indicating whether respondents considered the activities or practices as appropriate for a student to engage in when writing an assessment. A sixth option was added to the scale, providing respondents the option of choosing *it depends* instead of a designated level of acceptability. Survey results were aggregated into three ratings, to correspond with the acceptability categories used during the student interviews. Ratings of five (fully acceptable) and four (somewhat acceptable) were combined to represent *acceptable*. Ratings of one (fully unacceptable) and two (somewhat unacceptable) were combined to represent *unacceptable*. Ratings of three (not sure), along with the *it depends* option were combined to represent *not sure/it depends*.

Staff participants' reported acceptability ratings of the collection of writing assistance scenarios are presented in four tables. The tables display the ratings of each scenario within one of the four subsets: collaborating, editing, ghostwriting, and repurposing. Each table includes the scenario number and exact description of the activity, the number of respondents (n), followed by the count and percentage of respondents who considered the scenario *acceptable* (including fully acceptable and somewhat acceptable), *not sure/it*

depends, or *unacceptable* (including fully unacceptable and somewhat unacceptable). A collection of tables displaying each subset of scenarios listed in order from majority-rated unacceptable to majority-rated acceptable can be found in Appendix K.

In addition to the staff acceptability ratings for each scenario, the survey collected opinions on what situational features might indicate whether a scenario was acceptable or unacceptable. If respondents rated a scenario as *unacceptable*, *it depends*, or *not sure*, subsequent questions asked them to identify their main reasons for rating the scenario the way they did. A multiple response option ('choose all that apply') was provided, allowing respondents to pick more than one of the provided situational features that impacted their views of scenario acceptability. The most frequently identified situational features behind respondents' considerations of scenarios as unacceptable are also reported in the following sections. The full list of potential situational features available to respondents can be found within the survey in Appendix I.

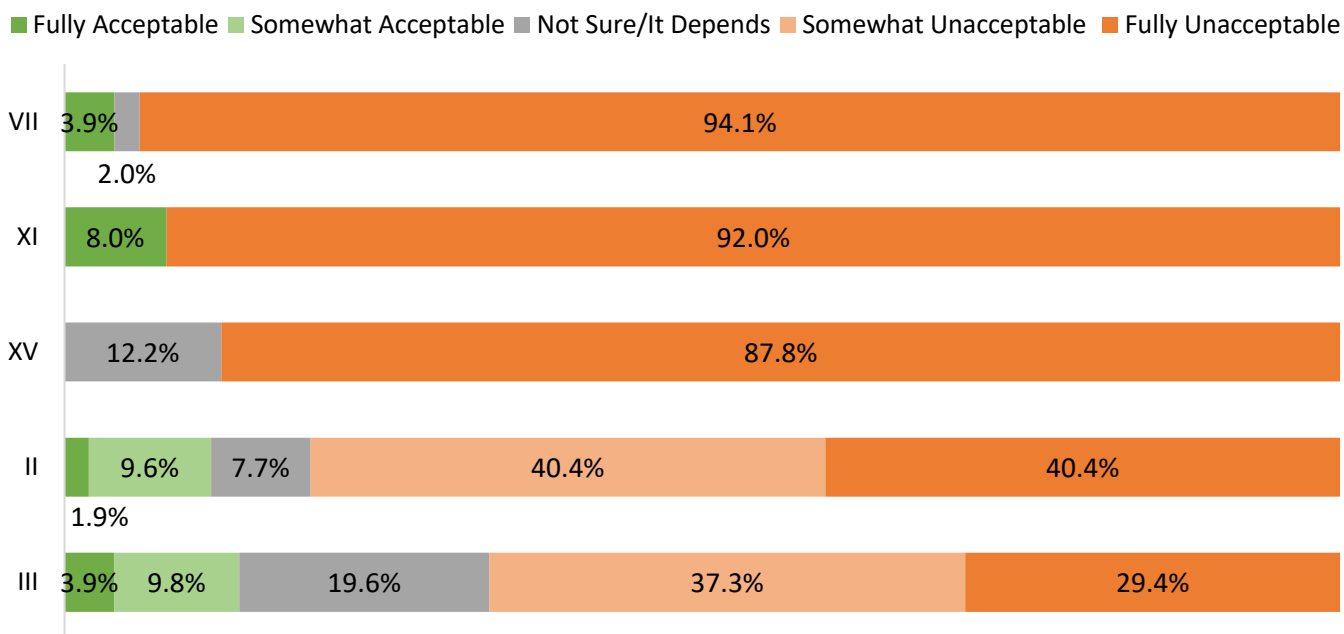
5.3.1 Ghostwriting Scenarios

All five ghostwriting scenarios were deemed *unacceptable* by most respondents, with four of the five scenarios rated as *unacceptable* by more than 80% of the respondents. These included situations in which the writing assistance took the form of an assessment written completely or partially by someone other than the student to whom it was assigned (refer to scenarios VII, XI, XV, and II in Figure 5).

Across these scenarios, the most frequent explanation for the unacceptability of such activities was the lack of participation from the student. Ninety percent of respondents listed this situational feature as a reason for their rating of scenario VII, 89% for scenario XI, and 95% for scenario XV. Other reasons identified among those who found the scenarios to

be unacceptable included the notion that the student's knowledge or ability would not be measurable, the amount of assistance was inappropriate, and the source of help was inappropriate (particularly for scenarios VII and XV). The most frequent reason for considering scenario II as *unacceptable* was the inappropriate quality (i.e., the condition or level) of the assistance received, as reported by 71% of respondents. This was followed by the belief that the quantity (i.e., the amount) of assistance was inappropriate, which was considered a reason for unacceptability by 69% of respondents.

Figure 5: Staff's Ratings of Ghostwriting Scenarios



Scenario	n	Description
VII	51	Renier gets a paper written by someone he does not know from a website. He purchases the paper and pays through the website.
XI	50	Renier gets a paper written by his friend who owes him a favour. He did not pay for the paper.
XV	49	Renier gets a paper written by someone he does not know from a website. He did not pay for the paper.
II	52	Renier starts writing but feels he cannot seem to get going. He takes what he has written to a friend and asks them for help. The friend corrects the spelling, grammar, and sentence structure of what Renier wrote. The friend also writes additional sections of the paper for Renier.
III	51	Renier copies a passage from a journal and pastes it into a paraphrase tool website, like Quillbot, that then provides a paraphrased version of the original text. Renier puts this paraphrased text in his paper and cites the original reference according to APA style.

The acceptability results for scenario III showed slightly more difference among respondent ratings than the previously mentioned ghostwriting scenarios. The scenario was still considered *unacceptable* by more than half of the respondents at 67%, with the most frequently chosen reason for such a rating reported as the student's independent knowledge or ability would not be measurable. But scenario III also had a substantial percentage of ratings of *not sure* or *it depends* at nearly 20%. Responses from these survey participants included concerns over being unable to determine what a student paraphrased and what the tool paraphrased, the extent of the paraphrased text in relation to the rest of the student's

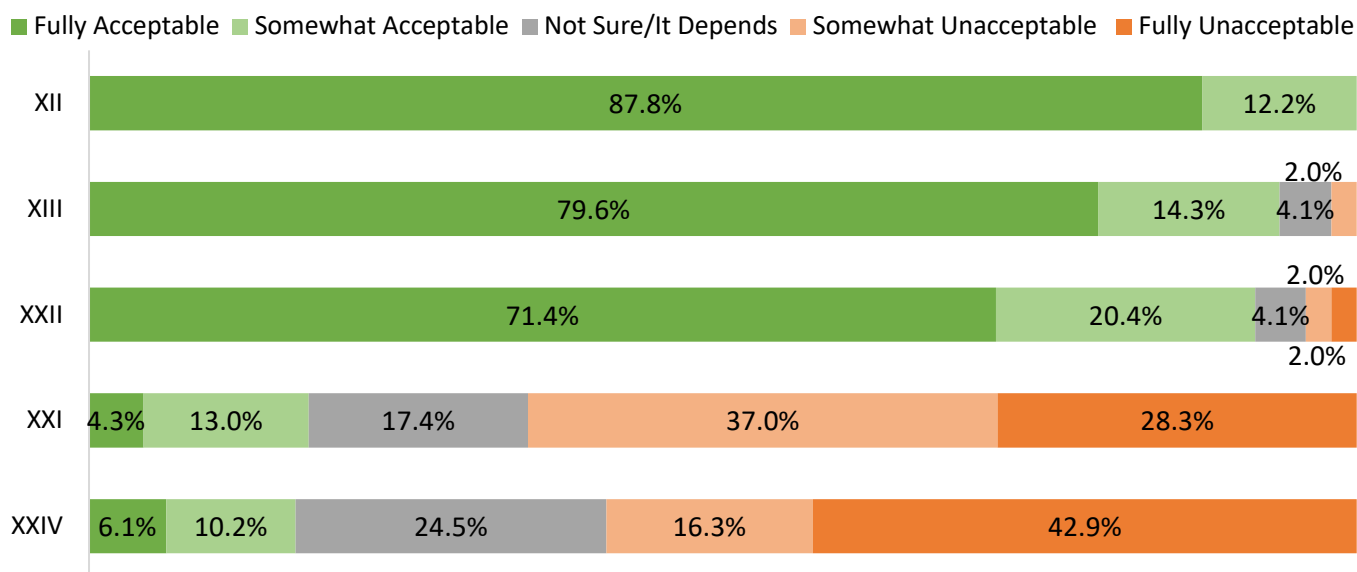
paper, if there were specific instructions from the course instructor, and ethical uncertainty over the use of a paraphrasing tool itself. This finding indicated that the use of a paraphrasing tool, like that of Quillbot in scenario III, appeared to be a slightly less clear area when it came to acceptability than the activities presented in the other scenarios of this subset.

5.3.2 Collaborating Scenarios

Three of the five collaborating scenarios were considered acceptable by most respondents. As shown in Figure 6, scenario XII was unanimously acceptable while scenarios XIII and XXII were both deemed acceptable by more than 90% of respondents. These three scenarios all included a student engaging with some form of collaborative writing assistance and then applying the received help through their own independent writing and corrective action.

The remaining two scenarios in this subset were considered *unacceptable* by over half the respondents. These scenarios (XXI and XXIV) also received as many or more *not sure/it depends* ratings than *acceptable* ratings. Both these scenarios presented third-party writing assistance in the form of the student using a classmate's work and written material during the production of his own assessment. While such instances were still considered unacceptable by most respondents, *not sure/it depends* ratings at 17% (for scenario XXI) and 25% (for scenario XXIV) indicate a conspicuous lack of uniformity in how these types of writing assistance activities were considered among teaching staff.

Figure 6: Staff's Ratings of Collaborating Scenarios



Scenario	n	Description
XII	49	Renier starts writing his paper and asks for help from his father. Renier and his father talk about Renier's ideas for the paper, including topic choice, organisation, and possible references. Renier reflects upon the discussion with his father and returns to writing his paper.
XIII	49	Renier and a classmate get together to work on their papers. They discuss their topics and ideas about what to write. They share references. They draft their papers independently and review each other's work making corrections to spelling and grammar.
XXII	49	Renier drafts a paper and asks a friend to proofread it. The friend reviews his paper and circles all the spelling and grammatical errors that Renier should correct, as well as offering ideas on additional content to support Renier's argument in the paper. Renier goes through and makes changes to his paper, correcting errors and adding supporting information his friend told him about.
XXI	46	Renier asks to see a classmate's paper to get an idea about what they are expected to do for the assessment. The classmate provides their paper to Renier to review. Later, Renier writes his own paper based on what he liked and remembered from the classmate's paper.
XXIV	49	Renier and a classmate get together to work on their papers. They divide up the task between themselves, with Renier writing his sections and the classmate writing their sections. They then combine the sections into one paper, each editing their own copy.

The most frequently identified explanation behind respondents' *unacceptable* ratings for both scenarios XXI and XXIV was that independent knowledge or ability would not be measurable. This reason was noted by 86% of respondents regarding scenario XXIV and 67% regarding scenario XXI. All (100%) of the respondents who rated scenario XXIV as a case of *it depends*, believed acceptability would hinge on the presence of specific instructions from the lecturer. The notion of assignment instructions was also seen among those who

reported their rating as *not sure*—with comments about group versus individual task directions. Among those who deemed the scenario XXI an *it depends* situation, 100% considered the quantity of assistance received to influence their view of acceptability.

5.3.3 Editing Scenarios

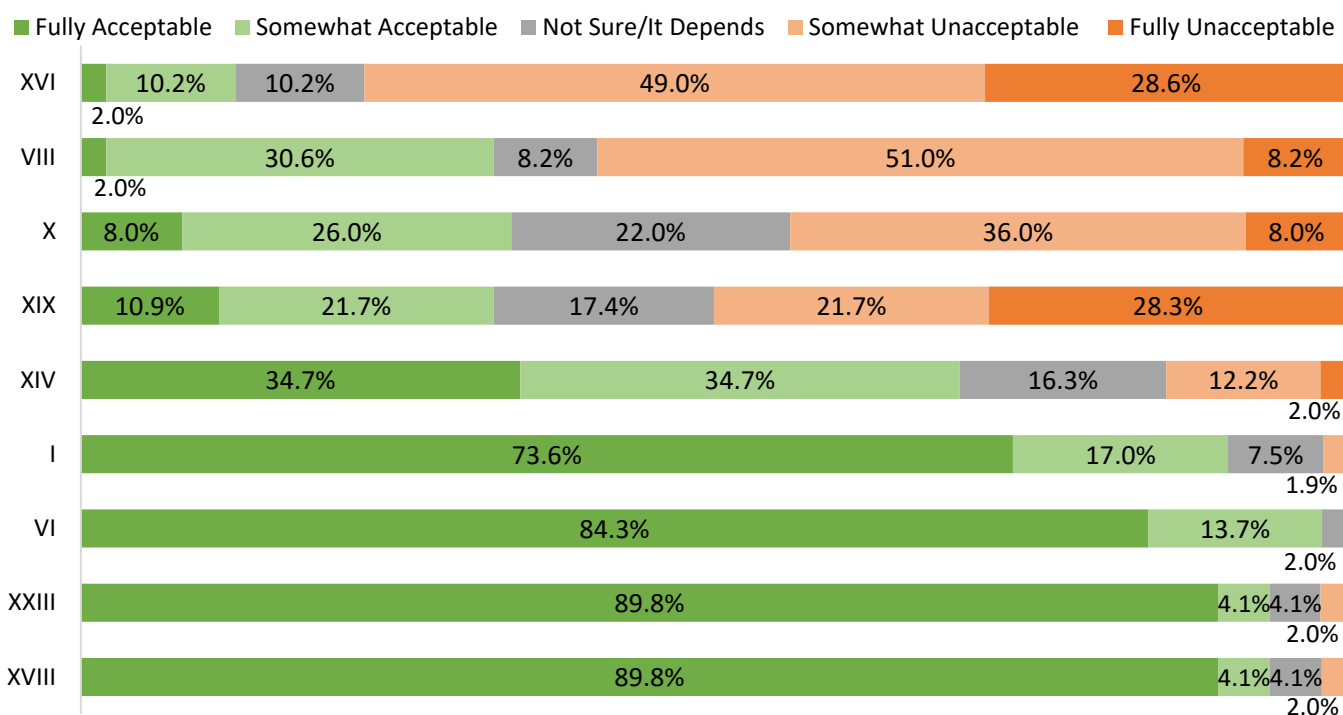
Of the nine scenarios in the editing subset, four were rated as *acceptable* by over 90% of respondents (refer to scenarios VI, XVIII, XXIII, and I in Figure 7). These particular editing scenarios, along with scenarios XII and XIII in the collaborating subset, were considered acceptable by the largest percentage of respondents. Similar to the collaborating scenarios that were rated *acceptable* by most respondents, the first three of these editing scenarios included instances of third-party writing assistance that the student then used as he went through his assessment and made alterations himself. Scenario VI, like scenario XII, described writing assistance that took place in the form of textual corrections paired with a discussion and subsequent autonomous writing, was not rated *unacceptable* by any respondents. All four of these editing scenarios described situations of assistance focused on proofreading matters, such as grammar and spelling. Scenario XIV, which described writing assistance from a professional editor, was also considered *acceptable*, albeit by a smaller majority of 69%.

Scenarios VIII and XVI, on the other hand, were both rated as *unacceptable* by a majority of respondents. The first of these two situations included assistance from a peer who completed textual alterations to the student's assessment without the student fully understanding why changes were made. Scenario VIII was deemed *unacceptable* by 59% of respondents, with the most common (at 79%) situational feature denoting this

unacceptability being the lack of participation from the student. Scenario XVI included assistance via grammar corrections and alterations to content and argument. The activity was rated *unacceptable* by 78% of respondents. The most frequently chosen reason for this unacceptability, at 74%, was that the student's independent knowledge or ability would not be measurable. The lack of participation from the student was another reason the activity was not acceptable, indicated by 61% of respondents.

The ratings of other scenarios in the editing subset of third-party writing assistance resulted in greater split among respondents' thoughts about acceptability. With scenario VIII, slightly more respondents considered the activity *unacceptable* (59%) than *acceptable* (33%). Seventy-nine percent of respondents identified the lack of participation as a reason for the situation's status of *unacceptable*. Scenario XIX was rated *unacceptable* by 50% of respondents, with a further 17% who rated it *not sure* or *it depends*. The most frequently reported reasons for an unacceptable rating were the lack of participation and the inappropriate quality of assistance, both identified by 65% of respondents. Those who felt uncertain about the scenario thus rated it *not sure/it depends* reported doing so because they believed acceptability depended on the extent to which rewriting was done—the quantity (i.e., how much) and the quality (i.e., the level or condition of changes).

Figure 7: Staff's Ratings of Editing Scenarios



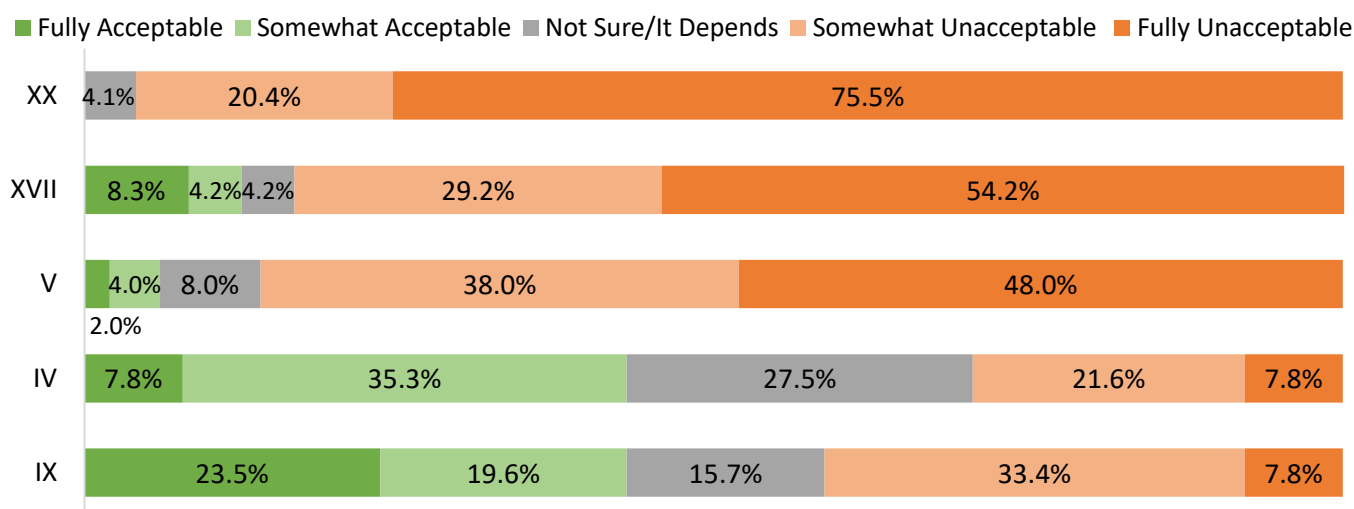
Scenario	n	Description
XVI	49	Renier asks his mother to proofread his drafted paper before he submits it. She makes corrections to spelling and punctuation. She makes adjustments to the content and the wording that alters Renier's argument in the paper.
VIII	49	Renier asks his flatmate to help him by proofreading his drafted paper. The flatmate sits at the computer and changes grammar, sentence structure, and the organisation of the paper. Renier is not sure why some of the changes were made.
X	50	Renier takes his drafted paper to another lecturer to review before submitting it to his course instructor. The lecturer provides Renier with feedback in the form of both comments and rewritten sentences. Renier revises his paper to include the rewritten sentences.
XIX	46	Renier pays a professional editor to review his drafted paper. The editor corrects spelling, grammar, and punctuation. The editor also recommends changes to improve the clarity of Renier's statements and provides rewritten sentences via Word's track changes mode. The editor emails the paper back to Renier and they do not discuss the comments. Renier accepts all the changes made.
XIV	49	Renier pays a professional editor to review his drafted paper. The editor corrects spelling, grammar, and punctuation. The editor also recommends changes to improve the clarity of Renier's statements through comments written in the margins. Renier discusses the comments with the editor and changes his writing based on the comments.
I	53	Renier writes a draft and puts it through Grammarly, making all the changes the programme suggests.
VI	51	Renier asks his older sister to help him by proofreading his drafted paper. She sits with him, pointing out mistakes she says he needs to address. Through their discussion, Renier understands all the comments she makes. Renier then sits at the computer and revises his paper.
XXIII	49	Renier drafts a paper and asks a friend to edit it. The friend reviews his paper and circles all the spelling and grammatical errors that Renier should correct. Renier goes through and makes corrections to his paper.
XVIII	49	Renier takes his drafted paper to the Centre for Teaching and Learning. A Learning Advisor suggests changes to grammar and structure and explains the comments to Renier. Renier sits at the computer and makes edits based on the Learning Advisor's comments.

Of all the editing situations, the ratings of scenario X showed the most constricted division in perceived acceptability. Seeking and receiving writing assistance from a lecturer who was not the course instructor, as described in scenario X, was deemed *unacceptable* by 44% of respondents. This was only slightly more than those who rated the situation *acceptable* (33%) and *not sure* or *it depends* (22%). The most frequently chosen reason for rating this scenario as unacceptable was the notion that the activity would create an unfair advantage, noted by 68% of respondents. The idea of fairness was also seen among the reasons respondents rated the scenario as a case of *not sure*, as was a concern over the lecturer rewriting sentences for the student.

5.3.4 Repurposing Scenarios

As shown in Figure 8, respondents rated three repurposing scenarios as *unacceptable*: scenarios XX, V, and XVII. At 96%, scenario XX was considered *unacceptable* by most respondents. There were no respondents who rated the scenario as acceptable. While scenarios V and XVII did have a small number of *acceptable* and *not sure/it depends* ratings, the majority of respondents believed both scenarios were *unacceptable*, at 86% and 83% respectively. A variety of reasons as to why the scenarios were unacceptable were reported by respondents. Frequently reported situational features included the activity created an unfair advantage for the student and the view that the student's knowledge or skill would not be measurable due to the third-party writing assistance. The most frequently identified reason the scenarios were unacceptable, though, was the apparent lack of participation by the student. This concern about the extent of a student's participation during writing assistance was listed by over 75% of respondents when asked why they considered each of these scenarios (XX, V, and XVII) unacceptable.

Figure 8: Staff's Ratings of Repurposing Scenarios



Scenario	n	Description
XX	49	Renier gets permission from a friend to use their marked paper from an earlier semester. Renier rewords each sentence so that the wording is different while the original meaning is retained.
XVII	48	Renier locates a paper he previously wrote and submitted for a different course. Since the assessment prompt was similar, he updates the title page to reflect the current course and instructor name.
V	50	Renier visits a student file sharing site where he has previously found helpful lecture notes from class sessions he was unable to attend. He finds assessments similar to his assigned research paper. Adding to his draft, he takes short sections from multiple papers and inserts them into his paper, rewriting some of them.
IV	51	While writing his paper, Renier uses the University of Manchester's Academic Phrasebank to help make his writing sound more scholarly. He copies phrases from the phrasebank into his paper, plugging in his topic words.
IX	51	Renier tries to paraphrase part of a reference he wants to include in his paper but feels like it is not working. He uses the thesaurus/synonym tool in Word to replace certain words in the source text with similar words.

Perceptions about scenarios IV and IX were more divided, with respondents split across the range of acceptability categories. When rating scenario IV, 43% of respondents considered the use of expressions from an online phrasebank *acceptable*. More respondents, however, viewed the scenario as either unacceptable or an instance of which they were not certain. Twenty-nine percent rated such activity *unacceptable* largely because of the lack of participation from the student in the assessment task (according to 67% of respondents) and the inability to measure the student's knowledge or ability (according to 60% of

respondents). A further 28% of respondents rated scenario IV as *not sure* or *it depends*. Of all the scenarios in the study, scenario IV had the highest percentage of respondents who considered acceptability indeterminable or dependent on certain circumstances. Such ratings were typically paired with concerns about the quantity of assistance received and the student's level of participation.

Review of scenario IX also showed wide variation in the consideration of its acceptability. Forty-three percent of respondents rated the use of Word's thesaurus/synonym tool to substitute select words in the source text with similar words as *acceptable*. Forty-one percent, however, rated this instance of writing assistance as *unacceptable*. According to these respondents, the most commonly noted reasons for why the scenario was unacceptable were the inability to measure the student's independent knowledge or ability (listed by 50% of respondents) and the lack of participation on behalf of the student (listed by 45% of respondents). Those who rated the situation *not sure/it depends* (16%) most frequently listed the quantity of assistance received as the reason behind their rating.

5.4 Staff's Conceptions of Plagiarism

Staff definition of plagiarism varied between concrete, operational rules to more abstract considerations. The collection of definitions ranged from 'guided by Turnitin results but essentially not using references or directly copying the work of other' to 'failing to acknowledge the mana⁵⁵ of other people whose original stories and ideas have helped you develop your own'. Within these various definitions, however, were commonalities

⁵⁵ In te reo Māori, mana refers to a person's authority, prestige, influence and/or power (Williams, 2006).

regarding what staff conceived as the main elements of plagiarism. Content analysis of staff respondents' definitions of plagiarism revealed three main elements in the consideration of what constitutes plagiarism. These elements were using others' work, failing to properly credit others' work, and passing off others' work as one's own.

5.4.1 Using Others' Work

Comments that reflected the notion of using others' work were present in all the responses (n=107) to the survey item 'please provide your definition of plagiarism'. Often the idea that plagiarism required the use of someone else's work was not explicitly stated, but rather implied due to the nature of the activity, e.g., 'handing in work that is not 100% the student's work'; 'repetition of another's ideas'; 'intentional or unintentional duplication'. There were 64 mentions of the use of others' work where respondents used more direct language to convey this idea, such as 'copying someone else's work', 'using another person's work', and 'where you copy word for word or paragraph'.

Among many staff, this first element of plagiarism was more expansive than just using someone's words. For 96% (n=103) of the survey respondents, the unattributed or unacknowledged use of others' work encompassed not only words—the language a person used to communicate—but also their ideas, thoughts, concepts, as well as their produced materials, data, images, designs, and experimental results. Several staff reported definitions of plagiarism that revolved around the idea of using someone's 'expressions of intellect' or 'intellectual property' without adequate reference as to what constitutes plagiarism. The perceptions of plagiarism among respondents indicated that staff think about plagiarism as more than just the misuse of another person's words.

5.4.2 Not Crediting Others for Their Work

Staff's views exhibited a link between the element of using others' work and the element of attribution, as evidenced by the closeness of these two items within responses. The notion of acknowledging and attributing sources to their authors was often mentioned alongside the use of someone else's work. The definitions provided by respondents included 62 explicit mentions of not giving credit to those whose work was used by students in their assessment. Failure to acknowledge sources included both the complete lack of attribution as well as improper recognition through 'inappropriate' or 'inadequate' citation.

5.4.3 Passing Work Off as One's Own

The notion of a student passing off, or appropriating, the work done by others to then represent it as their own work was mentioned 48 times within staff definitions of plagiarism. Examples of this element as expressed by survey participants were: 'misrepresenting someone else's work as your own', 'not acknowledging the work of someone else and implying it is your own', 'presenting work that is not your own as being original to you', and 'claiming others' intellectual effort as your own'. This element of appropriation—essentially students claiming they wrote text or completed work that was actually done by others—was not as overt in respondents' statements on what constituted plagiarism than the previous two elements. It was, however, considered an important situational feature by respondents when determining whether a situation should be deemed an act of plagiarism. Using a scale of one to five (one being *not important* and five being *very important*), respondents were asked to assign a level of importance to a selection of five situational aspects typical to potentially plagiaristic activities including 'presenting others'

work as one's own'. With an overall mean score of 4.87 and 91% of respondents finding it *very important*, the presence of appropriation appeared prominent in staff's considerations of whether a situation constituted plagiarism.

5.4.4 Less Commonly Noted Aspects of Plagiarism

Expressed much less often in staff plagiarism definitions were issues such as reusing one's own work and the intentionality behind students' use of assistance. Both aspects were mentioned in less than 10% of responses. Nine respondents' conceptualisations of plagiarism included the recognition of recycling one's own work, more commonly labelled by the academy as self-plagiarism. While this exact term was not always used to describe this type of activity, direct and indirect language in survey responses indicated that the staff's perceptions of what constituted plagiarism sometimes expanded the two elements of using others' work and not attributing sources to include using one's own work when not properly cited as such.

A small group of staff also indicated concerns about the influence of intentionality on what situations get called plagiarism. Five respondents clearly noted the intention behind an activity, considering plagiarism to be the intentional misuse (e.g., replicating without citing original source) of others' work or the intentional representation of others' work as the student's own work. A few respondents' definitions referenced inadvertent acts, placing such instances outside of their interpretation of plagiarism since the activities were done 'unintentionally out of ignorance of appropriate practices'. Only one survey participant explicitly included the unintentional misuse of others' work as part of what they considered plagiarism.

5.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter described staff's views on plagiarism as generally constructed upon three main elements. The first two elements were closely connected: first, using others' work and second, doing so without proper credit attributing the source. In addition, most respondents considered appropriation of others' work as one's own another important element of plagiarism. Many respondents thought about the use of another's work in a broad sense, considering *work* to include an individual or group's knowledge or intellectual output—their ideas, views, thoughts, expressions, and products. This consideration meant that plagiarism was more than just the replication of someone else's words.

In addition to reporting staff's beliefs about plagiarism, the results of the survey uncovered the types of third-party writing assistance situations most staff perceived as either acceptable or unacceptable, as well as writing assistance activities where respondents' ideas about acceptability were less uniform. The majority of staff found acceptable the instances of writing assistance that involved a discussion about the student's work or conveyed a level of agency in the student's composition or subsequent alteration of his assessment. Most staff considered instances of writing assistance where the student was seen as an inactive participant as indication the assistance was unacceptable. Of all the scenarios staff reviewed, two instances of assistance from technology-based tools and two instances of assistance via comments and rewriting by professionals produced the most disagreement regarding the acceptability of writing assistance. The division among staff's perceptions of these scenarios revealed the murkiness of determining acceptability of such forms of third-party writing assistance. Bringing together the staff survey results from this chapter and the student interview findings from Chapter Four, the next chapter further

expands the investigation into perceptions of third-party writing assistance and plagiarism.

Chapter Six adds a deeper layer of understanding to the interpretation of the data by providing a comparison of students' and staff's perceptions.

CHAPTER SIX | CONVERGING AND DIVERGING VIEWS AMONG STUDENTS AND STAFF

While the separate results from students and staff expose views within these two participant groups, an integrated analysis of the full data collection can provide us with even more insight into the areas of third-party writing assistance and plagiarism. The purpose of this chapter is to do just that: further illuminate the acceptability of third-party writing assistance according to perceptions held by those in the university community. Comparing the beliefs of student and staff participants in the study, Chapter Six is organised into three parts. The discussion highlights areas of convergence and divergence identified in the integration of the findings from the two separate tracks of data collection and analysis. Similarities in how the interviewed students thought about and determined the acceptability of writing assistance scenarios and how the surveyed staff rated scenarios are discussed in section 6.1. Areas where differences existed in how both groups considered scenarios are discussed in section 6.2. Finally, section 6.3 provides a comparison of students' and staff's conceptualisations of plagiarism, interpreted from their reported definitions and beliefs about what constitutes an act of plagiarism.

6.1 Shared Perceptions About Acceptability of Writing Assistance

In rating third-party writing assistance scenarios, students' and staff's views overlapped both in some of the underlying ideas about what situational features made a scenario acceptable or unacceptable and in which forms of writing assistance were less determinable. Three areas where the results from student interviews and the staff survey converged are presented in this section. The first similarity was the notion that the focus of

alterations to student writing could influence acceptability, with adjustments that addressed writing mechanics being acceptable and adjustments that led to changes to subject-matter content being unacceptable. The second similarity was the importance of the students' participation in indicating acceptability, with both groups reporting that a lack of active participation and contribution indicated an incident of writing assistance was unacceptable. The third similarity between student and staff participants was the apparent murky nature of technology-based phrasing tools as evidenced by a high level of uncertainty among both groups when it came to students using these sources of assistance while writing an assessment. The following subsections explore in detail each of these areas of shared perceptions.

6.1.1 Adjustments to Writing Mechanics were Okay, Adjustments to Subject-matter Content were Not

One perception of acceptability reflected in both the student and staff results was the distinction between alterations focused on writing mechanics and alterations focused on subject-matter content. There existed a sense among student participants that writing assistance that focused on writing mechanics alterations (such as corrections to spelling, grammar, and punctuation) fit within the realm of 'lower-order concerns' (De Oliveira, 2019, p. 247) centred around the presentation of the text. Students discussed this view as help that focused on *how to write*. Receiving assistance that addressed writing mechanics was seen as having little impact on a student's authorship status since this type of assistance was thought of as extra, additional, and somewhat separate to writing content. As such, the resulting changes were superficial and therefore held less importance in the writing process.

With a diminished significance assigned to writing mechanics alterations, students often believed writing assistance that focused on these types of changes was acceptable.

Scenarios where alterations were seen to move beyond mechanical issues into adjustments to subject-matter content, however, were viewed as more substantive. Nearly all the interviewed students repeatedly spoke about scenarios in a way that conveyed a separation between assistance with *how to write* and assistance with *what to write*. The former instances were perceived as ‘just help with grammar’ (Emily), therefore deemed acceptable by student participants. The latter instances were seen as changes or additions to ‘the content itself’ (Hao), rendering the assistance unacceptable. Staff ratings of scenarios also suggested this distinction. Scenarios that described instances of writing assistance that resulted in suggestions or changes to the student’s spelling, grammar, or other mechanical issues were rated *acceptable* by most staff. This included scenarios XXIII⁵⁶, XIII⁵⁷, and XVIII⁵⁸—each considered acceptable instances of writing assistance by 94% of surveyed staff. Scenarios that described changes made to the student’s writing that impacted his argument or added rewritten sections, in effect altering the subject-matter content of the assessment, were often rated as *unacceptable* by a majority of staff. Such scenarios included

⁵⁶ Scenario XXIII: Renier drafts a paper and asks a friend to edit it. The friend reviews his paper and circles all the spelling and grammatical errors that Renier should correct. Renier goes through and makes corrections to his paper.

⁵⁷ Scenario XIII: Renier and a classmate get together to work on their papers. They discuss their topics and ideas about what to write. They share references. They draft their papers independently and review each other’s work making corrections to spelling and grammar.

⁵⁸ Scenario XVIII: Renier takes his drafted paper to the Centre for Teaching and Learning. A Learning Advisor suggests changes to grammar and structure and explains the comments to Renier. Renier sits at the computer and makes edits based on the Learning Advisor’s comments.

II⁵⁹, which was deemed *unacceptable* by 81% of staff, and XVI⁶⁰, which 78% of staff found unacceptable.

The same distinction has been noted in earlier research that examined perceptions around proofreading. McNally and Kooyman (2017) found that university students and teaching staff believed minor copyediting was acceptable; this included corrections to punctuation, homophone mistakes, or other mechanical issues encompassed by assistance with *how to write*. Harwood (2023) also reported students' and staff's perceptions of these textual interventions of a 'relatively modest nature' (p. 23) as acceptable, while the editing of content (alteration of material or argument—*what to write*) was considered not acceptable. The focus of the writing assistance, and whether alterations consist of mechanical corrections or changes to subject-matter content, appears to play a part in the perceptions both students and staff hold when considering the acceptability of a student's use of third-party writing assistance.

6.1.2 Participation and Contribution were Important when Determining Acceptability

Another perception shared by students and staff was the consideration of a student's participation during the writing assistance activity. When student participants perceived that the student in a scenario was engaged and actively participating through the process of receiving the assistance, then that led them to believe the assistance was an acceptable

⁵⁹ Scenario II: Renier starts writing but feels he cannot seem to get going. He takes what he has written to a friend and asks them for help. The friend corrects the spelling, grammar, and sentence structure of what Renier wrote. The friend also writes additional sections of the paper for Renier.

⁶⁰ Scenario XVI: Renier asks his mother to proofread his drafted paper before he submits it. She makes corrections to spelling and punctuation. She makes adjustments to the content and the wording that alters Renier's argument in the paper.

activity. Most students spoke about the occurrence of a discussion during instances of assistance as a clear indication of active participation from the student receiving the writing assistance. Examples of this were seen in their considerations of scenarios VI⁶¹ and XVIII⁶², which were unanimously rated *acceptable* by all the students, and scenario XII⁶³, which was rated *acceptable* by all but one student. Such beliefs have been expressed by students in earlier research; talking with the source of assistance and having corrections explained to them meant the assistance was acceptable (Higbee et al., 2011). In the current study, scenarios VI, XVIII, and XII were also rated *acceptable* by over 90% of survey staff, suggesting that active and engaged participation was also something teaching staff took into account when considering whether writing assistance was acceptable.

On the other side of this opinion about participation, was the idea that a lack or absence of participation could indicate that writing assistance was not acceptable. During their interviews, students presented views based on ideas about labour including the notion that not investing the effort into doing the necessary work to compose an assessment signalled passivity on the student's part. Due to this lack of active participation, the writing assistance was considered unacceptable. The clearest illustration of this perception was seen

⁶¹ Scenario VI: Renier asks his older sister to help him by proofreading his drafted paper. She sits with him, pointing out mistakes she says he needs to address. Through their discussion, Renier understands all the comments she makes. Renier then sits at the computer and revises his paper.

⁶² Scenario XVIII: Renier takes his drafted paper to the Centre for Teaching and Learning. A Learning Advisor suggests changes to grammar and structure and explains the comments to Renier. Renier sits at the computer and makes edits based on the Learning Advisor's comments.

⁶³ Scenario XII: Renier starts writing his paper and asks for help from his father. Renier and his father talk about Renier's ideas for the paper, including topic choice, organisation, and possible references. Renier reflects upon the discussion with his father and returns to writing his paper.

in the consideration of ghostwriting scenarios, including VII⁶⁴, XI⁶⁵, and XV⁶⁶. All the students who reviewed these scenarios rated them *unacceptable*, largely due to their belief that the student was not putting forth the effort and doing the labour of writing his assessment, as evidenced by his lack of contribution to the text. Likewise, the majority of staff rated these scenarios as *unacceptable* (between 88% and 94%), and most frequently identified the lack of active participation as a reason for their consideration of the situations as unacceptable writing assistance.

6.1.3 Phrasing Tools Received a Mixture of Acceptability Ratings

Common between the study's student and staff participants was the mixture of ratings each group gave scenarios that involved a student using technological tools to assist with phrasing: scenarios III and IV. Scenario III⁶⁷ involved an online paraphrasing tool that the student used to create a paraphrased version of a passage of text from a reference he was using in his assessment. While just over half of the surveyed staff considered the use of this type of assistance *unacceptable*, another 20% were unsure about whether the situation was acceptable or unacceptable. Compared to other scenarios, this was a high percentage of *not sure and it depends* ratings from staff. This view of indeterminate acceptability was also seen in interviews with students. For example, Phil and Liv both reported being unsure how to

⁶⁴ Scenario VII: Renier gets a paper written by someone he does not know from a website. He purchases the paper and pays through the website.

⁶⁵ Scenario XI: Renier gets a paper written by his friend who owes him a favour. He did not pay for the paper.

⁶⁶ Scenario XV: Renier gets a paper written by someone he does not know from a website. He did not pay for the paper.

⁶⁷ Scenario III: Renier copies a passage from a journal and pastes it into a paraphrase tool website, like Quillbot, that then provides a paraphrased version of the original text. Renier puts this paraphrased text in his paper and cites the original reference according to APA style.

rate the scenario given their inability to definitively call the use of a paraphrasing tool acceptable or unacceptable. Other students though, like Mateo and Violet, did believe the scenario was unacceptable but came to different conclusions about the activity constituting plagiarism. Mateo explained that the incident was plagiarism since the student was ‘taking work that he didn’t do and passing it off as work that he did do’; whereas Violet felt that the use of a paraphrasing tool could not be considered plagiarism since the resulting text was indeed paraphrased and not a direct quote nor exact replication of the referenced text. Disagreement, and uncertainty, about the acceptability of using a phrasing tool mirrors the fact that these tools have been framed as both constituting academic dishonesty (Ansoorge et al., 2021) and supporting corpus-based writing pedagogy (Roe & Perkins, 2022).

Another writing assistance activity where students and staff both displayed disagreement among their respective groups was scenario IV⁶⁸. This situation involved an online phrasebank that the student used by copying phrases that conformed to conventional academic writing style and plugging them into his assessment. The acceptability ratings for this scenario assigned by student participants included all three options, *acceptable*, *not sure*, and *unacceptable*. Although Ava initially described feeling unsure about how she wanted to rate the incident, she gravitated towards a rating of *acceptable* since she perceived the website as reputable and felt that the student was getting help ‘communicating his points in a scholarly way...I don’t see anything wrong with that’. Similarly, Chih-ming rated the scenario *acceptable* based on his belief that the tool ‘teaches how to write’ through an

⁶⁸ Scenario IV: While writing his paper, Renier uses the University of Manchester’s Academic Phrasebank to help make his writing sound more scholarly. He copies phrases from the phrasebank into his paper, plugging in his topic words.

offering of sample phrases. With a rating of *not sure*, Liv posed a question to explain her interpretation that the acceptability of the scenario depended on how the student used the phrasebank: 'did he copy and paste that whole whatever [phrase] and just put that in or did he look at what was written and then modify what he had already written?'. Zoe rated the situation *unacceptable*, pointing out the word 'copied' in the scenario description meant the student was lifting text instead of 'writing it in his own words'.

Results from the survey showed that staff were also not uniform in their considerations of the use of a phrasing tool like an academic phrasebank. Informed by phraseology and formulaic language (Davis & Morley, 2018), a phrasebank might help students learn to write according to the style and sound of their discipline. As seen in a study by Pecorari and Shaw (2012), acceptability ratings for using this form of third-party writing assistance showed a difference of opinions among staff. In the current study, 43% of staff found the scenario *acceptable*, while 29% deemed it *unacceptable*. And, with the highest percentage of *not sure/it depends* ratings of all scenarios, 27% of staff were uncertain about the activity's acceptability. Variation among teaching staff regarding the acceptability of this form of writing assistance could be caused by disciplinary differences or attributes of the phrases used, such as frequency and length (Davis & Morley, 2015). Such aspects could also explain the substantial number (over one quarter) of staff who exhibited uncertainty when considering the acceptability of a student using a phrasing aid while writing an assessment.

Among both students and staff there were individuals who reported not knowing the specific tools named in scenarios III and IV or were unfamiliar, in a more general sense, with paraphrasing aids and public collections of academic writing phrases available for copying.

These types of third-party writing assistance may not be as well-known as other types of outsourcing options where students can obtain complete, fully bespoke assessments or download existing assessments written by other students. Aids for phrasing, however, continue to proliferate as evidenced by the results from an online search for '*paraphrasing tool*' hitting 4.5 million recently (Roe & Perkins, 2022), up from 550,000 in 2017 (Rogerson & McCarthy, 2017). Improving awareness of the existence of such resources is crucial, particularly among staff who should be informed as to how they can address student use of this type of third-party writing assistance.

6.2 Different Perceptions About Acceptability of Writing Assistance

While the findings from the student interviews and staff survey exposed areas where their perceptions matched, the comparison of datasets also highlighted areas where students' and staff's views diverged. The following subsections describe three areas in which the student and staff participants presented different perceptions of third-party writing assistance and ways of considering what situational features indicated unacceptability. To start, section 6.2.1 explores the divergence between students and staff regarding what forms of writing assistance caused the most uncertainty for each group. Then, the variation in staff and students' perceptions regarding the occurrence of a monetary transaction during writing assistance is presented. Lastly, a difference of opinion in why third-party writing assistance was inappropriate is reviewed through a detailed examination of the two groups' perceptions about seeking and receiving assistance from another lecturer.

6.2.1 When Students were Unsure, but Staff were Not

Sometimes, the way students talked about writing assistance scenarios evoked a sense of uncertainty in their determination of whether an activity was acceptable or unacceptable. For example, three of the five students who reviewed scenario I⁶⁹ were unsure whether engaging in this form of writing assistance was acceptable. For these students, the issue was not confusion over if the scenario was plagiarism—it was uniformly labelled as not plagiarism by all of them—but rather concern that this sort of assistance may not be acceptable given their perception that it did not support learning. Since they believed the student was merely taking on the textual alterations provided by the writing aid software and not actively considering the suggestions in a thoughtful way, they perceived the situation as potentially not acceptable. A similar reasoning exists within the anti-proofreading stance taken by some writing centre tutors and English language instructors. Concerns include the notion that ‘students will fail to reflect upon and learn from...interventions’ (Harwood, 2023, p. 5) and that they will not develop self-editing skills (McNally & Kooyman, 2017). The students in this study echoed these concerns about student learning.

The source of writing assistance described in scenario I, Grammarly, is promoted as a *communication assistant* that offers suggestions related to spelling, grammar, punctuation, conciseness, and tone via its popular free version (Grammarly, n.d.). Based on that depiction, it is plausible that this *assistant* would be perceived as a writing aid analogous to

⁶⁹ Scenario I: Renier writes a draft and puts it through Grammarly, making all the changes the programme suggests.

a basic spell check feature of a word processing programme used during proofreading. Given this consideration, it makes sense that staff would believe the assistance acceptable. Results from the current study showed that the uncertainty seen among the interviewed students was not evident among staff. In fact, over 90% of surveyed staff considered scenario I acceptable. Encouragement from teaching staff for students to have assessments proofread prior to submission (Harwood et al., 2009; Scott & Turner, 2008) conveys a message of acceptability for this type of third-party writing assistance. The findings among interviewed students in this study, however, brings into question whether all students will automatically perceive such tools as something they can, or even should, use during their writing process. If institutions align with the staff view of tools like Grammarly as an acceptable form of writing assistance, it is important to incorporate this assistance into curriculum. Research has shown that pairing these types of writing assistance tools with instruction from learning advisors (O'Neill & Russell, 2019a, 2019b) can help improve both students' writing skills and confidence. Incorporating the tool into classroom or academic support instruction communicates to students how to engage with the tool in a thoughtful, reflective way that supports their learning. This move would also allay any concerns students may have about whether seeking and receiving this form of writing assistance was acceptable and permitted.

With students' typical conception of plagiarism as the use of others' work, deeming the use of one's own work as plagiarism is likely a confusing or unworkable reconfiguration of the notion. Students may be less inclined to think that reusing their own work is an unacceptable tactic or that it is a form of plagiarism (commonly called self-plagiarism). Research has shown that many students do not consider this type of activity a form of misconduct (Bokosmaty et al., 2019; Chen & Chou, 2017; Dick et al., 2001; Ehrich et al.,

2016; Paynter & Mills, 2004). In the current study, Chih-ming asserted that what the student did in scenario XVII⁷⁰ was acceptable. He viewed the repurposing of an existing assessment as a way to save time and reasoned that since ‘it’s his previous work it’s totally fine...it is not plagiarism’. The fact that the student in the scenario was using an assessment of his own composition was seen by Chih-ming as precisely why the situation was not plagiarism. Given his understanding of plagiarism as the use of others’ work, students using their own work could not be plagiarism. Chih-ming’s perception of the student’s reuse of his existing work might be influenced by his cultural background, having spent much of his life in China. Differences in views about plagiarism, as well as writing from sources, have been connected to aspects of culture, such as writing in a second language and teaching practices and expectations (Pecorari & Petrić, 2014). Results from other studies, though, highlight how common it is for students, with varied cultural backgrounds, to exhibit an unawareness of self-plagiarism (Bokosmaty et al., 2019; Chen & Chou, 2017; Voelker et al., 2012). In one such survey, 90% of both Chinese and Australian students were not familiar with the notion of self-plagiarism as academic misconduct (Ehrich et al., 2016).

Other student participants, however, wrestled with whether this type of reuse was really acceptable. Both Liv and Zoe initially rated the situation as *not sure* based on their lack of confidence in knowing if repurposing one’s earlier assessment into a new assessment for a different course was permitted. Ava believed that the situation was unacceptable, but also expressed uncertainty in her remarks: ‘I don’t know exactly what the rules are, but my understanding is that you’re just not allowed to do this’. And even as she explained that she

⁷⁰ Scenario XVII: Renier locates a paper he previously wrote and submitted for a different course. Since the assessment prompt was similar, he updates the title page to reflect the current course and instructor name.

believed that using an existing assessment was not acceptable, she was not resolute in labelling it plagiarism since 'he really wrote the paper'. Only after talking through her thoughts, Ava concluded that the scenario was a case of plagiarism because she felt the student was 'pretending he's done [the assessment] for this course', therefore deceptively implying that previously written work was new—even if it was previously written by the student himself.

Earlier research into perceptions of self-plagiarism has contended that neither students nor staff exhibit a clear and uniform understanding on the reuse of one's own work and how, or if, such an activity constitutes plagiarism (Chen & Chou, 2017; Halupa & Bolliger, 2013). Such was the case with the students interviewed in the current study. This ambiguity was not reflected among the surveyed teaching staff, though. The survey showed that staff were largely in agreement when it came to scenario XVII, with 83% rating the incident *unacceptable*. This result was more than a previous study conducted in the United States that found 54% of surveyed tertiary staff considered it plagiarism when a student resubmitted an assessment for another course (Bennett et al., 2011). In a review of plagiarism research conducted since their 2013 study, Halupa (2019) suggests that an increase among staff believing this reuse to be unacceptable could be due to the activity's inclusion as misconduct in academic integrity and plagiarism policies. In Aotearoa New Zealand, most universities list self-plagiarism (including *double-dipping* and resubmission) in official policy as a breach of academic integrity (Möller, 2022). It may be that having self-plagiarism included in policy impacted perceptions about repurposing assessments and led to more staff rating such situations *unacceptable* than reported in other research.

6.2.2 *Paying for it Does Not Make Assistance Unacceptable—or Does it?*

Generally, students and staff had different views about the occurrence of a monetary transaction and this feature's connection to determining acceptability. The occurrence of payment for writing assistance did not appear to be an indicator of unacceptability among the interviewed students. This situational feature was, however, identified by many staff as a reason behind the unacceptability of writing assistance. The rating results for scenario XIV⁷¹, where the student pays a professional editor for assistance, evidenced this divergence of thought between students and staff. As he discussed the scenario, student participant Adrian stated that the student's payment to a source of writing assistance did not make the assistance unacceptable. He asserted that 'paying for help encourages the professional [editor] to do a better job...so I don't think money is inherently dangerous'. Even George, who did believe the scenario was unacceptable, explained that the financial transaction was not part of the reason for his rating: 'the fact that he's paid someone doesn't actually come into it, because whether you are paying someone or you know someone who's pretty good at proofreading...it's not a factor at all'. Eighty-six percent of the staff who believed this scenario was unacceptable, though, noted the existence of a financial payment as a reason for their *unacceptable* rating.

Even in the instance of third-party writing assistance that was rated as *unacceptable* by most participants, students did not consider the presence of monetary payment as a

⁷¹ Scenario XIV: Renier pays a professional editor to review his drafted paper. The editor corrects spelling, grammar, and punctuation. The editor also recommends changes to improve the clarity of Renier's statements through comments written in the margins. Renier discusses the comments with the editor and changes his writing based on the comments.

reason why the scenario was not acceptable. All students who reviewed scenario VII⁷² believed it was unacceptable; purchasing the paper, though, was not used as an indicator in their determination of this unacceptability. The focus was on the incident, which was considered ‘cheating’ (Mateo) since the paper was ‘not his original work’ (Phil) and they explained that this form of writing assistance was not appropriate regardless of whether the student paid for the already written assessment or obtained it without payment. Among the staff who rated this scenario as *unacceptable* (94%), 71% reported that the occurrence of a financial transaction was a reason for their consideration of the situation as unacceptable.

In academic integrity research, the involvement of a monetary transaction in writing assistance situations typically holds a negative connotation. The notion of payment is most often discussed in relation to the outsourcing of the task of composing an assessment, through online essay mills or other contract cheating services (e.g., Amigud & Lancaster, 2019, 2020; Newton, 2018; Newton & Lang, 2016). Within this literature the purchase of others’ work is not necessarily the sole reason these types of writing assistance are unacceptable. However, the financial transaction is seen as a situational feature that makes the activity inappropriate and an act to consider as misconduct. The payment is an indication of the student’s intentions (Newton, 2018); they are deliberately bypassing the process of writing, neither undertaking the actual labour of producing written work nor the task of learning through doing the assessment themselves (Eaton et al., 2019). Student use of for-pay services like ghostwriting and essay mills, though, is less common than the use of those that do not require payment (Awdry, 2020). And while purchasing editing assistance

⁷² Scenario VII: Renier gets a paper written by someone he does not know from a website. He purchases the paper and pays through the website.

is also not as common as acquiring free editing assistance, some students do still pay money for such assistance (Conrad, 2020). However minor, the issues of paying for assistance should still be addressed in the broader conversation of whether it is viewed as a possible indicator of unacceptability. This notion is particularly so for writing assistance in the form of editing, proofreading, and other tasks that do not easily fit the labels of academic ghostwriting or contract cheating. If staff use the occurrence of a monetary transaction in their determination of whether a writing assistance situation is acceptable or not, issues will arise when students do pay for help with tasks that are part of the writing process.

6.2.3 Writing Assistance from Another Lecturer: Impartial Feedback or Unfair Advantage

The way students and staff perceived writing assistance from another lecturer (other than the one who set the assessment) revealed differences in their considerations of such situations. The five students who rated scenario X⁷³ were split when it came to acceptability; three deemed the situation *acceptable* while two felt it was *unacceptable*. Abby and Isla conceptualised the situation as ‘feedback’ from an instructor, which they believed was a reasonable aspect of the student’s writing process. Harriet initially indicated uncertainty that she attributed to her status as a first-year student. She felt unclear as to whether seeking help from a different lecturer to the one who assigned the assessment was appropriate ‘etiquette’ in university. After some consideration though, Harriet also ended up rating the assistance *acceptable*. Emily and Adrian saw the situation differently. They both stated the scenario was *unacceptable* due to the lecturer rewriting sentences in the student’s

⁷³ Scenario X: Renier takes his drafted paper to another lecturer to review before submitting it to his course instructor. The lecturer provides Renier with feedback in the form of both comments and rewritten sentences. Renier revises his paper to include the rewritten sentences.

assessment. Their concern lay with the fact that the student's writing was being redone, thus no longer an artefact of the student's labour nor knowledge.

When it came to staff views of scenario X, only 34% of respondents rated the situation as *acceptable* compared to 44% who deemed it *unacceptable*. In addition, 22% of staff rated the scenario *not sure* or *it depends*, indicating a substantial number of the surveyed staff who were not willing to make a definite decision about whether this form of writing assistance was acceptable. Among staff who did think the situation was unacceptable, many indicated that the activity created an unfair advantage. The idea that third-party writing assistance from another lecturer would result in unequal conditions was also seen in a few of the comments from staff who rated the scenario as *not sure*: 'is this other lecturer help available to all students?'; 'lecturers should not engage in this unless...the same support is available to everyone'. This concern about potential unfairness might be expected among students considering various types of third-party writing assistance, as it has been noted in previous research (Burnett et al., 2016; Turner, 2011). Only one of the interviewed students in this study, though, spoke about the idea of writing assistance from a lecturer leading to an unfair advantage. Moreover, the remarks were only specific to instances where the assistance was received from the same lecturer who set the assessment, not another lecturer unconnected to the student's course or assessment.

The questions of whether receiving writing assistance from another lecturer is appropriate or when such assistance starts to compromise the student's status as author or be inequitable and unfair to others are not well examined in academic integrity research. Furthermore, studies that do examine issues around writing assistance from lecturers are almost exclusively focused on postgraduate students (e.g., De Oliveira, 2019; Harwood et al.,

2010). With a dearth of research into this specific scenario of writing assistance, particularly at the undergraduate level, more needs to be done to examine the acceptability of lecturers (beyond the instructor who set the assessment) providing writing assistance to students.

6.3 Comparing Conceptualisations of Plagiarism

The students and staff in the study typically defined the term plagiarism in similar ways, but their constructions of the notion of plagiarism revealed nuanced differences that likely impacted how they considered and labelled scenarios of unacceptable writing assistance. Both groups offered definitions of plagiarism that were structured according to three basic elements: replication (using others' work), attribution (not properly acknowledging the origin of the work), and appropriation (passing this work off as one's own). Move from this base level of understanding, though, and the details regarding conceptions about plagiarism diverge, particularly in orientation and scope.

6.3.1 The Students' Views of Plagiarism were Narrower than the Views Among Staff

Staff's definitions of plagiarism suggested a more expansive scope of what could be replicated in the use of someone else's work. Most staff thought of plagiarism as not only the use of others' words, but more broadly as the use of someone else's ideas, concepts, designs, experimental results, or artistic and intellectual expressions. This view reflects teaching staff's wider framing of plagiarism as encompassing an array of misuses of others' work (Flint et al., 2006; Kwong et al., 2010). The student participants, on the other hand, generally regarded plagiarism through the concept of replicating existing work in terms of text—copying others' words, either resulting in an exact duplication or a version with enough textual similarity to still be considered a replication. With this much narrower

construction of plagiarism, scenarios that were perceived to be beyond replications of text were not deemed plagiaristic by some students.

There was, however, one apparent exception to this perception. The student participants uniformly rated four ghostwriting scenarios as unacceptable and plagiarism. They applied the label of plagiarism to these incidents of writing assistance based on their view that the student did not undertake the labour necessary to write his own assessment, not putting in adequate effort, and instead presenting others' work as his own—all of which overrode their provided replication-focused definition of plagiarism. Previous research into students' perceptions of plagiarism showed that students considered their understanding of plagiarism as adequate and provided an adequate definition of plagiarism but had far less success identifying activities that constituted plagiarism (Emerson, 2008; Yeo, 2007). The students in the current study also presented reasonable definitions of plagiarism, albeit often founded upon notions of replication and textual similarity. But deviating slightly from earlier research findings, these students still applied the label of plagiarism to situations involving activities distinct to this foundational aspect of their understanding of plagiarism. This suggests that students may apply the label of plagiarism more widely than their reported definitions of the notion indicate.

6.4 Chapter Summary

Comparing the results from student interviews and the staff survey, findings indicate that perceptions held by these groups coincide in some ways and deviate in other ways. Sometimes students expressed more uncertainty about writing assistance than staff did, as seen in the use of a writing tool like Grammarly or in the repurposing of their own previous

assessment into a new assessment. A difference also existed in how students and staff viewed the role paying money for assistance had on acceptability, with students dismissing the occurrence of a financial transaction as inconsequential while staff often considered it a reason for unacceptability. Situations wherein a student received assistance from another lecturer were also perceived differently by some students and staff. More staff deemed the scenario unacceptable and were often concerned about unfairness, while more students perceived the assistance as feedback and therefore acceptable. When it came to conceptions of plagiarism, the students in the study appeared to focus more on the textual replication aspect of plagiarism than staff did. This construction of the notion appeared to narrow what students labelled as plagiarism when it came to editing and repurposing scenarios.

More broadly though, students' and staff's beliefs about third-party writing assistance aligned. Perceptions from both groups pointed to a distinction in acceptability based on whether the assistance addressed mechanical errors or changed the subject-matter content of the student's assessment. The importance of active participation during assistance activities and a student's contribution to their work were noted by students and staff. Also, both groups exhibited a degree of incongruence, and uncertainty, in their considerations of the use of phrasing tools, as evidenced by the mixture of acceptability ratings. This chapter provided an integrated review of the results and outlined another dimension to the interpretation of findings. Having this comparative review helps us see a more detailed and fuller picture of perceptions about third-party writing assistance, including where students' and staff's views align and differ. The next chapter takes these results, along with those reported earlier in Chapters Four and Five, and situates the findings about perceptions of

third-party writing assistance within the larger scholarly conversation concerning student writing, plagiarism, and academic integrity.

CHAPTER SEVEN | CONSIDERING THE INTRICACIES OF ACCEPTABILITY

Chapter Seven presents a discussion that purposefully considers the current findings within the context of the wider body of knowledge. Confirmations of, and deviations from, prior academic integrity and student writing research are explored. The chapter is organised into three main sections. To start, there is a summarised report of findings in response to each of the three research questions. These answers are provided as a reminder of what was discovered during the study, thus setting the stage for the aspects discussed in the sections that follow. Then, section 7.2 provides an examination of views on the space between third-party writing assistance and plagiarism. The section spotlights when students and staff most often deemed writing assistance unacceptable and when uncertainty hung over considerations of whether assistance constituted plagiarism. Reflecting on what this information tells us, the third section offers thoughts about responding to the complex nature of acceptability. Also discussed in section 7.3, is a potential reframing of acceptability based on the interpretive thematic analysis of participants' ideas about student use of writing assistance.

7.1 Answering the Research Questions

7.1.1 What do Students and Staff Identify as Unacceptable Third-party Writing Assistance and Why?

Multiple scenarios of third-party writing assistance were considered unacceptable by all students and most staff. These included academic ghostwriting, using a file sharing site

to compile unattributed text for use in an assessment, and splitting the task of writing an individual assessment with a peer. A deeper look into the qualitative interview data revealed that students thought about third-party writing assistance through two main lenses: labour and learning. Identified in both these themes were situational features students perceived as indicators the assistance was unacceptable. Within the labour theme, indicators of unacceptability revolved around passive participation, a lack of agency in final decision making, and compromised contribution or status as author. Within the learning theme, indicators of unacceptability included the absence of intended learning through the nature of the assistance removing the opportunity to learn or the student not gaining knowledge or skills via the assistance. The complementary quantitative survey method revealed that staff perceptions about unacceptable writing assistance sometimes aligned with students' views. Staff also considered a student's participation during writing assistance in their perceptions of acceptability, with a lack of active and involved participation during the assistance usually rendering the aid unacceptable. Concerns about learning were also present among staff, as multiple scenarios were deemed unacceptable based on the perception that the third-party writing assistance made it difficult to ascertain the student's knowledge or abilities.

7.1.2 What do Students Believe are Motivating Factors for Using Third-party Writing Assistance?

There are numerous reasons why students may turn to third-party writing assistance. Those most frequently discussed by the students in this study distilled into three factors: a preoccupation with decent marks, the need to conceal academic deficiencies, and a desire to reduce time and effort spent on a task. Students' beliefs about what motivates their university peers to use various forms of third-party writing assistance align with prior

research into the reasons students give for their own engagement in both legitimate help seeking as well as cheating, plagiarising, and other types of academic dishonesty. The students' views about what motivations lie behind the use of third-party writing assistance indicated an underlying attempt to increase the efficiency with which students produce an assessment that still provides them with the marks they desire.

7.1.3 How do Students' Perceptions of Third-party Writing Assistance Fit with Perceptions of Plagiarism?

There were scenarios of third-party writing assistance that students believed exemplified their idea of what plagiarism was, other scenarios that they felt were acceptable, and even scenarios that some considered unacceptable but not plagiarism. Every student deemed third-party writing assistance that involved ghostwriting to be situations in which students were not actively participating, not undertaking the labour of writing text themselves, or passing off others' work as their own. Such instances of third-party writing assistance certainly fit within students' reported constructs of plagiarism. Additionally, the students' conceptualisations of what constituted plagiarism often included concerns about textual similarity—that the use of others' written words resulted in an exact reproduction or if not a direct copy, were still too much like the original text. This perception of plagiarism meant that scenarios that involved the replication of existing text were also often considered plagiarism. Most scenarios that described more collaborative writing assistance activities, though, were rarely considered by students as acts of plagiarism. Students' perceptions about such instances of third-party writing assistance highlighted situational features that they believed signalled that the assistance was acceptable. One such aspect was that the occurrence of a discussion indicated that the student was actively involved during the

assistance activity. Seen as observable behavioural engagement, instances where a student was actively involved during the writing assistance and learning from the experience were deemed not plagiarism.

Scenarios that involved varying degrees of editing assistance or the use of technological tools were not as uniformly considered by students as the ghostwriting and collaborating scenarios were. Perceptions about these situations exhibited a greater divergence of thought regarding acceptability than was observed among other scenarios. In fact, some students interpreted third-party writing assistance as less than appropriate to engage in when writing an assessment, but not something that constituted plagiarism. Scenarios where the student using writing assistance did not understand the reasoning for certain corrections or textual interventions to their writing were deemed unacceptable by some interview participants. What these participants saw as an apparent lack of learning and no knowledge gain on the student's behalf—while perceived as unfavourable for the student's comprehension—did not connect to their ideas about plagiarism. This finding indicates that students' constructs of plagiarism can be narrower than ideas about unacceptability. To them, third-party writing assistance that did not result in textual similarity or a student not learning the intended outcomes of an assessment did not fit the label of plagiarism.

7.2 The Space Between Third-party Writing Assistance and Plagiarism

In examining students' and staff's perceptions of various realistic scenarios of third-party writing assistance, the study illuminated perceptions about the space between writing assistance and plagiarism. Students' beliefs about the notion of plagiarism as a moral or

ethical failing appear misaligned with the call for the academy to take an educative stance on academic integrity (e.g., Bretag, Mahmud, East, et al., 2011; Macdonald & Carroll, 2006; Morris, 2015). This disconnect likely impacts what situations and activities students label plagiarism. Findings showed that overlap existed between the two terms, with some instances of writing assistance being considered plagiarism. This most often happened in the cases where a student did not undertake the labour necessary to compose an assessment themselves, such as in the ghostwriting scenarios. Also apparent from participants' responses and discussions, though, was the notion that instances of unacceptable writing assistance may not be perceived as instances of plagiarism. Participants exhibited uncertainty and hesitation when considering instances of writing assistance and the notion of plagiarism together, particularly when it came to editing scenarios.

7.2.1 Students' Views Did Not Reflect the Academy's Reframing of Plagiarism as an Educative Issue

Study findings evidenced a difference in how students and staff understood the basic orientation of plagiarism as it exists in an academic community. Responses and comments from surveyed staff conveyed education-based values when considering plagiarism. Some staff displayed concern that most undergraduate students were 'novice writers' yet to develop the skills to adequately adhere to scholarly writing conventions. University students are often not proficient in writing from sources and this lack of academic literacy can result in compositions considered to include instances of plagiarism (Festas et al., 2022; Howard, 1995; Mbutho & Hutchings, 2019). Both writing studies experts and academic integrity scholars have long advocated for an educative framing of plagiarism, and academic integrity more broadly, with pedagogical responses when addressing these issues (Chandrasoma et

al., 2004; Emerson et al., 2005; Hall, 2005; Morris, 2015; Pecorari, 2008; Powell & Singh, 2016; Wilhoit, 1994). In Aotearoa New Zealand, most university academic integrity policies regarding plagiarism convey this educative framing (Möller, 2022), while also addressing ethical and regulatory aspects of the issue. Staff responses in the survey reflected the positioning of plagiarism within the process of learning to write.

The discussions with interviewed students, however, reflected views that were very much still grounded in moral, ethical, and regulatory discourses. Students' comments revealed beliefs that plagiarism was a moral issue, something inherently wrong. Discussions also often reflected a regulatory discourse, both in the way student participants spoke about the notion of plagiarism and when they considered a few of the writing assistance scenarios. Students sometimes considered ghostwriting situations based on their personal ideas of morality and what was or was not permissible based on institutional standards of conduct. Consistent with Adam et al. (2017), the results confirm that students often talk about plagiarism in ways that convey their conception of the notion as a moral issue and express their views about plagiarism in relation to ethical standards and institutional regulations. The findings showed that the broader academic community's transition from punitive to educative in addressing plagiarism matters has not successfully reached all students. And while universities and some teaching staff appear to officially regard plagiarism in educative terms, many students still position plagiarism as the result of immoral behaviour or unethical choices that flout rules and regulations.

7.2.2 Ghostwriting: When Third-party Writing Assistance was Considered Plagiarism

The perception of plagiarism as oriented in a moral or regulatory space was also reflected in some of the student participants' considerations of plagiarism as a form of cheating, most clearly seen in students' remarks about ghostwriting scenarios. When asked directly about their thoughts on plagiarism, students often regarded the notion of plagiarism as equivalent to cheating given their perceptions that such actions were 'a pretty clear no-no' (Harry) and 'not allowed' (Ava) by universities. This belief about plagiarism was particularly evident among students who discussed writing assistance that involved a student using ghostwritten material as part or all of their assessment. While some studies show students have not always equated plagiarism to cheating (Owunwanne et al., 2010; Sutherland-Smith, 2008), instances of ghostwriting or contract cheating have often been considered by students as wrong, and more severe than other types of writing assistance. In both Australia (Bretag, Harper, Burton, Ellis, Newton, Rozenberg, et al., 2019) and Canada (Jurdi et al., 2011, 2012), students considered writing assistance activities like purchasing a completed assessment from a website (like scenario VII⁷⁴ in the current study) and having a peer write their paper for them (scenario XI⁷⁵ in the current study) to be dishonest and akin to cheating. The student participants in this study were no different. Additionally, the consideration of these more substantial forms of writing assistance as plagiarism and cheating confirms the students' orientation towards the discourse common among university students who think about plagiarism in terms of morality (Ashworth et al., 1997)

⁷⁴ Scenario VII: Renier gets a paper written by someone he does not know from a website. He purchases the paper and pays through the website.

⁷⁵ Scenario XI: Renier gets a paper written by his friend who owes him a favour. He did not pay for the paper.

or at least a questionably unethical decision, given the rules and policies put in place by institutions (Adam et al., 2017).

Considering the way students defined plagiarism, it makes sense that situations of third-party writing assistance involving various forms of editing and repurposing might not conform to their conceptualisation of plagiarism. Results showed that when students supplied their own definition, they often focused on more straightforward cases of textual similarity via copying as what they considered plagiarism. Student participants also labelled as plagiarism scenarios where the student was presenting complete assessments by others as work he had done himself. Left in the middle were scenarios of third-party writing assistance involving varying degrees of editing input or repurposing that were not instances of text that was too similar nor fully ghostwritten assessments. With a conception of plagiarism concentrated on the two more distinguishable versions of compromised contribution, instances of writing assistance that fall in between may not receive the label of plagiarism.

7.2.3 Hesitancy and Uncertainty in Considering Editing Scenarios as Plagiarism

Findings from student interviews regarding the scenarios that involved varying degrees of editing revealed a level of uncertainty in how students considered these forms of third-party writing assistance. Several student participants exhibited hesitancy to rate scenarios one way or the other, vacillating between ratings (such as *acceptable* and *unacceptable*, or *unacceptable* and *not sure*) before making a decision. Often when they ultimately decided, the rating did not appear to be made with a high degree of conviction. Furthermore, some students hesitated to label scenarios as plagiarism even when they

believed the situations were unacceptable. Staff also exhibited uncertainty about whether writing assistance constituted plagiarism. The findings indicated uncertainty regarding editing and repurposing scenarios, and particularly in instances of writing assistance from technological tools. This lack of certainty about the boundaries of plagiarism, in relation to editing assistance, echoed views expressed by students and staff in previous studies (Dawson & Overfield, 2006; Kim & LaBianca, 2018; Waltzer & Dahl, 2021). Corroborating the existing research (Crook & Nixon, 2019; Higbee & Thomas, 2002; Kim & LaBianca, 2018), the current study further highlights the unclear nature of where the line of acceptability lies concerning when instances of editing assistance from a third party are or are not plagiarism.

This uncertainty among students, as well as staff, regarding whether some instances of third-party writing assistance constitute plagiarism should be an expected result given the myriad influences on both teaching and learning academic writing. Artificial intelligence designed to generate bespoke quality writing with ease (Adams & Chuah, 2022), that conforms to formats like essays and research papers, continues to grow. At the same time, changes in the corrective intervention done by features within word processing programmes could influence the boundaries of basic proofreading. For example, boundaries may be stretched as automated assistance like Microsoft Word's spell check is reconfigured into an *Editor* (Dale & Viethen, 2021) that offers corrections to not only spelling, grammar, and punctuation, but also addresses clarity, conciseness, word choice, tone, and tests of similarity against texts online. Further changes can be anticipated with the incorporation of more sophisticated artificial intelligence. Continuing advancements to these types of writing assistance technologies undoubtedly impact both what it means to compose written work and what it means to edit existing writing (Godwin-Jones, 2022). As a result, students' and

staff's uncertainty around what is and is not permissible during the creation of written work is likely to remain an issue.

In addition, both unclear policies and differences between disciplines can exacerbate uncertainty about the acceptability of various forms of editing assistance. The lack of clarity in institutional guidance and policy regarding academic integrity issues like collusion (Crook & Nixon, 2019) and automated phrasing tools (Dinneen, 2021; Möller, 2022) can influence how students perceive plagiarism (Carroll, 2005, as cited in Gullifer & Tyson, 2010; McCabe, 2005). Ambiguous policies may also lead to an increase in discretion among staff addressing potential academic misconduct, plagiarism, or incidents of writing assistance, resulting in inconsistent responses (de Maio et al., 2020) and adding to a general sense of uncertainty experienced by students and staff. Epistemological and pedagogical differences between academic disciplines regarding knowledge creation and the writing process could also lead to uncertainty regarding editing and collaborating forms of assistance. For instance, norms for source integration differ, with direct quotations being less common in natural sciences and more common in arts and humanities research (Pecorari, 2013; Shi, 2012). Likewise, ideas about the appropriateness of collaborating to complete work (Borg, 2009) and the re-use of phrases in text (Davis & Morley, 2015) can vary by discipline. Staff may be unfamiliar with the expectations of a discipline outside of their field of study, resulting in a lack of certainty about plagiarism across disciplines. Students could perceive these differences as shifting or unstable boundaries when going from the standards of one discipline to another (Merkel, 2021), adding to the uncertainty about when writing assistance may constitute plagiarism.

7.3 Responding to the Complexity of Acceptability

The findings from both the student interviews and staff survey show that there is no clear-cut boundary distinguishing all forms of third-party writing assistance as acceptable or unacceptable. Instead, perceptions regarding the acceptability of writing assistance activities reveal the nuanced complexity, and sometimes ambiguous nature, of the issue. Unanimity in acceptability ratings was rare, further confirming that perceptions about when using third-party writing assistance is acceptable or unacceptable are complicated. Views about the acceptability of potentially plagiaristic situations, including third-party writing assistance activities, are contextual and circumstantial (Barrett & Cox, 2005; Bretag et al., 2014; Higbee et al., 2011; Quaye, 2010; Underwood & Szabo, 2003). Context like the type of assessment (Aasheim et al., 2012), perceived behaviour of peers (Jurdi et al., 2012), and the potential for negative consequences such as failing a course (Murdock & Stephens, 2007) can all impact considerations about what is or is not acceptable. The current research exposes an additional complication to the complexity: acceptability is also a matter of consumption, in that it is partly determined by *how* a student uses third-party writing assistance when undertaking an assessment. For students in this study, beliefs and considerations about writing assistance harboured two main themes—labour and learning—which included an array of situational features identified as indicators of unacceptability. Within both these themes existed situational features that regarded how the student in the scenarios used the aid received during the writing assistance activity. These results reveal that, in addition to the context or circumstances surrounding the writing assistance situation, how a student makes use of the assistance also impacts perceptions about acceptability. This finding holds implications for how teaching staff and institutions respond to the issue of third-party

writing assistance. There are four substantial points to consider as we respond to the complexity of acceptability. Discussed in the following sections, these points are fostering human communication, reframing acceptability with consumption of writing assistance in mind, acknowledging the role of an efficiency motive, and applying cognitive offloading to the issue of third-party writing assistance.

7.3.1 *The Indispensable Value of Communication*

This study uncovered just how complicated it can be to consider third-party writing assistance. Staff do not always rate the acceptability of scenarios uniformly. Students sometimes deem a scenario unacceptable, but not a case of plagiarism. Both students and staff can exhibit uncertainty regarding situations involving the editing of student writing. Determining and understanding when writing assistance is acceptable and unacceptable is a complex matter. It is precisely because of this complexity that strong lines of communication are so important.

There are multiple avenues for institutional communication when it comes to academic integrity matters. Research has shown the impact of student conduct workshops and academic integrity modules on students' views about the seriousness of plagiarism (Curtis et al., 2013). Also noted in the literature is the importance of clear, concise, plain language in relevant policies (Bretag, Mahmud, Wallace, et al., 2011) when communicating a culture of academic integrity. Equally crucial, though, is fostering direct and explicit conversations between students and teaching staff.

The variability of acceptability across third-party writing assistance activities exposed by the current research evidences the need for integrated discussions about the situational

features within instances of assistance. Making opportunities for students and staff to share their perspectives and expectations with each other provides them with an immediate way to identify potential differences in how writing assistance is considered. This type of communication is essential to creating a path through the murky areas of third-party writing assistance. In responding to the complexity of acceptability across third-party writing assistance, universities should consider placing human communication at the forefront of their efforts.

7.3.2 Reframing Acceptability Based on How Writing Assistance is Consumed

Results from both the interviews and survey showed that students and staff often identified student participation as a situational feature they used to determine the acceptability of third-party writing assistance in a scenario. The identification by both students and staff of passive participation as a situational feature that makes writing assistance unacceptable draws attention to the importance of how forms of third-party writing assistance are used by students in considering acceptability. Rather than simply hinging on any inherent unacceptability of the writing assistance source, service, or tool itself, how a student engaged with and consumed the assistance was often taken into account. The quality of participation, be it active or passive, by a student during assistance activities was often a key indicator in considerations of acceptability. This finding confirms ideas about student use of writing assistance needing to ‘reflect real collaboration’ (Higbee & Thomas, 2002, p. 47) where the student is making a legitimate effort to improve their knowledge or skills. How third-party writing assistance is used can matter as much as who the source is or what form the assistance takes.

This finding can inform how the academy determines and communicates what it designates acceptable and unacceptable when it comes to third-party writing assistance. Staff and institutional responses to concerns over potential compromises to a student's textual contribution to their writing should not be solely aimed at working to identify which variety of third-party writing assistance activities are unacceptable, constitute plagiarism, and therefore need to be prohibited. Instead, focus could fall on how—in what ways—a student uses third-party writing assistance to dictate the acceptability of it as a tactic employed while composing their assessment. Placing an emphasis on the way students interact and participate with a third-party writing assistance source or tool could help to delineate the guidelines institutions need to establish and provide to students and staff about using the various kinds of third-party writing assistance available.

In addition, this reframing of the issue of acceptability would further underscore the importance of responsibility, a fundamental value of academic integrity (International Center for Academic Integrity, 2021). While upholding academic integrity is a shared responsibility of all those within an academic community (Bretag et al., 2014; Macdonald & Carroll, 2006), students have an individual duty to ensure they are responsible for their actions, including the way they undertake assigned assessments. If students use permitted third-party writing assistance, they have a responsibility to use the assistance in a way that is in service of their learning. An institution's establishment of acceptable, thus authorised, third-party writing assistance should be guided by whether a student is an active participant, exhibiting thoughtful engagement and genuine contribution during the assistance activity. That way the base for what is acceptable assistance adheres to an educative stance, emphasising growth and learning. It is important for a university to clearly

explain what suitable participation with third-party writing assistance looks like, particularly when it comes to editing and proofreading instances of writing assistance.

The challenge for an institution, of course, lies in deciding where to draw the lines through such a complex space in order to clearly present a framework of acceptable third-party writing assistance. Working to incorporate how writing assistance is consumed (i.e., the way a student participates with and uses the assistance) into the distinction of when it is acceptable or not, institutions should take into consideration the views held by both students and staff. Their perceptions regarding indicators of [un]acceptability in scenarios of writing assistance can help inform how institutions decide what suitable use of third-party writing assistance looks like for students. When it comes to considering editing assistance from third parties, specific perceptions universities should consider include the broadly held view that third-party writing assistance addressing issues with *how to write* are acceptable, as opposed to assistance focused on *what to write* which alters the subject-matter content or argument of the student's writing. Beyond instances of writing assistance focused on basic writing mechanics, there was also value placed on active participatory interaction, the contribution students make in composing the text of their assessment, and students' application of agency—employing evaluative judgement to determine which, if any, textual alterations to their writing should be incorporated into the final version of their assessment. These are insights about how a student consumes writing assistance that institutions should consider when determining acceptability and establishing parameters.

7.3.3 Perceived Motivational Factors Highlight an Aim for Efficiency

While there are many specific reasons why students engage in unacceptable writing assistance (Devlin & Gray, 2007; Lines, 2016b; Wilkinson, 2009), students' perceptions in the current study regarding what motivates students to use assistance point to an effort to procure an *efficiency gain* (Park, 2003, p. 479). Two of the most discussed motivational factors among interview participants were students being preoccupied with marks and wanting to reduce the time they spent doing an assessment. Both reasons harbour an aim to still benefit through seemingly more efficient means.

The perception among interviewed participants that other students are driven by a desire to receive satisfactory, or better, marks was evident during this study. University students often believe the desire for better marks fuels engagement in editing activities like proofreading (Conrad, 2020) as well as cheating or plagiarising activities (Mellar et al., 2018; Newstead et al., 1996; Power, 2009; Wilkinson, 2009). Some students have even reported engaging in academic misconduct because they believed it was a way to obtain the marks they wanted for their assessment (Stevenson-Clarke & Brimble, 2007), while effectively reducing time and effort (Payne & Nantz, 1994). If students sometimes operate under an assumption that cheating, including acts resulting in plagiarism, can increase the efficiency with which they acquire decent marks (e.g., Beasley, 2014), they might also consider third-party writing assistance an avenue for this efficiency gain—even when the assistance is considered inappropriate.

The preoccupation with marks that students believed occupied their peers' focus may be a reflection of the broader commodification of higher education. As Western society

continues to operate in a neoliberal space where worth is often contingent upon the generation of capital, education becomes valued for the expected economic benefits it can leverage (McKenna, 2022; Shumar, 1997) instead of holding intrinsic value in learning and making knowledge. The commodification of higher education is exemplified by many factors, including the transition to a students-as-customers mode, continued increases in student fees, and a refocus of learning onto employability and preparation of graduates for entry into the labour market (Kezar & Bernstein-Sierra, 2016; Tomlinson, 2013). With a university degree serving as a signifier of an attained education, it becomes the product (Crossman, 2022) students want, employers require, and governments use as a simplistic metric indicating learning outcome success. In this commodified system, the value then exists in the product, the degree itself, as opposed to the process a student goes through to earn the degree. And since having satisfactory marks is necessary to procure the degree, students fixate on the marks. As a result, students may then make use of writing assistance they believe will help get the marks they desire.

Another motivation backed by an aim for efficiency is the belief that the time needed to complete written assessments could be reduced by engaging in third-party writing assistance. Results showed that a commonly held opinion among student participants was that their peers were motivated to use writing assistance to cut down on time spent on the task of producing an assessment. Wanting to minimise time is also commonly noted by students as a motivating factor behind cheating, plagiarising, and ghostwriting (Beasley, 2014; Costley, 2019; Payne & Nantz, 1994). Academic integrity research notes that both students and staff believe the desire to reduce the amount of time spent writing an assessment can be connected to students' mismanagement of time, procrastination, or

laziness (Devlin & Gray, 2007; Mahabeer & Pirtheepal, 2019; Mellar et al., 2018; Palmer et al., 2017; Wilkinson, 2009). Students may also underestimate the amount of time needed for tasks like writing (Brady et al., 2022), a misjudgement that leaves them unable to devote sufficient time to composing a quality assessment. Such behaviours could effectively create an artificial scarcity of time, where the student's own decisions—like miscalculations in time management or wilful delaying of the writing task—result in a scarcity that would otherwise not exist. If students operate under this self-inflicted time shortage, they would likely be left to complete an assessment in an inadequate amount of time prior to the submission deadline (Ayton et al., 2022; Hattingh et al., 2020). As a result, some students may employ tactics like relying on third-party writing assistance as a shortcut to finish their work, believing it helps them reduce the amount of time spent on the assessment.

It is also plausible, though, that students' perceptions that their peers are motivated to reduce the time spent on composing written assessments reflects the competing pressures of life as a modern-day student. The current study revealed that interview participants believed university students led busy lives with legitimate constraints on their time. Perceived study workload has long been identified by undergraduate students as a stressor (Sarros & Densten, 1989, as cited in Norton et al., 2001). Students sometimes consider this workload, particularly having to complete several assessments with deadlines set at the same time, as a possible reason for plagiarism (Devlin & Gray, 2007; Mellar et al., 2018). Compounding academic demands on one's time are the commitments and responsibilities of everyday life. The undergraduate student population in Aotearoa New Zealand is not only composed of individuals enrolling directly after completing high school. Enrolment in tertiary institutions includes a significant number of students 25 years old and

older; in 2021, this amounted to nearly 40% of those enrolled in undergraduate programmes⁷⁶ (Education Counts, 2022). With age comes an increase in various demands for time. Students with children manage multiple schedules as well as the additional care and financial issues that come with family responsibilities (White, 2006). Additionally, many students in Aotearoa New Zealand are employed and working full or part time while studying at the tertiary level (Pham, 2021). Half of the student participants in the current study reported having a job while undertaking their studies. Given the limits placed on students' time by competing commitments like handling hectic assessment schedules, working a job while studying, or caring for family members, students may consider themselves short on time (Gourlay, 2006). As a result, they may deem it necessary to reduce the amount of time they spend on assessments (Amigud & Lancaster, 2019). This need to reduce time-on-task due to the pressure of juggling responsibilities from multiple legitimate commitments could explain why some students seek third-party writing assistance.

Perceptions about time issues being a motivating factor in students' engagement with assistance are frequently advanced in the marketing of some sources of third-party writing assistance. Often, the writing assistance is promoted as a time-saving service or tool. Services offering custom written assessments to students use language that portrays life as full of competing demands while noting the preciousness of time, the pressure of busy schedules, or the encroachment of studies on free time (Crook & Nixon, 2021). Sources of this type of ghostwriter-based assistance directly target students in advertisements that

⁷⁶ This percentage was calculated from the Learners Summary 2021 dataset provided by Education Counts (the quantitative statistical data hub for Aotearoa New Zealand's Ministry of Education). Undergraduate programmes included certificate/diploma and bachelor-level qualifications.

present their services as a solution for time poor students with too much to do, as well as those who just want to reduce the time they spend on an assessment (Kaktinš, 2018). Third party writing assistance in the form of writing aids and paraphrasing tools are also promoted as ways to work faster and save time. Advertisements for prominent third-party writing assistance services frequently purport that the assistance allows the user to minimise time spent composing written work (e.g., Grammarly, 2022). Such messaging may validate students' perceptions of their peers as needing or wanting to reduce time spent writing assessments. It is likely then that third-party writing assistance presented as a time-saver is taken up by those students dealing with time management issues. Regardless of whether their time is constrained by real, competing responsibilities or by an artificial scarcity of time, students looking for ways to reduce time-on-task when doing assessments may consider using third-party writing assistance to create that efficiency gain.

7.3.4 Applying the Concept of Cognitive Offloading to Third-party Writing Assistance

The concept of cognitive offloading may offer another way to consider the use of some forms of third-party writing assistance. Cognitive offloading refers to the use of physical action, via a tool, device, or mechanism, to reduce the amount of cognitive effort needed to do something (Risko & Gilbert, 2016). Many tasks where people employ cognitive offloading are not highly arduous or demanding. Common examples include using a calculator for basic arithmetic and saving phone numbers in a mobile phone for retrieving later. In addition to minimising the mental resources used, offloading can be a way to improve performance while reducing the time needed to complete a task (Armitage et al., 2020). As such, cognitive offloading acknowledges both the aim for efficiency revealed by students' ideas about what motivates the use of writing assistance and the general

perception among students and staff that *how to write* assistance is acceptable. Scenarios of writing assistance that included instances student participants considered ‘just grammar help’ to address lower-order writing mechanics issues were often deemed acceptable—superficial and not significant enough to be thought of as unacceptable or prohibited. The apparent triviality with which students considered assistance that resulted in corrections to grammatical errors and spelling mistakes (also a lower priority among staff as suggested by their ratings of scenarios) could make room for the use of cognitive offloading.

Work by Dawson (2020) exploring cognitive offloading as it relates to assessments in university settings suggests that cognitive offloading, and the use of technology to do so, should be acknowledged and incorporated into the design of assessments. While not appropriate for all assessments, cognitive offloading by way of assistance with editing one’s work (e.g., light proofreading by a friend; basic corrective intervention from an automated grammar check tool) may be useful to students’ general skill development. Sanctioning cognitive offloading of lower-order concerns in assessments could allow for greater focus on acquiring and demonstrating the more advanced skills needed to successfully meet learning outcomes (Dawson, 2020), such as critical analysis and problem solving. If writing assistance that involves informative corrections to mechanical issues like punctuation and grammar was accepted as a function of cognitive offloading and incorporated into assessments, there could be more time to devote to active participation with the significantly challenging aspects of composing effective written communication.

Since offloading could also be done to avoid undertaking higher-order learning thereby threatening academic integrity (Perkins, 2023), it is important to distinguish when and how tools can be used. Clear and specific communication about which assessments

permit offloading, and to what degree, may help reduce some of the uncertainty surrounding the acceptability of engaging with third-party writing assistance. With the tendency for individuals to engage in cognitive offloading when available, the use and acceptance of such offloading in professional industry settings, and the best practices use of authentic assessment, Dawson (2020) considers a future where ‘students may be required to cite not only the materials they have read, but also the cognitive offloading they engaged in’ (p. 44). Considering that this reality exists alongside varied, and sometimes uncertain, views about the overlap of writing assistance and plagiarism exhibited by both students and staff, perhaps this future needs to start now.

7.4 Chapter Summary

Within the context of existing research, the findings of the current study offer more insight into students’ and staff’s perceptions about third-party writing assistance, as well as how these situations relate to their notion of plagiarism. Participants’ opinions that ghostwriting scenarios and other writing assistance involving complete outsourcing of the task of writing were unacceptable matched those expressed by students and staff in earlier studies. Views about editing and repurposing scenarios, however, exhibited a level of uncertainty as to whether different instances of assistance constituted plagiarism. This uncertainty is likely impacted by unclear academic integrity policies, disciplinary differences, varied perceptions of authorship, and continued technological changes altering what it means to write. In response to the complexity of acceptability evidenced by the findings, this chapter presented multiple ways to consider the issue. The potential for variability in considering whether instances of writing assistance are appropriate calls for integrated communication as an essential aspect in our approach to navigating this

complicated issue. Given the importance of active participatory interaction in participants' determination of acceptable third-party writing assistance, a reframing of acceptability based on how a student consumes writing assistance could be advantageous. Acknowledging the aim for efficiency behind students' use of third-party writing assistance and applying the concept of cognitive offloading to writing assistance were also noted as useful ways of considering the issue. Building upon this discussion of the complex space between writing assistance and plagiarism, the next chapter describes the contributions of this research as well as implications for practice and policy.

CHAPTER EIGHT | CONTRIBUTIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Overall, the current study reveals how some university students and teaching staff in Aotearoa New Zealand think about third-party writing assistance and plagiarism. The findings expose the extent of the complexity in the space between these two elements that can exist in the process of writing. As the conclusion to this thesis, Chapter Eight comprises culminating remarks about the research and practical suggestions for where we go from here. To start, section 8.1 notes the empirical contributions within the findings. After that, section 8.2 describes the original methodological contribution this study makes through its development and implementation of a bespoke and distinctively embedded set of realistic scenarios as a data collection tool. Then, section 8.3 provides implications for both policy and practice and 8.4 presents limitations of the study. Section 8.5 offers a brief consideration of the next generation of third-party writing assistance, generative AI tools, already making an impact on academic integrity and the teaching and assessing of writing. Then, section 8.6 goes on to present multiple research topics related to this study that need further examination. The last part of the chapter, section 8.7, offers some final thoughts including a contemplation on the conclusions of the study and a personal reflection on the impact undertaking this work has had on me as a researcher.

8.1 Empirical Contribution

The findings from this study offer empirical contributions to the body of knowledge on academic integrity and student writing in multiple ways. These include confirmations of earlier research, like students' limited conception of plagiarism and the drive for efficiency underpinning their common reasons for using writing assistance. Contributions also include

expansions on academic integrity and student writing research, thereby enriching the body of knowledge. One such contribution is the detection of an added complication of how assistance is consumed in determining the acceptability of activities. In addition, the study draws attention to the importance of a sustained dialogue between students and staff around the nuanced and complex issue of third-party writing assistance.

As mentioned in Chapter One, there was a dearth of work expressly focused on situations where students seek assistance from a third party to improve their written work and if such situations fit into conceptions of plagiarism. This investigation uncovered beliefs about students' use of writing assistance activities where students have someone, or something, assist them in undertaking their writing assessment. Specifically, results regarding students' conceptions of plagiarism strengthen the assertion by academic integrity research that students understand plagiarism on a basic level (Breen & Maassen, 2005; Sutherland-Smith, 2008; Yeo, 2007), but often to a limited degree (Emerson, 2008; Mbutho & Hutchings, 2021). The study substantiates the finding that students often believe instances of academic ghostwriting and contract cheating are unacceptable (Bretag, Harper, Burton, Ellis, Newton, Rozenberg, et al., 2019; Jurdi et al., 2011, 2012). The acceptability of third-party writing assistance in the form of editing was particularly murky for both students and teaching staff, confirming concerns about whether it is appropriate for students to use proofreading and other editing services or support tools (Harwood, 2023; Kim & LaBianca, 2018). Additionally, the view among students that some situations of writing assistance activities are unacceptable but that such a rating is not always tantamount to plagiarism further demonstrates the complexity of the issue.

The analysis of both students' and staff's perceptions revealed a shared valuing of student engagement during writing assistance. Engagement, perceived through active participation, played a role in delineating between acceptable and unacceptable third-party writing assistance. Situational features like a discussion between a student and the source of assistance, a student exercising agency in decision making, and a student's written contribution to their assessment, were all conceived as making an instance of assistance acceptable. Expanding on the literature expounding the contextual and circumstantial elements present in various forms of third-party writing assistance (e.g., Barrett & Cox, 2005; Bretag et al., 2014; Higbee et al., 2011; Murdock & Stephens, 2007), the current research draws attention to the significance that consumption, or the way in which a student makes use of writing assistance, plays in perceiving acceptability. This contribution is an important aspect of the study's results as it holds implications for how we think about third-party writing assistance and whether various situations are acceptable help or unacceptable conduct. With the way in which a student actually engages with writing assistance factoring into acceptability, we can reframe the use of third-party writing assistance in part through a participatory lens.

As higher education institutions work to provide a supportive learning environment for students, findings about what motivates students to use third-party writing assistance can play a part in creating a supportive setting. The findings in this study validate earlier research. Like tertiary students in other countries (Hattingh et al., 2020; Jereb et al., 2018; Park, 2003), the current study shows that university students in Aotearoa New Zealand are often motivated by the appeal of efficiency, which can lead to their use of third-party-writing assistance. Knowing this information, institutions can respond at the root level of what

drives the use of third-party writing assistance instead of just focusing on the use itself.

Building a response at this level into an educative approach to academic integrity is likely to have a greater impact on student learning.

Underscored by the study findings was the importance of communication between humans, and not bypassing or disengaging from this vital component of writing education. Along with participation, contribution, and aims for efficiency, there was an array of situational features that impacted perceived acceptability. Additionally, writing assistance involving editing and repurposing appeared to exist in a particularly murky area for students and staff. Both groups exhibited hesitancy and were sometimes unsure when gauging whether writing assistance scenarios were acceptable or unacceptable. With the range of situational features to consider and the likelihood of uncertainty, it is imperative to integrate discussions that address these matters into students' time at university. In contending with the acceptability of the scenarios in this study—as well as emergent and future forms of writing assistance—this research stresses the importance of sustained communication. Conversations with, and between, students and staff are necessary to forge a path through the confusion and complexity of using third-party writing assistance.

8.2 Methodological Contribution

The most significant contribution this study offers is in its qualitative method: the creation and implementation of custom scenarios to collect data through interviews. Unlike much of the research examining perceptions about the acceptability of writing assistance and plagiarism scenarios via a survey (e.g., Barrett & Cox, 2005; Kim & LaBianca, 2018; Marshall & Garry, 2005; Paynter & Mills, 2004; Yeo, 2007) the current study embedded a

bespoke set of scenarios into an interview designed to gather primarily qualitative data. The unique structure and implementation of this method offers a considerable contribution to multiple research areas, including writing instruction, academic integrity, and research methods in education. The way the scenarios were developed and used helped to reveal the complicated nature of acceptability in third-party writing assistance by allowing for space to exist between acceptable and unacceptable and letting students' interpretations help shape the research and highlight aspects beyond those sought in the research questions.

8.2.1 Original Scenarios Embedded into Interviews

Using the scenarios in a qualitative fashion provided the chance to collect a richer and fuller chronicle of perceptions behind acceptability ratings than possible through a traditional Likert-scale or multiple-choice style survey (as those used by Aasheim et al., 2012; Barrett & Cox, 2005; Paynter & Mills, 2004). While the acceptability results reporting what scenarios received which ratings were still available (and quantifiable via frequency of rating choice) in the current study, the interview discussions that followed added a level of depth to the research. The interviews collected information through the students' real-time contemplations of the scenario cards in front of them. During their interview, participants were deciding how to classify their ideas about [un]acceptability and then explaining their views of the various writing assistance activities. All the qualitative data provided more insight into the opinions and perceptions that shaped their beliefs about both third-party writing assistance and plagiarism.

In addition, the inclusion of a *not sure* rating provided the opportunity for participants to mark their uncertainty about a given scenario instead of being forced to label

it as either acceptable or unacceptable. With the option of rating scenario acceptability as *not sure*, there was a natural opportunity to further question participants and gain more insight into their process for determining what aspects of a situation they believed impacted acceptability. The resulting information students shared produced a particularly rich and layered segment of data. Often, participants not only shared their views about why the scenario's acceptability was indeterminable, but also provided a comparative explanation as to how the scenario was different to the scenarios they believed were acceptable or unacceptable. This structural feature of how the scenarios were used allowed for the further exploration of nuances within what situational features or aspects of a writing assistance activity students grappled with when considering what made a situation acceptable, unacceptable, plagiarism, or just too difficult to always pin with only one label.

8.2.2 A Practical and Productive Implementation

The study method used scenarios that described an array of third-party writing assistance situations, all presented without any label or classification to indicate established (or institutionally defined) status of plagiarism, misconduct, etc. This implementation meant that the scenarios were presented as a collection of situations of writing assistance, free of any predetermined brand or judged status. In addition, participants were asked to consider if each scenario was acceptable, unacceptable, or indeterminable. This setup was distinctly different from other research that asked if various scenarios were plagiarism or not (Yeo, 2007), academic dishonesty or not (Austin et al., 2006), or if situations were acceptable or plagiarism (Barrett & Cox, 2005). In asking participants to classify scenarios into one of three acceptability options, the current method allowed for the participants' conceptions to help inform the research. Consequently, this implementation helped set the

stage for the observation that some students do not consider unacceptable assistance tantamount to plagiarism.

In addition to the impact on gathering rich qualitative research, the method of scenario use in this study provided pragmatic utility in data collection, an advantage to researchers working in complex and dynamic environments like education. The scenario-centred interviews were simple to administer. The laminated scenario cards could be set up in meeting locations with little need for a lot of space. The premise and instructions for the exercise were basic and easy to explain to participants. In addition, the method was malleable enough to conduct both in-person and online formats while still maintaining continuity of implementation. The set of scenarios also allow for customisation in implementation based on the particular focus of a research inquiry. With the wide range of third-party writing assistance activities covered in the scenario set, use of a specific selection could enable a more narrowly focused examination into a certain subset of activities. Additionally, the set of scenarios could be expanded to include situations that reflect the changing landscape of writing assistance, such as a scenario describing a student using generative AI during the process of writing their assessment.

Based on unsolicited feedback from students who reflected on the use of scenarios during their interview, the method was well-received. Multiple interview participants reported how much they enjoyed the sorting exercise and talking about the specific scenarios. These aspects of the study's method highlight the utility of the original creation and implementation of scenarios for research purposes, while also hinting at a usefulness beyond pure research endeavours.

8.2.3 Beyond Research Purposes: Scenarios as a Learning Support Tool

In addition to contributing a bespoke and uniquely implemented set of scenarios to academic integrity research, this method holds practical utility as a learning support tool within the classroom. Research shows students are often eager for more guidance about academic integrity, particularly in the form of ‘hands-on, engaging activities’ (Bretag et al., 2014, p. 1165). The scenario sorting exercise used in this research project could be used as an interactive activity, facilitating a discussion about how third-party writing assistance connects to academic integrity. Making use of the scenarios in the classroom would help contextualise academic integrity. Used to start a conversation among students and their lecturers, the scenarios could provide a chance for students to think about types of third-party writing assistance, staff to explain any variations in disciplinary standards, and both groups to consider writing assistance activities in relation to expectations set by policy.

Using the scenarios to present different situations of third-party writing assistance means that students would receive the opportunity to consider, discuss, and inquire about specific, realistic incidents. Embedding the scenario sorting exercise into a class or workshop session could provide the chance for students and staff to reflect on their views about, and any experiences with, writing assistance. The discussion could also be an opportunity to explain any disciplinary variations in norms regarding use of third-party assistance, which could help to clarify some of the murkiness around what is and is not acceptable according to the standards and expectations of a field or area of study. Similarly, a discussion about the acceptability of each scenario in conjunction with a review of institutional policy could supply a basis for students to practise applying the standards of conduct ascribed by their university to real-world situations. This type of contextualised in-

course instruction should help students better navigate a path of academic integrity (Bens, 2022) when it comes to identifying inappropriate uses of third-party writing assistance.

8.3 Implications for Policy and Practice

8.3.1 Requiring Transparency in the Use of Third-party Writing Assistance

The murkiness of the space between writing assistance and plagiarism suggests the need for transparent reporting of what and how assistance is used during the process of writing an assessment. As evidenced by the study results, students and staff sometimes disagree with their peers on the acceptability of scenarios of third-party writing assistance. Additionally, both groups exhibit uncertainty regarding whether various situations of writing assistance constitute plagiarism. What is acceptable and unacceptable in seeking and receiving third-party writing assistance, especially when it comes to instances of editing, is not clear-cut nor uniformly considered by students and staff. Variations in disciplinary approaches and continued changes in technology's role in writing further complicate the matter. Requiring students to disclose their use of third-party writing assistance provides a way to operate within the reality of this murky space. While perceived acceptability may not be clear or uniform, incorporating transparency would create a point of clarity regarding the use of assistance.

Implementing a requirement for students to include an acknowledgement in their assessment that attributes any third-party writing assistance used and its impact on their writing could advantage both students and teaching staff. Students may benefit from crediting any writing assistance since doing so would underscore the importance of acknowledging the influence and contribution of other sources to their thinking and

writing, in a transparent manner. Staff assessing student work would likely benefit from the information conveyed by a noted recognition of third-party writing assistance. In its seventh edition, the style manual of the American Psychological Association (APA) provides guidance on referencing some sources of third-party writing assistance. The style includes a format to cite individuals with whom the writer had personal communications. This citation template could be employed to note the use of writing assistance from a peer, editor, or other non-recoverable source. With the recent rise of generative AI, like ChatGPT, APA calls for adherence to the citation format used for software, with the added suggestion of including a full transcript of the chat in an appendix (McAdoo, 2023). The Modern Language Association (MLA) also provides templates for both in-text and works cited list notations of AI chatbots (*How do I cite generative AI in MLA style?*, 2023). Including a citation for such tools, however, may not be the best way to recognise use. As an informational mechanism, citations only clarify what sources were used. A citation does not offer specifics regarding how the sources were used. Additionally, AI-produced writing does not credit the input it uses to generate text (source origin of material in the programme's repository) and sometimes provides inaccurate or completely falsified information. While acknowledging use of a third-party writing assistance, AI or otherwise, seems reasonable, doing so by citation implies the tool or source is reliable and credible—which it may not be.

Instead, it would be advantageous to stipulate a *declaration of use* of any third-party writing assistance be included in submitted assessments. This declaration could be used to cover generative AI, more basic tools of cognitive offloading, or human editorial textual intervention. The practical impact of having a short, written acknowledgment for any writing assistance used would help address one of the frequent concerns surveyed staff had:

the inability to measure a student's individual abilities when writing assistance was used to compose the assessment. Requiring a declaration of use means that staff are provided with the detail of what type of assistance was used and how it was used. This information would offer the instructor more insight into the student's level of engagement with the assistance and what aspects of the assessment were affected, thus a better indication of the student's contribution to the work.

8.3.2 Responding to the Efficiency Motive

Students' perceptions about what motivated the use of third-party writing assistance revealed a desire to reduce time-on-task and increase the efficiency with which assessments were completed. Brought about by either an artificial scarcity or legitimate constraints on their time, students may use third-party writing assistance due to the presumption that doing so will save time. Knowing that this efficiency gain can fuel the use of third-party writing assistance, universities should acknowledge this factor and consider ways to respond.

While many aspects of students' lives, including family or work obligations, exist beyond the influence of institutions and teaching staff, there are some ways within their purview that universities can address issues related to time. At the department level, internal reviews of lecturers' conjectures about the amount of time it takes students to undertake written assessments, including any related readings necessary to compose their work, could help ensure time-bound expectations are reasonable. At the programme level, potential responses include coordinating assessment submission schedules to reduce

coinciding deadlines and examining the curriculum across courses or units to ensure over-assessment is not happening.

8.3.3 *Situating Discussions about Editing Assistance Within Academic Integrity*

Based on the uncertainty voiced by students and the divergence of thought among staff regarding editing instances of writing assistance, the use of editing, proofreading, or other textual revision beyond basic spell checking should be situated within academic integrity. More straightforward cases of plagiarism via textual similarity and more deliberate cases of academic ghostwriting already hold a significant amount of space in the discourse on academic integrity. Addressing the topic of editing instances of writing assistance from within the realm of academic integrity means that the topic is conferred importance equal to that of the more commonly considered prototypical plagiarism and ghostwriting incidents. According to study results, beliefs about whether editing activities are unacceptable varied among students and staff. And their perceptions about when such situations constituted plagiarism were hampered by a lack of certainty. Placing students use of editing assistance within academic integrity could be one way to start tackling this murkier area of writing assistance.

Guidelines for seeking and receiving editing assistance should be incorporated or linked to academic integrity policy (Kim & LaBianca, 2018). Issues related to editing from third parties are often situated within learning support centre spaces or directed at international students and English language learners (Babcock, 2008; Kim, 2018; McNally & Kooyman, 2017). The use of editing services is sometimes addressed in regulations or guidelines for student research, but this is often specific to postgraduate students (e.g.,

Massey University, 2021; University of Otago, 2021). Talking about editing within the academic integrity discourse and incorporating it into the official communications about academic integrity could accomplish two things. First, it would be an acknowledgement of the complexity that exists within determining acceptability of these instances of writing assistance. Second, it would provide a clear connection between seeking and receiving editing assistance and the values of academic integrity that may aid students as they work through how to engage with this type of assistance.

Most important, though, is ensuring that communication extends into the classrooms. Embedding conversations about seeking and receiving editing assistance into courses would help to clarify expectations for students. Such discussions would also provide staff with a chance to gauge whether views align or differ, and to adjust their instruction accordingly. Talking with students about third-party writing assistance at this level also provides a fitting opportunity to explain any potential impact on acceptability from variables like disciplinary norms, instructor preferences, and assignment parameters (Bens, 2022). In light of the murky edges of acceptability, both students and staff could benefit from continued discussions about what it looks like to use acceptable textual intervention from third parties.

8.3.4 *Shifting Focus from the Term Plagiarism*

The broad and varied nature of the term plagiarism and how those in academic communities use it to refer to a wide spectrum of actions, situations, and incidents has been well documented in both writing studies and academic integrity research (Denney et al., 2020; Howard, 1999; Jamieson, 2016; Sutherland-Smith, 2005). Scholars have called for

reconsiderations of the term, including when it should be used and to what types of situations it should refer (Howard, 1993; Jamieson & Howard, 2019). The idea that we should not do away with the term plagiarism but maybe ‘transcend’ it (Eaton, 2021, p. 222) is particularly appealing when it comes to the issue of considering third-party writing assistance activities like those in the current study. The complexity inherent within this area means adhering to definitions of labels like plagiarism can result in a disconnect when certain instances fit the label according to some people but do not fit the label according to others—as demonstrated in this study. It would be advantageous to shift focus from the term plagiarism and onto acknowledging and embracing the nuanced nature of using third-party writing assistance, particularly editing and repurposing instances of writing assistance. Moving in this direction could allow for greater reflection on what it means to write with integrity.

8.3.5 Using Scenarios as a Learning Support Tool

Incorporating the study’s scenario set as a discussion activity in the classroom may be a valuable addition to both teaching writing and addressing academic integrity. University-level academic integrity programming, such as general awareness campaigns and asynchronous academic integrity mastery modules, are already in use at some universities in Aotearoa New Zealand. Such tools have been highlighted as helpful in increasing student awareness of academic integrity matters (Khan et al., 2020) and understanding of academic misconduct, which often includes plagiarism (Belter & du Pré, 2009; Curtis et al., 2013). It may be that such programming, while helpful, lacks context-specific information that could help students navigate the complexities of writing assistance and plagiarism (Bens, 2022). Research suggests that using vignettes or scenarios in the classroom can help expand

students' understanding of concepts (Burrell Storms, 2014), including academic integrity (Trautner & Borland, 2013). Adding writing assistance scenarios into instruction, at the course, degree, or discipline level, would provide a more relevant and interactive way to spotlight the realities of writing with integrity. Embedding review and discussion of the study's set of scenarios into the classroom, or even academic support sessions, would help to address an area that is not always adequately covered in more traditional means like compulsory online academic integrity modules, as shown by Sefcik et al.'s (2020) review of university's academic integrity education programmes in Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand. Implementing the scenario sorting exercise and following it with an in-depth discussion among students and staff would facilitate the 'continuous reinforcement by lecturers and tutors' (Palmer et al., 2017, p. 396) necessary to help students improve their understanding about the use of third-party writing assistance as it relates to academic integrity.

8.4 Limitations of the Study

The limitations of this study stemmed from aspects of the data collection process and included the use of a pool of self-selected participants, a potential order bias caused by the sequence in which survey questions were presented, and the small sample size of participants. The first limitation was the use of volunteer participants who self-selected to take part in the study. Because both students and staff were recruited through requests for participation, the results reflect the views of individuals who possibly took part in the study due to an affinity for the task of writing or a personal interest in the research topic. As such, the group of student participants may be a collection of people who have been more engaged in their educational journey through university than other students. Similarly, the

staff who responded to the survey may have been drawn to the research topic in a way that might not be uniform among all university teaching staff, making them more willing to participate. These potential impacts of collecting data from self-selected participants limit the breadth of the findings. Implementing the scenario-based interviews in a new study with a predetermined researcher-selected group of participants (as in, those within a particular course or those who have been involved in an academic integrity case) may provide additional insights and expand the reach of the findings.

Another limitation of the study was the variation in order of information presented in the staff survey when compared to the student interviews. The students were asked to rate the acceptability of the writing assistance scenarios (by way of the scenario sorting exercise) prior to reaching questions on their beliefs and perceptions about plagiarism. In comparison, the staff survey included two questions about plagiarism before all the scenario specific questions. The survey was structured this way based on the best practice, commonly called the funnel technique or sequence, where broader, more general, questions come before more specific, and potentially more time-consuming questions. Using this approach, broad open-ended questions regarding plagiarism came before specific Likert-scale questions requesting a rating for each scenario. While the scenarios used in both data collection tracks were identical, and each scenario questions focused on whether the situation was acceptable (*fully or somewhat*), unacceptable (*fully or somewhat*), or indeterminable (*not sure or it depends*), the order of when questions about the notion of plagiarism were asked may have influenced how staff responded. Having questions that included the term *plagiarism* before any of the scenario questions in the survey may have primed staff to consider the subsequent questions about writing assistance activities in a

different way than they would have otherwise. In any future research that gathers this type of data from two separate groups via two different methods, the potential impact of an order bias should be weighed against the benefit of conventional practices.

The third limitation was the relatively small number of respondents to the survey. The survey dataset included only 108 responses; this sample is small by common quantitative research standards, which typically consider dataset size in relation to the population being represented. Due to the two-block structure of the survey instrument⁷⁷, implemented to reduce completion time, the sample size for specific scenario questions was roughly half of the full survey response. This structure reduced the sample size for each of the questions regarding the 24 scenarios. While the small sample size should be partially attributed to the block structure used, other factors of circumstance could have played a role in the low response rate. One likely reason was that the survey took place during 2021, when the impact of the novel Covid-19 virus was still disrupting everyday life in Aotearoa New Zealand. The pandemic and continued rounds of strict national stay-at-home lockdowns forced everyone to make substantial adjustments to how they spent both personal and work time. The majority of employed people transitioned to work-from-home arrangements, which came with its own set of challenges felt by academics (Gwen et al., 2021). Teaching staff were grappling with the need to redesign in-person courses into comparable remote online instruction, and may not have had adequate digital competency to do so (Brooks & Grajeck, 2020). Because of the disruption caused by Covid-19 and the

⁷⁷ As detailed in Chapter Three, the staff survey was divided into two separate blocks containing half of the 24 scenarios. The survey used a randomisation element to display one of the two blocks to participants, effectively collecting responses to 12 scenarios from roughly half the participants and responses to the other 12 scenarios from the other half of participants.

related containment measures, staff at Aotearoa New Zealand universities may have had less time or energy to give to non-essential tasks, resulting in a smaller than anticipated response to the survey.

One notable consequence of the small survey sample size included a lack of diversity among the respondent group, with uneven representation of colleges, disciplines, and fields of study. As a result, the data did not provide the opportunity to examine for potential correlations within staff responses in relation to discipline or other work-related demographic variables. Additionally, the small sample size also means it is not appropriate to generalise the quantitative results of the staff survey. The design of the study (a convergent QUAL+quan mixed methods approach⁷⁸) combined with the small survey response placed advanced quantitative analyses outside the scope of the project. It would, however, be advantageous for future research to include more participants, with a more representative sample for a quantitative analysis that could offer potentially generalisable findings.

While less substantial than the constraint caused by the small sample in track II, the number of interview participants in track I might be considered by some as a fourth limitation of the study. Qualitative research is typically less concerned with relational dataset size and instead often relies on the notion of saturation. There are various

⁷⁸ As discussed in Chapter Three, the study was designed to primarily focus on students' perceptions, with a secondary inquiry into teaching staff's perceptions. The methods were structured accordingly: the student-focused narrative-producing method (QUAL) was prioritised over the staff-focused number-generating method (quan). Refer to Section 3.3.2 for details regarding this element of the study design.

interpretations of saturation⁷⁹, but at a basic level it suggests that a dataset contains an adequate amount for analysis since the ability to gather additional new information or devise new codes or themes has been reached (Fusch & Ness, 2015). Thus, saturation serves as a quality ‘criterion for discontinuing data collection and/or analysis’ (Saunders et al., 2018, p. 1894). Since variation exists among researchers’ conclusions as to when saturation is met (Baker & Edwards, 2012), the current study’s use of 20 interview participants could be considered by some as a limitation. Adhering to *inductive thematic saturation* (Saunders et al., 2018), however, the 20 interviews produced a sufficient collection of data. The perceptions and opinions shared by students began to exhibit a degree of repetition in the codes and themes developed from the data in initial analysis. The data were both rich in nuanced and layered detail, and thick in quantity (with over 300 codes). The depth of this dataset evidenced a sufficient level of saturation (Fusch & Ness, 2015). The saturation, along with the practical constraints of a fixed budget and project schedule (Emmel, 2013), supported a judgement that the size and quality of the dataset collected for the narrative-producing method was reasonable and sufficient.

8.5 Considering the Next Generation of Automated Third-party Writing Assistance

Recent developments in generative artificial intelligence (AI) and natural language processing have led to advanced technology that represents the latest iteration of technological third-party writing assistance. Using machine learning algorithms, language

⁷⁹ While commonly employed by many qualitative researchers, saturation as an indicator of quality is thought to be problematic by some. For example, Braun and Clarke (2021) argue saturation’s positivist underpinning makes it inappropriate for reflexive thematic analysis, and Low (2019) calls for a redefining of saturation that goes beyond the notion that no new information is emerging from the data.

models like Copy.ai⁸⁰ and ChatGPT⁸¹ compose refined, fluent, original text that ‘mimics human-generated text’ (Illia et al., 2022, p. 201) in the natural way it reads. These tools can be used to create free⁸² written work by anyone with access to the Internet. According to the current study’s survey, staff were often concerned about being able to accurately evaluate a student’s abilities when they use writing assistance. The issue of instructors not knowing what or how writing assistance was used by the student, thus unable to measure a student’s knowledge or abilities was repeatedly reported as a reason for ratings of *unacceptable* among scenarios that involved the use of older, less sophisticated technology (e.g., automated paraphrasing tools, file sharing websites). New AI tools are more powerful and designed to generate bespoke written text more effectively than previous tools. With the next generation of these automated third-party writing assistance options upon us, concerns about measuring a student’s abilities will persist and intensify.

It is not difficult to understand why such forms of third-party writing assistance concern academics and educational institutions. The rise of automated writing assistance has been characterised as a ‘shift from computer-as-editor to computer-as-author’ (Dale & Viethen, 2021, p. 514), underscoring the progression in the technology’s ability to serve as the originator of new composition instead of the polisher of existing text. On top of providing a way for students to circumvent the labour of being the genuine author of their

⁸⁰ <https://www.copy.ai/?via=adam-enfroy>

⁸¹ <https://openai.com/blog/chatgpt/>

⁸² At the time of this writing, many of these language model generators are free to use. It is anticipated that future iterations of these and other similar tools will be available via a one-time fee, premium subscription, or some other payment model.

assessment, the aid these tools offer can obscure a student's actual ability, thereby altering the utility of an assessment to serve as evidence of a student's knowledge or skills.

The current study did not include a scenario involving the use of generative AI⁸³, but recent media reports describe a hasty reaction of moral panic among educational institutions and staff when considering the seemingly sudden influx of third-party writing assistance tools powered by AI (e.g., Elsen-Rooney, 2023; McMurtrie, 2022). The proliferation of these types of tools, however, should instead serve as a moment for staff and institutions to reassess both the teaching of writing, and the way the academy communicates what academic integrity is and how to exemplify this principle when undertaking assessments.

Increasingly noticeable in higher education news, scholars are calling for an integration of AI writing tools, notably ChatGPT and similar natural language processing models, into curriculum and instruction (Illingworth, 2023; Kovanovic, 2022; Otsuki, 2020; Sims, 2023; Sparrow, 2022a). In doing so, these forms of third-party writing assistance could be used in service of students' learning. The routine use of generative AI is already well-established in a number of industries, including professions within healthcare (Costa, 2019) and law (Clarke, 2018). AI text generators in particular have been used by professionals to create written work or aid in the creation of written work in areas like journalism (Beckett, 2019, as cited in Sparrow, 2022b) and marketing (Knowles, 2022).

While not acquiescing the neoliberal stance of education as valuable solely based on its economic benefits, the missions of most universities do include aims to educate, foster

⁸³ Data collection for this study ended in September 2021, before the launch of ChatGPT in November 2022.

and progress knowledge, and support civic enhancement (Papadimitriou, 2020). Within such missions exists a goal to develop critical thinkers equipped with skills they will need for their future. To prepare students for working in settings that accept, or even require, writing be done in conjunction with AI tools, the academy should escalate AI literacy efforts aimed at teaching students how to use such tools critically and effectively. In addition, assessments that authentically reflect real-world tasks and challenges beyond the university classrooms could include the use of AI writing assistance. Assessments that permit the use of automated writing assistance could serve as an exercise in strengthening their evaluative judgement (Bearman & Luckin, 2020). Completing assessments that integrate automated writing assistance would position the student to gain experience composing written work while also examining the quality of the AI-generated text, manually identifying areas of the work that could be improved, revising to correct and enhance what is being communicated, and using additional sources to verify information is accurate and cited material is attributed properly.

Much like other technologies used in educational settings, though, the benefits of AI tools must be carefully weighed with the harms often inherent in advanced technology. And, with generative AI, the risks extend beyond concerns about where these tools sit on the spectrum of cognitive offloading and whether they obscure an instructor's ability to measure a student's ability to write. Problematic aspects of new generative AI include implicit biases regarding race and language, inequitable access, potentially toxic content output, and worker exploitation (Bjork, 2023; Perrigo, 2023; Stokel-Walker & Van Noorden, 2023; Vock, 2022) More investigation and deliberation are needed in this area and in other areas of the third-party writing assistance space.

8.6 Moving Forward with Further Research

Considering the findings and implications from this study, as well as the limitations inherent to its scope and methods, the following sections describe four potential avenues for further research. The first suggestion is a more in-depth examination into the view that some assistance is unacceptable but not plagiarism. Second is a suggestion for an exploration into the potential impact of a discussion's mode on perceived acceptability of writing assistance. The third suggestion is for a qualitative investigation into staff's perceptions, with specific focus on lecturers' explanations for less commonly held beliefs. Finally, future investigations into students' knowledge about third-party writing assistance and plagiarism should include action research that evaluates and reflects on the use of the study's scenario set as a classroom tool to facilitate academic writing and integrity discussion and instruction.

8.6.1 Examining Student Engagement in Situations Deemed Unacceptable but Not Plagiarism

This study found that sometimes students considered instances of writing assistance as not acceptable but also believed that these situations did not result in nor constitute plagiarism. Another complexity within the acceptability of assistance, the belief that situations of third-party writing assistance could be unacceptable but not plagiarism certainly warrants further examination. The initial review of this finding suggests that students' constructions of what plagiarism is may not align with all aspects of what they feel makes writing assistance unacceptable. But if using certain forms of writing assistance is deemed unacceptable but not plagiarism, then what would students consider these

instances? A moral failing that happens to not be prohibited by anti-plagiarism guidelines, thus a wrongdoing that is not seen as being officially considered misconduct? Or just a less than ideal way to acquire, or demonstrate, knowledge, and therefore a type of inferior academic practice? And when unacceptable third-party writing assistance is regarded as not plagiarism, are these students more apt to partake in these activities? Future research could include a deeper exploration specifically into the perception that some situations of third-party writing assistance were unacceptable but not plagiarism, and the actual use of these types of assistance.

8.6.2 The Potential Impact of Varied Configurations of Discussions

The findings showed that student participants considered the absence of a discussion during the writing assistance as a signifier of unacceptability. Nearly all the interviewed students talked about writing assistance that included a discussion between the student and the source of assistance as a positive aspect that evidenced the student's active role in acquiring the help. While multiple scenarios used in the study mentioned a discussion occurring or not occurring, none of the instances included explicit details about the configuration of the discussion. A question that then arises for future research is whether the mode or other aspects of the discussion would change how students consider its bearing on acceptability of writing assistance. With the continued use of technology (e.g., online and hybrid classroom instruction; virtual academic support services), more and more conversations happen asynchronously. Some conversations may involve interaction with a non-human source of assistance (e.g., AI chatbots). Future research into perceptions about third-party writing assistance should examine the situational feature of discussion in more detail. Are instances of back-and-forth communication that occur at different times

considered differently to those which take place live and in real time? Are discussions with generative AI perceived differently to discussions with human sources of third-party writing assistance?

8.6.3 A Qualitative Look into Staff's Explanations for Less Commonly Held Beliefs

An in-depth qualitative inquiry into the reasoning behind why teaching staff perceived certain third-party writing assistance as acceptable or unacceptable was beyond the scope of the current study, so further research examining staff's explanations for their ratings of scenarios would be useful. Adding to this study's quantitative representation of which scenarios staff believed were *acceptable*, *unacceptable*, or indeterminable (ratings of *not sure* or *it depends*) and the frequency of ratings for each scenario, qualitative research could examine the specific reasons why, in their own words, staff assigned these ratings.

A narrative-generating method would be particularly helpful in understanding more about instances like the reported acceptance of ghostwriting. The results of the survey showed a small number of staff rated ghostwriting scenarios as *acceptable*, which conflicted with the widely reported rating of *unacceptable* from most staff participants. Much like the qualitative method used with student participants in this study, a future study could build upon the numeric findings from the staff survey by employing an interview or focus group approach aimed at garnering information from staff about why they hold the beliefs they do—especially when it comes to beliefs that appear less common among their colleagues.

8.6.4 Action Research Evaluating Scenarios as a Learning Support Tool

The study results and reflective feedback from student participants on their experience undertaking the scenario sorting exercise suggest that a similar implementation

of the scenario-based method would be a beneficial teaching and learning tool. Using the scenarios in the classroom holds the potential to be a helpful way to facilitate a discussion among students and staff about the acceptability of writing assistance and the possibility of plagiarism. To test this potential and evaluate the effectiveness of the scenarios as a learning support tool, an action research project should be conducted. Action research is built upon cycles of 'planning a change, implementing and evaluating the change, then reflecting on the process' (Vaughan, 2020, p. 441). This approach, connecting research and practice (Townsend, 2013), is well suited for determining the utility of the scenarios as a learning tool for teaching staff trying to generate discussions about academic integrity, the process of writing, and plagiarism. Such research may also provide insights into how to improve contextualised in-course instruction focused on helping students understand the complexities and expectations of composing academic writing.

8.7 Final Thoughts

When I started this project, I thought that maybe my data would elucidate students' and staff's considerations of when writing assistance was deemed unacceptable, that I could then use to identify boundaries between assistance activities that were appropriate to use and assistance activities that were to be avoided. Identifying the perceptions participants had about what was acceptable and unacceptable for students to do when getting assistance during their writing process led me to see that boundaries typically did not exist as static borders. Instead, the edges of acceptability are often murky and can move or flex, or even be determined by how assistance is consumed and operationalised by a student.

Conducting this study showed me just how complex and nuanced matters really are in the space between writing assistance and plagiarism. I have learned that working to identify or create demarcations to serve as distinct boundaries based on the type, extent, or source of writing assistance is an exceedingly difficult endeavour—and in the end, may not be as useful as I initially believed. In higher education, writing assistance from third parties cannot be rigidly categorised by form or cordoned off into universally acceptable or unacceptable. The complexity of [un]acceptability cannot be solved or organised away. Dealing with this issue of third-party writing assistance is going to require our full acceptance of the context-specific nature of how different types of writing assistance are considered in terms of plagiarism, academic integrity, and student writing activities. Figuring out how to address the issue in a way that offers reasonable and practical guidance to students and staff, while acknowledging and embracing the complicated nature of acceptability, is going to be a continuous challenge for the academy.

When it comes to third-party writing assistance, there are wider ramifications for higher education than my focus on student writing, integrity, and plagiarism. Students' use of third-party writing assistance, particularly the anticipated increase in use of generative AI, will force the academy to not only reflect on academic integrity, but purposefully examine what we should be teaching students, which skills and abilities need to be assessed, and how these assessments should be designed and conducted. An entire paradigm shift will be needed to adequately tackle all that needs tackling so that the academy provides our students with educational experiences that support their intellectual development.

Beyond what I learned about students' and staff's views on the space between writing assistance and plagiarism, I also learned about the process of undertaking a lengthy research

project. As a result, I have grown as an academic researcher. The continuous cycle of rereading and rewriting helped me to gain a deeper understanding of what it means to think critically. Managing a multi-year study with human participants and two distinct data collection methods (during an unprecedented pandemic) certainly tested my organisational skills. Equally demanding for me was being deliberate about making space for the interpretivism essential to qualitative research, while resisting the reflex to revert to my predominately positivistic way of thinking developed during my criminology studies as an undergraduate and master's student. I experienced the entire doctoral research and writing process as an enduring lesson in patience, persistence, and most importantly, personal and intellectual growth.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Human Ethics Approval Letter



Date: 05 December 2020

Dear Ami Moller

Re: Ethics Notification - SOB 20/38 - Academic Writing Assistance and Plagiarism

Thank you for the above application that was considered by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Human Ethics Southern B Committee at their meeting held on Saturday, 5 December, 2020.

Approval is for three years. If this project has not been completed within three years from the date of this letter, reapproval must be requested.

If the nature, content, location, procedures or personnel of your approved application change, please advise the Secretary of the Committee.

Yours sincerely



Professor Craig Johnson
Chair, Human Ethics Chairs' Committee and Director (Research Ethics)

Appendix B: Recruitment Materials

In-class Advert

PARTICIPANTS NEEDED!
ACADEMIC WRITING ASSISTANCE STUDY

WHO? 2nd and 3rd year undergrads

WHAT? One activity session

- 30-45 minutes
- Confidential
- Discussion about different types of writing help students use

WHEN? Time & date of your choice

WHERE? Manawatū campus

Ami Möller
acadwritingstudy@massey.ac.nz

Participants will be in a draw for a \$400 or \$100 card!

Scan me!

Image source: <https://www.prezycard.co.nz/>

Social Media Post

Call for Participants!
Academic Writing Assistance Study

Join a research study exploring student perspectives about using help when writing assessments.

 **Who? NZ university undergrads**
What? One individual activity session
Where? Online (ZOOM) or Manawatū campus

Participants have a chance to win a \$400 or \$100 Prezy® Card!

Interested in sharing your views?
For full details email acadwritingstudy@massey.ac.nz

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B, Application SOB 20/38. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research, please contact Dr Gerald Harrison, Chair, Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B, telephone 06 336 9099 x 83570, email humanethicsouthb@massey.ac.nz



Participants needed for the

ACADEMIC WRITING ASSISTANCE STUDY

Join a research study exploring students' views on different types of writing help undergrads may consider using when completing an assessment.

Participation involves doing a 30-45 minute one-time individual and confidential activity session (online or in-person).

To be eligible to participate you must

- be a university student in NZ
- enrolled in either a
 - bachelor's degree
 - graduate certificate or diploma
- have already completed your first semester

**Be in the draw for a \$400
or \$100 Prezzy® Card!**



Scan the code
to send an email
for more info!



Ami Möller
acadwritingstudy@massey.ac.nz



This project has been reviewed and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B, Application SOB 20/38. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research, please contact Dr Gerald Harrison, Chair, Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B, telephone 06 356 9099 x 83570, email humanethicsouthb@massey.ac.nz

Appendix C: Study Information Sheet



Kia ora,

My name is Ami Möller and I am a doctoral student at Massey University. I am working towards a PhD in English (Writing Studies). This document provides information about my thesis research project called the Academic Writing Assistance Study.

Project Description

This study aims to explore university student and staff perspectives on different types of writing assistance engaged in by students during the process of completing an assessment. The study has two parts: a) an individual in-person activity with undergraduate and graduate students currently enrolled in an academic programme at a New Zealand university, and b) an electronic survey of current university teaching staff in New Zealand. The following information details the first part of the study – the activity part.

Participant Recruitment

To be eligible for this study, activity participants must be current university students studying towards an undergraduate or graduate qualification in New Zealand. Individuals who happen to be both a current student and a staff member will be excluded from the study. The project goal is to have 50 students do the activity.

All students who participate will be entered into a draw for one of two Prezzy cards. The first draw will be for a \$400 card; the second draw will be for a \$100 card.

Invitation to Participate

I am interested in learning about students' views on using assistance or help when writing assessments, and since you are a current New Zealand university student, I would like to hear what you think about different assistance activities.

You are invited to be part of this study.

The information below provides details about the study and the activity process. If you are keen to participate, we will

review all this information to make sure you are aware of your rights as a research participant, are comfortable participating, and able to complete a consent form before the activity session.

Activity Process

The activity session is expected to last between 30 and 45 minutes. At the beginning, you will be asked to complete a short exercise (approximately 1-3 minutes) where you will categorise a set of scenarios into three separate groups. This is not a test of knowledge; there is not one right answer in how the scenarios are grouped. After the scenarios are categorised, we will discuss what aspects of the scenarios indicated to you which group they should be in, your thoughts on students' use of the help in the scenarios, any similar experiences you may have had, and your thoughts on why students may engage with the types of help in the scenarios.

At the beginning of the activity session, I will ask if it is okay to audio record our discussion. After we are done, I will transcribe our discussion and be in touch with an electronic copy that you can check for accuracy.

Data Management

Data from the activity sessions will be reported in my PhD thesis. Data will also be included in any related publications (e.g., conference presentations, scholarly journals). Participants will not be identifiable in any such reports or publications, since each participant will be referred to by a pseudonym.

Activity transcripts and audio recordings will be kept in a secure location, with access limited to me. With your consent, I will archive the data for use in future research. This will only include de-identified data (i.e. the data will not include your name). If you do not allow data from your activity session to be archived, it will be destroyed after 7 years in accordance with ethical research best practices.

Benefits and Risks

A benefit of participating in this study is the opportunity it provides you to offer your point of view on different writing assistance activities students may engage in while at university. You will be given the chance to talk about your ideas, views, and experiences; this can also provide you with a chance to reflect on your own learning and understanding. An added benefit is that the information you share will provide researchers with insight into the student perspective, which could help inform their continued efforts to improve learning experiences for future students.

Effort to make participants comfortable during their participation include structuring activity sessions in a conversational format around a set of fictionalised scenarios. While participants may be asked to share any similar experiences they have had, the focus of the discussion is on perceptions, views, and beliefs based on the hypothetical scenarios. This minimises the risk of possible discomfort or distress in discussing personal learning or writing activities that may be stigmatised in some communities or social circles. There are no known major risks involved in participating in the study.

Your Rights as a Participant

You are under no obligation to accept this invitation. If you decide to participate, you have the right to:


- decline to answer any particular question (note that non-responses will be recorded as such in the data);
- withdraw from the study up until September 2021;
- ask any questions about the study at any time during participation;
- request for the recorder to be turned off at any time during the activity session;
- provide information on the understanding that your name will not be used unless you give permission to the researcher.

Study Contacts

If you have any questions about this study, please contact me or my primary supervisor:

Ami Möller	Prof. Lisa Emerson
PhD Candidate	Supervisor
College of Humanities and Social Sciences	College of Humanities and Social Sciences
Massey University	Massey University
ami.moller.1@uni.massey.ac.nz	l.emerson@massey.ac.nz

Ngā mihi nui,



Ami Möller

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B, Application SOB 20/38. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research, please contact Dr Gerald Harrison, Chair, Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B, telephone 06 356 9099 x 83570, email humanethicsouthb@massey.ac.nz

Appendix D: Informed Consent Form



Academic Writing Assistance Study

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM – INDIVIDUAL ACTIVITY SESSION

I have read the Information Sheet and had the details of the study explained to me. Any questions I had have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time. I have been given enough time to consider whether to participate in this study and I understand participation is voluntary and that I may withdraw from the study at any time before September 2021.

- I agree to participate in an activity session for this study.
- I agree to the session being audio recorded.
- I agree to the session data being archived for future research. Archived data will be anonymised (it will not include participant names or identifiers).

Declaration by Participant:

I _____ hereby consent to take part in this study.

Printed full name

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix E: Transcript Release Authority



MASSEY UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES
AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
TE KURA PŪKENGĀ TANGATA

Academic Writing Assistance Study

AUTHORITY FOR THE RELEASE OF TRANSCRIPTS

I confirm that I have had the opportunity to read the transcript of the interview(s) conducted with me.

I agree that the edited transcript and extracts from this may be used in reports and publications arising from the research and archived (in anonymised form) for future research.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Full Name - printed _____

Appendix F: Writing Assistance Scenarios

- I: Renier writes a draft and puts it through Grammarly, making all the changes the programme suggests.
- II: Renier starts writing but feels he cannot seem to get going. He takes what he has written to a friend and asks them for help. The friend corrects the spelling, grammar, and sentence structure of what Renier wrote. The friend also writes additional sections of the paper for Renier.
- III: Renier copies a passage from a journal and pastes it into a paraphrase tool website, like Quillbot, that then provides a paraphrased version of the original text. Renier puts this paraphrased text in his paper and cites the original reference according to APA style.
- IV: While writing his paper, Renier uses the University of Manchester's Academic Phrasebank to help make his writing sound more scholarly. He copies phrases from the phrasebank into his paper, plugging in his topic words.
- V: Renier visits a student file sharing site where he has previously found helpful lecture notes from class sessions he was unable to attend. He finds assessments similar to his assigned research paper. Adding to his draft, he takes short sections from multiple papers and inserts them into his paper, rewriting some of them.
- VI: Renier asks his older sister to help him by proofreading his drafted paper. She sits with him, pointing out mistakes she says he needs to address. Through their discussion, Renier understands all the comments she makes. Renier then sits at the computer and revises his paper.
- VII: Renier gets a paper written by someone he does not know from a website. He purchases the paper and pays through the website.
- VIII: Renier asks his flatmate to help him by proofreading his drafted paper. The flatmate sits at the computer and changes grammar, sentence structure, and the organisation of the paper. Renier is not sure why some of the changes were made.
- IX: Renier tries to paraphrase part of a reference he wants to include in his paper but feels like it is not working. He uses the thesaurus/synonym tool in Word to replace certain words in the source text with similar words.
- X: Renier takes his drafted paper to another lecturer to review before submitting it to his course instructor. The lecturer provides Renier with feedback in the form of both comments and rewritten sentences. Renier revises his paper to include the rewritten sentences.
- XI: Renier gets a paper written by his friend who owes him a favour. He did not pay for the paper.
- XII: Renier starts writing his paper and asks for help from his father. Renier and his father talk about Renier's ideas for the paper, including topic choice, organisation, and possible references. Renier reflects upon the discussion with his father and returns to writing his paper.
- XIII: Renier and a classmate get together to work on their papers. They discuss their topics and ideas about what to write. They share references. They draft their papers independently and review each other's work making corrections to spelling and grammar.

- XIV: Renier pays a professional editor to review his drafted paper. The editor corrects spelling, grammar, and punctuation. The editor also recommends changes to improve the clarity of Renier's statements through comments written in the margins. Renier discusses the comments with the editor and changes his writing based on the comments.
- XV: Renier gets a paper written by someone he does not know from a website. He did not pay for the paper.
- XVI: Renier asks his mother to proofread his drafted paper before he submits it. She makes corrections to spelling and punctuation. She makes adjustments to the content and the wording that alters Renier's argument in the paper.
- XVII: Renier locates a paper he previously wrote and submitted for a different course. Since the assessment prompt was similar, he updates the title page to reflect the current course and instructor name.
- XVIII: Renier takes his drafted paper to the Centre for Teaching and Learning. A Learning Advisor suggests changes to grammar and structure and explains the comments to Renier. Renier sits at the computer and makes edits based on the Learning Advisor's comments.
- XIX: Renier pays a professional editor to review his drafted paper. The editor corrects spelling, grammar, and punctuation. The editor also recommends changes to improve the clarity of Renier's statements and provides rewritten sentences via Word's track changes mode. The editor emails the paper back to Renier and they do not discuss the comments. Renier accepts all the changes made.
- XX: Renier gets permission from a friend to use their marked paper from an earlier semester. Renier rewords each sentence so that the wording is different while the original meaning is retained.
- XXI: Renier asks to see a classmate's paper to get an idea about what they are expected to do for the assessment. The classmate provides their paper to Renier to review. Later, Renier writes his own paper based on what he liked and remembered from the classmate's paper.
- XXII: Renier drafts a paper and asks a friend to proofread it. The friend reviews his paper and circles all the spelling and grammatical errors that Renier should correct, as well as offering ideas on additional content to support Renier's argument in the paper. Renier goes through and makes changes to his paper, correcting errors and adding supporting information his friend told him about.
- XXIII: Renier drafts a paper and asks a friend to edit it. The friend reviews his paper and circles all the spelling and grammatical errors that Renier should correct. Renier goes through and makes corrections to his paper.
- XXIV: Renier and a classmate get together to work on their papers. They divide up the task between themselves, with Renier writing his sections and the classmate writing their sections. They then combine the sections into one paper, each editing their own copy.

Appendix G: Interview Schedule

- Intro – me, the study, my actions during session, etc.
- Study Info Sheet read/discussed
- Any questions regarding study or participant rights?
- Consent form completed
- Refreshments offered
- Audio recorder ON

Today, you will be asked to consider different scenarios based on an undergraduate student doing an assessment for one his courses. The student is named Renier and his assignment is to complete a paper synthesising current literature on a topic of his choosing. According to the course instructor, the paper must be at least 4000 words and use APA reference style. The assessment is worth 70% of Renier’s course mark.

Based on your ideas about getting help with writing, please sort this set of 4 [or 5] cards into separate piles: those which are acceptable, those which are not acceptable, and those which you are not sure about. [set 3 minutes for sorting]

1. Do you have any scenarios in the acceptable pile?

[IF yes] CONTINUE...

[IF no] SKIP TO 2.

-What makes you think these scenarios are acceptable activities when writing an assessment?

(What specific aspects indicate to you the activity is okay to do?)

-Have you had any experience with these types of activities?

[IF yes] Tell me about it.

What was your reason for engaging in the activity?

[IF no] What type of situation would you have to be in for you to consider doing these activities?

2. How about any scenarios you put in the unacceptable pile?

[IF yes] CONTINUE...

[IF no] SKIP TO 3.

- What makes you think these scenarios are not acceptable to do?

(What specific aspects indicate to you the activity is not appropriate?)

(Why is <indicated response> unacceptable?)

-Do you think these are activities students commonly engage in?

-What are some reasons students do these activities?

-What type of situation would you have to be in for you to consider doing these activities?

3. Okay, are there any scenarios you put in the “not sure” pile?

[IF yes] CONTINUE...

[IF no] SKIP TO 4.

-What about these scenarios leave you unsure whether they are acceptable activities?

(What specific aspects make things unclear?)

-Have you had any experience with these types of activities?

[IF yes] Tell me about it.

[IF no] What type of situation would you have to be in for you to consider doing these activities?

What was your reason for [not] doing the activity?

(How did you go about deciding?)

-Can you think of any circumstances that would make the activities okay to do?

-Or any circumstances that would make it more acceptable? Tell me about them.

4. Tell me about your experience seeking help when writing an assessment.

-How have you got help if/when you needed it?

(Who/where did you go? Why?)

5. Can plagiarism occur in situations of writing help?

6. What does it mean “to plagiarise”? / How do you define plagiarism?

7. Would you consider any of these scenarios as plagiarism or something different?

8. What makes these scenarios [different to] plagiarism?

- Debrief - summary of responses
- Any additional comments regarding this what we've talked about?
- Any questions?
- Provided/reminded of email in case of more questions
- Reminded for next step: contact for review of transcript
- THANK YOU!
- Audio recorder OFF

Appendix H: Qualitative Data Codebook

Code Name	Code Description
A bit iffy	Situation could go either way - it could be acceptable or it could be not acceptable.
Academic integrity	DC- term use of 'academic integrity'.
Accepted changes	Accepting others' changes to work without discussing them, considering them, etc.
Accidental plagiarism is possible	E.G., he could do it without knowing; sometimes accidentally; take someone's idea by accident...
Acknowledging unacknowledged	Considering situation of acknowledging those in instances deemed "just assistance", "just help".
Absurd	Feeling that it's crazy or silly or extreme to credit help sources.
Alters argument	Changes made by someone else to a student's argument.
Altruism	Acting to aid others.
An aid to understand	Use of WA as an aid to understanding, comprehending (as opposed to replacement of work/effort/attempt/understanding.
Appropriation	E.G., taking someone else's words as your own, using someone's work for yours, passing off their work as his.
As long as	Caveats or clauses for considering something a particular way (E.G., this is acceptable as long as he's learning something)
Assessment as reflection of student	Work reflects students' values, ability to obtain grade/degree...
Attitude	Feelings about, and attitudes towards, the act of writing.
Authorship	Student is [not] the author; ownership of the work.
Final say	Student decides what goes in / gets changed in paper; makes up their own mind regarding accepting or rejecting suggestions/changes/edits etc.
Avoiding plagiarism	How to not plagiarise; not let situation become plagiaristic; avoid engagement; etc.
Taking care	Being careful, taking care (not) to, paying attention, being vigilant...
Benefit of F2F	Internal study as a benefit to learning/education.
Beyond assessment	Considering what's beyond the one assessment (E.G., practice for other stuff in the future, knowledge can be applied to other papers, use that skill elsewhere ...)
Beyond uni	Considering what's beyond time at uni (E.G., what matters after university; impact on the future, knowledge used beyond degree programme...)

Code Name	Code Description
Building skills	Improving skills; building one's skillset...
Change in categorising	Making a change to how scenario was initially rated- I.E., moving a card to a different rating pile.
Change in own behaviour	Reported changing own behaviour related to academic writing.
Changes after written	Timing of edits or changes made - after work is written.
Cheating	DC - labelling or considering something cheating.
Close wrap up	End of interview (incl. asking for final thoughts (if there aren't any), explanation of next steps in participation, asking for questions, etc.)
Cognitive load	Making a mental note, holding a thought/idea in my head (as opposed to writing the note down).
Comfortable	Sense of comfort; comfortability in source (use).
Commodity	Getting what you pay for... knowledge, degree, etc.
Common behaviour	Views scenario-like activities are common among students; examples of known instances; etc.
Comparing documents	Using commented version to compare with OG version for determining acceptance of edits.
Comprehension	E.G., he understands the changes, he needs to understand why, asks for explanation...
Confirming language	E.G., does that make sense?, you know what I mean? if that makes sense...
Conflict of interest	Concern framed as potential issue due to conflict in assistance (E.G., going to lecturer who's going to mark paper for WA)
Connection- same course	Students in the same class or course.
Content	DC - content of work
Adding stuff	E.G., someone else adding work/words, adding new content...
Wording v. material	Changes to wording / the way things are worded -- changes to the content or material covered in the assignment.
Copying	DC - copying others' work.
Covers deficiencies	E.G., it's good at catching the stuff I always miss; they are good at the stuff I'm bad at; my grammar sucks and it is good at fixing things I didn't see...
Covid-19 impact	Mentions of circumstance/change created by Covid (E.G., not being face-to-face, using tech to discuss, schedule adjustments...)
Critical thinking	Using critical thinking; thinking critically; own critical thought; etc.

Code Name	Code Description
Cultural issues	Cultural impact on ideas of plagiarism, academic writing, categorising scenarios, etc.
Danger	Plagiarism and danger/dangerous/risk.
Deception	E.G., handing in work under the guise it's yours; deceiving someone about the work...
Decisions	Student decisions regarding activity in scenario.
Defer to others knowledge	E.G., I don't know, but I know they have good knowledge and are right; they have the skills I don't so they know what to change it to...
Demonstrate own skills	E.G., you have to be able to put it in your words; you show what you know by doing the assessment...
Desensitisation	E.G., there's too many warnings I don't really take it in; just agree to AI messaging cause I have to...
Determining engagement	How students decide to engage in scenario-like activity.
Amount	Influence of the quantity of assistance on engagement.
Confirmation of info	Checking assessment prompt/requirements, expectations, etc.
Connection	Influence of personal connection of some sort on engagement.
Ease of access	Influence of access to source of help on engagement.
Effort needed	Influence of how much effort is needed to engage in activity.
Impact on work	The impact, influence, effect on the student's work and/or assessment.
Instruction	Influence of instructions/directions on engagement in activity.
It's free	WA was free influenced engagement.
Knowledge base	Influence of sources/students' knowledge, discipline, area, assignment context on engagement in activity.
Level	Influence of level/place in study on engagement.
Needs assessment	Influence of what one thinks their assessment/writing/work needs on engagement.
Opportunity	Influence of opportunity (or lack thereof) on engagement.
Reputability	Source is considered reputable / good place to get help.
Risk	Risk of getting caught/found out and/or punished for engagement.
Timing	Influence of timing on decision to engage.
Type of assessment	Influence of type of assessment (actual form or perceived) on engagement.

Code Name	Code Description
Type of assistance	The type or form of assistance the scenario/behaviour takes.
Utility	Influence of perception that service/assistance has utility, should be used...
Workload mgmt	Influence of managing workload (or effort needed to complete workload).
Difficulty level	How easy or difficult something is.
Difficulty rating acceptability	Reflections on categorising scenarios into rating groups.
Disappointment	Disappointed in assistance/help sought.
Disapproval	Indicating personal moral judgement of situation/behaviour.
Discipline	Impact of discipline on help seeking and plagiarism.
Discussion	Talking about ideas; just sharing ideas or thoughts; discussion with others; etc.
Disorganised	Assistance leads to disorganised work, jumbled paper, something that doesn't make sense.
Doesn't change the work	The WA 'doesn't really change the work' (due to grammar being considered minor, of no impact on content...)
Downplaying	Diminishing the status/importance/value of something.
Drawing the line	Determining what is and is not acceptable behaviour/activity.
Reliance on others	Rely on others (source of help, authority figure, etc.) to draw distinction.
Unsure about 'rules'	Voices confusion or uncertainty about discussing plagiarism, acceptability, variations due to lack of understanding.
Editing	DC - editing by or for student.
Enculturation	Notes around being enculturated (or not) into academic community's values/ways/expectations/etc.
Ensuring intention of writing	E.G., making sure what I write makes sense; my assessment says what I intend it to; check I get my point across.
Everything comes from somewhere else	Ideas for work come from somewhere outside of student/person.
Expectation of help	Students shouldn't expect help to be getting others to do the work for them.
Explanation	Receiving an explanation of why (alongside plan corrections).
Extra pair of eyes	Second/another person used to review work to spot mistakes.

Code Name	Code Description
Fear of discovery	Concerns over being caught plagiarising/cheating/engaging in AM.
Fear of rule-breaking	Concerns over not following the rules (E.G., but it's against the rules I hate breaking rules; I don't want to do things not permitted, that's scary...)
Feedback	Receiving, using, needing feedback... presence of feedback as indicator of acceptability of activity/action;
Feedback- engage with it	Read and engage (work to understand) what's being communicated in feedback.
Filler	Verbal fillers (E.G., um, yeah, you know) and sound extensions (:::) or pauses (.sec).
Gaining perspective	E.G., getting someone else's perspective on the paper/idea; looking at it from another pov; seeing it based on someone's perspective.
General v specific	WA/help is broad and generalised, not specific (E.G., a discussion about the assessment v a pointed look at exactly what you wrote...)
Get through the degree	E.G., just carry on until the end; for the degree; have to do it to finish the course...
Getting caught	Focus on getting caught, found out, etc.
Given the answer	Receiving the answer (or info) from someone/thing else (E.G., it's not saying this is the wrong answer; just gave him the answer; told him what to say/write...)
Giving help	Students report being a source of help/assistance for others.
Grades value presentation	Grades reflect importance of presentation of content; subject to (determined by) writing mechanics...
Grammar	DC - grammar
Grammar is minor	Grammar corrections are minor, aren't of consequence, just little, superficial...
Grey area	Grey areas; blurry; fuzzy; in-between and not always clear-cut.
Guidance and advice	Guiding/ance from a source - on what to do or how to go about the process of doing it.
Guilt	Feelings of guilt (E.G., I'd feel too bad about doing it)
GW over no submission	Idea that submitting nothing is worse than submitting ghostwritten work.
Haven't given too much thought	Lack of consideration about the notion of plagiarism within the context of academic writing.
HS v Uni	Engagement (real or suspected) at HS, but Uni is different...
Importance of circumstance	Context or circumstance dictate classification (E.G., specifics of situation, details, variation in activity)

Code Name	Code Description
Imprinting	Making assumption about Renier based on self/own behaviour.
In own words	DC- used their own words; wrote it in their own words; etc.
In support of	If the WA provides more info/work/words to support what's already been done by student.
Independence	Aspect of independence in student process of producing work.
Inductive sourcing	Finding sources to support/match/agrees with what one writes.
Info from news	Getting information from media/news.
International students	Mention of int'l students' actions.
It's a good idea	E.G., that [action] is a good idea...
It's different enough	Difference in original source text and student's text.
It's how you use the tool	Acceptability depends in part on how a tool is used.
It's just a check	The help is- just a check, just checking to make sure..., a double-check...
Knowledge gained	E.G., learning something from the help, taking new knowledge away from the assistance received...
Lack of clarity	Unclear in own writing, writing not clear, not representative of what student meant to convey.
Lack of initiative	E.G., didn't go beyond what I needed to; just hoped enough was enough...
Language- English	English skills/knowledge
Learning focused	Focused on the idea of learning during/through/from the process of writing or assistance activity.
Legal language	Use of legal terms (E.G., stealing; illegal; charged)
Make it basic	Simplify to understand; get it explained in a basic way...
Make it make sense	The help- makes sure what you're saying make sense; ensuring your message is coherent; so work makes better sense
Mechanics	About 'how to write'; doing the writing part; what goes into writing...
Misalignment	E.G., acceptable but not advisable/proper; unacceptable but not plagiarism.
Mistreatment of work	Plagiarism as mistreatment or misuse of text.
Morality	Notions of morals, personal principles, judgement of good and bad - right or wrong, etc.
More effort	Student's efforts to understand, make/accept an edit.
Motivations	Reasons for engaging or not engaging in activity.
Engage	Reasons to partake in activity.

Code Name	Code Description
Known failure avoidance	Influence of perceived/actual knowledge of impending failure (of course, of degree)
Lack AI understanding	Don't understand AI - importance, reason behind it, connection to values, etc.
Lack of ability	Don't have the knowledge or skills.
Lack of knowledge	Don't know or unclear on rules, what's appropriate according to uni, policy, etc.
Lack of time mgmt	Can't manage time, are "time poor", etc.
Lots of reasons	E.G., there are multiple reasons why they do it; lots of stuff leads people to it; oh, different things...
More manageable	Influence of need/desire to make work more manageable on engagement.
Overlapping demands	E.G., exams/papers all due at the same time (assessment scheduling); too much all at once; etc.
Takes little effort	Doesn't require a lot of effort; can do with low motivation drive.
Writing is a lot of work	Influence of the idea that writing takes a lot (time, effort) to do on engagement.
External	Motivations from outside the student.
Appeal of source	Source of help is appealing for some reason.
Denied extension	E.G., couldn't get an extension; wasn't granted extra time; etc.
Easy - low risk	Considered easy to get away with engaging.
Easy to do	Considered easy to engage in.
For the marks	Grades, marks, to get the degree, etc.
High stakes	Situation deemed high stakes; avoidance of severe outcome...
It's ubiquitous	Everyone else engages in the activity; sense of behaviour being done by most/all; activity exists everywhere...
No \$ cost	Activity/service is free or has no monetary cost associated with it.
Obligation	Coursework/assessment is compulsory.
Peer influence	Friends/peers behaviour impact on student.
Rigor	Influence of the perceived rigor of work.
Save time	Influence of time-saving advantage to engagement.
Internal	Motivations from within the student.
Anxiety	Influence of anxiety or being too anxious on engagement.
Devalued	Work/assessment not valued as part of degree, not considered important for programme, etc.

Code Name	Code Description
Disinterest	Not interested in writing (or the assessment).
Dissatisfied with work	Influence of expressed dissatisfaction with aspect of own work.
It's the only way	Tunnel-vision, narrow mindset, the only solution, etc.
No desire to learn	Lack of want, not interested in learning...
Perfectionism	Influence of perfectionist qualities on engagement.
Questionable ethics	Influence of personal ethical stance or judgement on engagement.
Self-doubt	A lack of confidence in abilities, skills, self, etc.
Too tired	Too tired to [want to] do the work.
Value of assignment	High value or importance of assessment influences engagement.
Refrain	Reasons not to partake in activity.
Can't be bothered	Expressions of not caring enough to put in more effort.
Change in process	Different to what student's normally done; new tactic or step.
Concerns about judgement	Influence of being critiqued by others, judged on skills/knowledge/output.
Devaluation of qual	Qualification is less valuable, false representation of recipient...
Enjoy writing	One's affinity for writing as a reason for not engaging in activities deemed unacceptable/inappropriate.
Financial	Didn't want to (wouldn't want to) spend money or pay for help.
Impact on future	Influence of the impact on one's future on engagement.
Nonsensical	Doesn't make sense to engage (E.G., seen as not making sense, not practical, or obviously wouldn't produce usable work.)
Not worth it	E.G., not worth the risk; not worth the consequences if caught; not worth being punished...
Penalty as deterrent	Influence of potential punishment on engagement.
Too controlling	E.G., I'm not controlling for that; I don't want to give up control...
Unethical	Influence of sense of ethics on engagement.
Unnecessary	Not considered necessary or needed (E.G., I don't think I need to, it's not that necessary now...)
Values learning	E.G., I'm here to learn; because uni is for learning and growing...
Needed more details	Wanted to know what Renier did beyond what was provided on card; needed more info about situation that what was on the card.

Code Name	Code Description
No change to work	Changes are not made for student - but suggested/recommended.
No effort	E.G., hasn't made an effort to do work; put no effort into writing it.
Non-human communication	Seeking help that doesn't involve talking directly to people.
Non-traditional students	E.G., distance, mature...
Non-verbal	Wordless communication (E.G., laughter, making a face, body language, movement...)
Not actually learning	Student isn't learning what they are supposed to
Not permitted	Not allowed; not permissible given assessment instructions; etc.
Not plagiarism	Instances not considered plagiarism or different to plagiarism.
Not smart to engage	Idea that it's a dumb decision to cheat, people should be smart enough to not, it's a bad decision...
Not your knowledge	Doesn't reflect students' own knowledge/skills; his knowledge isn't in the assessment...
Not your work	DC- not the student's own work/product.
On the right track	Check what a Uni level paper should be/look like; make sure, double check doing the right thing...
Organising time	E.G., tasks that aid in managing/organising time and writing process.
Originality	Original, unique, own ideas/work, etc... or lack thereof.
Output focused	Focused on the quality of the output/product (I.E., written work).
Outside student's control	Action or behaviour or something happening beyond students - regardless of their conception of the action, behaviour, etc.
Own work	Student did the work themselves; independently produced work; it's their own work; etc.
Ownership	E.G., the grade I get is my grade; I'm the one who gets the degree...
Paraphrased	DC- paraphrasing work; to paraphrase; etc.
Parcelled work	Assessments are individual, disconnected, one and done move on...
Participation- active	Engaged in learning, discussion about paper/writing/suggestions, student makes determination in what assessment includes/says...
Participation- passive	Disengaged in learning, student does not make determination in what assessment includes/says...
Pathway of obtainment	The way in which student obtains GW work.

Code Name	Code Description
Payment for work	Paying for work to be done during writing process - including judgements on this aspect of scenarios.
Peer review	(Students) working together, reviewing assessment work, etc.
Permission to use work	E.G., someone's happy for you to use there work; I mean they got permission...
Personal experience	Discussing own engagement (or lack of) in activity/ies similar to scenarios.
AI-plagiarism awareness	Instruction received regarding AI and/or plagiarism.
Desire for more help	Wanting more (different) forms of assistance than what's be received.
Desire for more info on cases	Wanting more information on plagiarism cases at uni and what happens to them.
Dictating acceptability	Student's personal actions/experiences appear to dictate their decision about acceptability.
Exposure to help ads	Reports seeing adverts for writing assistance.
First assistance	First option for source of assistance.
Not a source of help	Those not used for help - in interviewee's exp (people, tools, services, etc.)
Personal values	Consideration for students' values, ethical inclination.
Personalised help	WA is personalised to student in some way (eg., it's specific to how you understand stuff; articulated in the best way for me...)
Plagiarism - 1st mention	Where student mentions notion of plagiarism (plagiarising, plagiaristic) first, prior to questions about it.
Plagiarism- defining it	Reported definitions/conceptions of plagiarism.
Considering the notion	Thoughts about plagiarism (when asked to consider it).
Contingency in understanding	Provides provision to their definition or explanation of what plagiarism is.
Includes paraphrasing	E.G., just paraphrasing what they have is plagiarism...
Includes patchwriting	E.G., changing just a few words, switching verbs, minor changes, swap words...
Multifaceted	E.G., there's a lot of stuff that goes into it; it's a number of things; can be multiple things; a range of things...
Not giving credit	Aspect of plagiarism- not quoting; not citing; not attributing source; etc.
Passing off as own	Aspect of plagiarism- passing the work/words/etc. off as your own stuff.
Subjective	More than one way to consider/define it.
Using others' work	Aspect of plagiarism: using other people's work (ideas, words, etc.)

Code Name	Code Description
Varied	E.G., most of the time it's..., it can be various things, sometimes it's...
Via examples	Offers sample instance to explain plagiarism.
Plagiarism- during help seeking	If/when situations of writing assistance and plagiarism overlap.
Plagiarism- scenarios	Reported labelling of which scenarios as 'plagiarism'.
Polishing	Use WA as means to polish work (E.G., just to see if synonyms can condense my sentences; make sure I'm not using the same words over and over...)
Premise instructions	Providing the overall premise and instructions for the scenario activity.
Premise query	Students' questions about the scenario activity premise/instructions.
Preoccupation with marks	Focused on grades/marks (frames thoughts on acceptability or motivation).
Pre-reading service	DC- Massey (or other uni's) pre-reading service.
Pride	Taking pride in producing work legitimately; sense of achievement...
Proofread	DC - proofread/ing/er
Punishment is severe	Penalty for academic misconduct is severe (E.G., you could get kicked out of uni; you fail your paper -eh?...)
Push back	Comfortable countering source's comments/views.
Question	Questions being posed to students.
Go on	Filler/attempt to indicate active listening to interviewee (E.G., okay, I see, yeah?...)
Quoting them	Properly quoting the source, not quoting them, using a direct quote.
Rating- acceptable	Acceptable actions
Rating- not sure	Categorise scenario as 'not sure'.
Rating- unacceptable	Categorise scenarios as 'unacceptable'.
Reason for assessing	E.G., to measure knowledge; to test his skills; to see what Renier knows/can do.
Reassurance	Of ability, skills, etc.
Reciprocity	E.G., exchange proofreading duty with each other, mutual aid, help goes both ways.
Rectify ignorance	Student should do something to reduce their uncertainty, lack of knowledge, ignorance, etc.
Reduce blow to ego	Picking one source over another influenced by self-preservation, reduce harm of potential judgement....
Reference texts vary in value	Considering different types of sources (texts) and their prescribed value/use (E.G., peer-reviewed articles are

Code Name	Code Description
	better; a student paper is still a source just not like a book...)
Referencing	DC- Reference/cite/acknowledge...
Relying on others	E.G., relying on someone else's knowledge; depending on their skills for help; rely on others for/during aspect of writing process.
Removing student from work	Taking the student's work away from him; separating student from their work/effort...
Repeat sources	Uses same source(s) repeatedly over time.
Respondent quotes	Potentially useful quotes.
Reviewing edits	E.G., looking at source's comments/edits/changes to work.
Safeguard	Take step to ensure no issues/plagiarism/unacceptable behaviour,
Scenario 1	Referring to 1: 'Renier writes a draft and puts it through Grammarly, making all the changes the programme suggests.'
Scenario 10	Referring to 10: 'Renier takes his drafted paper to another lecturer to review before submitting it to his course instructor. The lecturer provides Renier with feedback in the form of both comments and rewritten sentences. Renier revises his paper to include the rewritten sentences.'
Scenario 11	Referring to 11: Renier gets a paper written by his friend who owes him a favour. He did not pay for the paper.
Scenario 12	Referring to 12: 'Renier starts writing his paper and asks for help from his father. Renier and his father talk about Renier's ideas for the paper, including topic choice, organisation, and possible references. Renier reflects upon the discussion with his father and returns to writing his paper.'
Scenario 13	Referring to 13: 'Renier and a classmate get together to work on their papers. They discuss their topics and ideas about what to write. They share references. They draft their papers independently and review each other's work making corrections to spelling and grammar.'
Scenario 14	Referring to 14: 'Renier pays a professional editor to review his drafted paper. The editor corrects spelling, grammar, and punctuation. The editor also recommends changes to improve the clarity of Renier's statements through comments written in the margins. Renier discusses the comments with the editor and changes his writing based on the comments.'
Scenario 15	Referring to 15: Renier gets a paper written by someone he does not know from a website. He did not pay for the paper.

Code Name	Code Description
Scenario 16	Referring to 16: 'Renier asks his mother to proofread his drafted paper before he submits it. She makes corrections to spelling and punctuation. She makes adjustments to the content and the wording that alters Renier's argument in the paper.'
Scenario 17	Referring to 17: Renier locates a paper he previously wrote and submitted for a different course. Since the assessment prompt was similar, he updates the title page to reflect the current course and instructor name.
Scenario 18	Referring to 18: 'Renier takes his drafted paper to the Centre for Teaching and Learning. A Learning Advisor suggests changes to grammar and structure and explains the comments to Renier. Renier sits at the computer and makes edits based on the Learning Advisor's comments.'
Scenario 19	Referring to 19: 'Renier pays a professional editor to review his drafted paper. The editor corrects spelling, grammar, and punctuation. The editor also recommends changes to improve the clarity of Renier's statements and provides rewritten sentences via Word's track changes mode. The editor emails the paper back to Renier and they do not discuss the comments. Renier accepts all the changes made.'
Scenario 2	Referring to 2: Renier starts writing but feels he cannot seem to get going. He takes what he has written to a friend and asks them for help. The friend corrects the spelling, grammar, and sentence structure of what Renier wrote. The friend also writes additional sections of the paper for Renier.
Scenario 20	Referring to 20: Renier gets permission from a friend to use their marked paper from an earlier semester. Renier rewords each sentence so that the wording is different while the original meaning is retained.
Scenario 21	Referring to 21: 'Renier asks to see a classmate's paper to get an idea about what they are expected to do for the assessment. The classmate provides their paper to Renier to review. Later, Renier writes his own paper based on what he liked and remembered from the classmate's paper.'
Scenario 22	Referring to 22: 'Renier drafts a paper and asks a friend to proofread it. The friend reviews his paper and circles all the spelling and grammatical errors that Renier should correct, as well as offering ideas on additional content to support Renier's argument in the paper. Renier goes through and makes changes to his paper, correcting errors and adding supporting information his friend told him about.'
Scenario 23	Referring to 23: 'Renier drafts a paper and asks a friend to edit it. The friend reviews his paper and circles all the

Code Name	Code Description
	spelling and grammatical errors that Renier should correct. Renier goes through and makes corrections to his paper.'
Scenario 24	Referring to 24: 'Renier and a classmate get together to work on their papers. They divide up the task between themselves, with Renier writing his sections and the classmate writing their sections. They then combine the sections into one paper, each editing their own copy.'
Scenario 3	Referring to 3: Renier copies a passage from a journal and pastes it into a paraphrase tool website, like Quillbot, that then provides a paraphrased version of the original text. Renier puts this paraphrased text in his paper and cites the original reference according to APA style.
Scenario 4	Referring to 4: While writing his paper, Renier uses the University of Manchester's Academic Phrasebank to help make his writing sound more scholarly. He copies phrases from the phrasebank into his paper, plugging in his topic words.
Scenario 5	Referring to 5: Renier visits a student file sharing site where he has previously found helpful lecture notes from class sessions he was unable to attend. He finds assessments similar to his assigned research paper. Adding to his draft, he takes short sections from multiple papers and inserts them into his paper, rewriting some of them.
Scenario 6	Referring to 6: 'Renier asks his older sister to help him by proofreading his drafted paper. She sits with him, pointing out mistakes she says he needs to address. Through their discussion, Renier understands all the comments she makes. Renier then sits at the computer and revises his paper.'
Scenario 7	Referring to 7: Renier gets a paper written by someone he does not know from a website. He purchases the paper and pays through the website.
Scenario 8	Referring to 8: 'Renier asks his flatmate to help him by proofreading his drafted paper. The flatmate sits at the computer and changes grammar, sentence structure, and the organisation of the paper. Renier is not sure why some of the changes were made.'
Scenario 9	Referring to 9: Renier tries to paraphrase part of a reference he wants to include in his paper but feels like it is not working. He uses the thesaurus/synonym tool in Word to replace certain words in the source text with similar words.
Scenario activity reflection	Reflections on doing scenario classification/rating.
Scenario sets	Grouping of scenarios as presented in interviews.

Code Name	Code Description
Collab	Collection of SET 1 scenarios 12, 13, 21, 22, and 24.
Editing1	Collection of SET 2 scenarios: 14, 6, 23, 19.
Editing2	Collection of SET 3 scenarios: 1, 18, 8, 10, 16.
Ghostw	Collection of SET 4 scenarios: 7, 11, 2, 15, 3.
Repurp	Collection of SET 5 scenarios: 17, 20, 4, 5, 9.
Self-assured	Certainty in the way interviewee responds (E.G., of potential engagement, of personal values/choices, of ratings/categorisations...)
Self-awareness or perception	How interviewee identifies or sees himself.
Self-directed learning	Exhibits initiative (independent and/or self-guided).
Self-improvement	Doing stuff for self-improvement; to improve one's skills or knowledge...
Self-interest	Acting out of self-interest.
Self-perception	How interviewee identifies or sees himself.
Self-testing	Tactics or ideas about testing one's own knowledge/skill.
Separating tasks	Making tasks within writing process separate; operating compartmentalised; focusing on one aspect separately to another.
Sharing	Sharing work between students.
Short changed	Student loses out on opportunity; misses aspect of experience/learning...
Shouldn't bother lecturers	E.G., they are so busy you don't want to ask too many questions; lecturers do not have time; they say use other people for support..
Silent on others' behaviour	Hasn't spoken up about others' (peers, lecturers) actions.
Source availability	Whether source of assistance has time to assist (E.G., just as busy as me, they are there to do it always)
Source demeanour	How source feels about activity.
Source of help	Where helps comes from (E.G., partner, advisor, tech tool, friend...)
Spectrum framing	Considers activities on a spectrum or as a range (E.G., that's a bit too far for me, that's over the line, it borders on misconduct, just a little is okay...) or discussing presented situations in relation to each other.
Speech fragment	Unfinished, partial, incomplete, etc. sentence
Springboard	Needing assistance to help ignite/restart writing process.
Feeling stuck	Not sure how to proceed; unsure of what to do next; don't know how to start; etc.
Starting point	Needing/using something to serve as a starting point in the writing process.

Code Name	Code Description
Strapped for time	E.G., don't have enough time; only so much I can do in my time...
Stress	DC- because of stress; too stressed; stressed out; etc.
String of words	Number of words used together - indicates plagiarism; quantifying/judging length of word strings.
Structure	DC - structure/organisation
Struggle area	Student(s) struggle with certain aspect(s) of writing process.
Students aren't motivated	E.G., students don't care about studies; students aren't motivated in their course; students lack motivation to do work well.
Students expect poor behaviour	E.G., I wouldn't be surprised if students did that [unacceptable thing]; yeah, that's probably common...
Study skills	Reported study skill methods.
Subverts assessment	Assistance makes measure of student knowledge not possible.
Suggested changes	Changes are suggested – not made
Teaching focused	Focused on the teaching (as opposed to the learning or the outcome).
Technology	Use of the internet, Google, help sites, tech tools, etc.
The writing side	Writing as separate from assessment task (E.G., just help with the writing side; the writing bit not the answer...)
Time as student	Student experience (E.G., year of study, returner, extra time...)
To improve	E.G., cause I want to do better; so he improves his skills, to get better...
Too similar	Text/work is similar to source.
Trust	DC - trust (the source).
Turnitin	DC - Turnitin/text matching software.
All knowing	Turnitin is all knowing and serves as the definitive say on whether plagiarism is present / whether assessment is acceptable.
Uncertainty in categorising	Voices uncertainty in classifying scenario/behaviour.
Are there rights and wrongs	Concerned with getting questions right; are there right answers?; what are the right (wrong) responses? etc.
Uncertainty in considering plgm	Not sure about how to consider or label situations.
Uncertainty in defining plgm	Not sure about definition of plagiarism or offers qualifier-type language when discussing thoughts on plagiarism (E.G., but I'm not too sure, I could be wrong, I don't really know but I think)

Code Name	Code Description
Unclear on consequences	E.G., what really happens?; is it really severe as they say?...
Unclear on getting help	E.G., I didn't know how to get help; what's the process for that type?...
Uncomfortable	Voices discomfort with a given situation/action (E.G., I'd just feel iffy about it...)
Uncommon behaviour	Things students might not do that much / at all.
Understand prompt	E.G., conforming with assessment directions/expectations
Unfairness	Assistance provides an unfair advantage; makes things unfair for students.
Uni affiliated	Connected to, or coming from, the institution.
Uni framing	Acknowledgement of uni values regarding plagiarism (E.G., it's a big deal; they really don't approve; it's severe...)
Unique style	E.G., everyone has their own style; his own different style.
Unprepared	Not prepared (skilled, practiced enough) for assessment (E.G., he won't be ready for assessing; he doesn't understand what he'll be tested for,,)
Use own judgement	Actively deciding if suggestion/comment is correct, useful, something to change.
Using an exemplar helps	Using someone's work as a guide or to 'see' expectations...
Using drafts	E.G., writing drafts, doing a first draft, using a draft...
Value of help	The quality of the assistance (or result of assistance)... how good/bad/worth help is.
Variation among writers	Someone else may rephrase/write it in a different way to you.
Vulnerability	Feeling vulnerable or exposed in seeking assistance.
Well-defined	Not grey or ambiguous.
What others say	Acknowledgement of difference of opinion in considering scenarios and/or plagiarism.
Who does the work	Work by others not the student.
Writing as scholarly conversation	Considering writing as part of academic discussion.
Writing is iterative	Considering iterative nature of writing process, or iterative aspects of process (E.G., re-reading, editing from feedback, revising what you're writing...)

Appendix I: Survey

Start of Block: Intro / Consent

Kia ora, My name is Ami Möller. I am a doctoral candidate at Massey University working towards a PhD in English (Writing Studies). My research project is called the Academic Writing Assistance Study.

Project Description This study aims to explore university student and staff perspectives of different types of writing assistance used by students during the process of completing an assessment. The study comprises two parts: a) one-on-one interviews with undergraduate students currently enrolled in an academic programme at a NZ university, and b) an electronic survey of current teaching staff at NZ universities. The following information provides details about the second part— the staff survey.

Invitation to Participate I am interested in how staff members perceive different types of writing assistance, the notion of plagiarism, and the acceptability of these activities. As university teaching staff, I would like to hear from you!

You are invited to be part of this study. The survey should take about 15 minutes to complete.

Data Management Survey data will be reported in my PhD thesis. The data may also be included in any publications (e.g., conference presentations, scholarly journals) produced as part of this research project. Since the survey is anonymous, participants will not be identifiable in any related reports or publications. Data from the survey will be kept in a secure electronic location, with password-protected access limited to the researcher.

Benefits and Risks A benefit of participating in this study is the opportunity it provides you to share your point of view on different writing assistance activities students may engage in while at university. Providing your view on the acceptability of particular writing assistance and plagiarism activities will help increase knowledge specific to the NZ context. There are no known major risks involved in participating in the survey.

Your Rights

- You are under no obligation to accept this invitation. Participation is voluntary.
- You have the right to decline to answer any particular question (note that non-responses will be recorded as such in the data).
- *Your submission of this survey implies consent.*

Study Contacts

If you have any questions about this study, please contact me or my primary supervisor:

Ami Möller
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CoHSS, Massey University
ami.moller.1@uni.massey.ac.nz

Professor Lisa Emerson
Primary Supervisor
CoHSS, Massey University
l.emerson@massey.ac.nz

Ngā mihi nui,

Ami

Please proceed by clicking the blue arrow button (-->) below.

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B, Application SOB 20/38. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research, please contact Dr Gerald Harrison, Chair, Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B, telephone 06 356 9099 x83570, email humanethicsouthb@massey.ac.nz.

Page Break

IN Are you currently in a teaching role at a university in NZ (e.g., lecturer, tutor, A/prof)?

- Yes (1)
 No (0)

Skip To: End of Survey If Are you currently in a teaching role at a university in NZ (e.g., lecturer, tutor, A/prof)? = No
End of Block: Intro / Consent

Start of Block: Plagiarism

PLG_DFTION Please provide your definition of plagiarism.

Page Break

PLG_APTS

When thinking about aspects of plagiarism, what level of importance do you assign to each of the following?

	Very Important (must be present) (5)	Quite Important (4)	Somewhat Important (3)	Mildly Important (2)	Not Important (1)
Using someone else's work (PLG_APTS_1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sources not sufficiently referenced (PLG_APTS_2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sources not correctly referenced (e.g. according to style) (PLG_APTS_3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Presenting other's work as one's own (PLG_APTS_4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
An intent to deceive (PLG_APTS_5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other (PLG_APTS_8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

End of Block: Plagiarism

Start of Block: Scenario Intro

PRMS The following section of the survey includes scenarios of action based on the following premise: Renier, an undergraduate student at a university in NZ, has been assigned an assessment in one of his courses: a paper synthesising the current literature on a topic of his choosing. The paper must be at least 4000 words and use APA style for citations/references. The assessment is worth 70% of his course mark.

As you proceed through this section, you will find a scenario describing Renier's actions while completing his assessment along with questions for you to answer. Please answer the questions before proceeding to the next scenario.

End of Block: Scenario Intro

Start of Block: Scenario 1 set EDtec_1

EDtec_1_sce

Scenario 1:

Renier writes a draft and puts it through Grammarly*, making all the suggested changes.

EDtec_1_rate How would you consider the activity in Scenario 1?

- Fully acceptable (5)
- Somewhat acceptable (4)
- Not sure (3)
- Somewhat unacceptable (2)
- Fully unacceptable (1)
- It depends (9)

Display This Question:

If How would you consider the activity in Scenario 1? = Fully unacceptable
Or How would you consider the activity in Scenario 1? = Somewhat unacceptable

EDtec_1_unaCH Which characteristics make the activity in Scenario 1 unacceptable? (Tick all that apply)

- Activity creates an unfair advantage (1)
- Amount (quantity) of help is inappropriate (2)
- Financial transaction takes place (3)
- Independent knowledge/ability is not measurable (4)
- Lack of active participation in aspect(s) of assessment task (5)
- Level (quality) of help is inappropriate (6)
- Source of help is inappropriate (7)
- Other (8) _____

Display This Question:

If How would you consider the activity in Scenario 1? = It depends

EDtec_1_depCH Which characteristics make Scenario 1 an 'it depends' situation? (Tick all that apply)

- Amount (quantity) of help (1)
- Amount of student's active participation (2)
- Level (quality) of help (3)
- Source of help (4)
- Specific directions from instructor (5)
- Other (8) _____

Display This Question:

If How would you consider the activity in Scenario 1? = Not sure

EDtec_1_otsCH What characteristics or parts of the activity in Scenario 1 make you not sure whether it is acceptable?

End of Block: Scenario 1 set EDtec_1

Start of Block: Scenario 2 GWsoc_2

GWsoc_2_sce

Scenario 2:

Renier starts writing, but feels he cannot seem to get going. He takes what he has written to a friend and asks them for help. The friend corrects the spelling, grammar, and sentence structure of what Renier wrote. The friend also writes additional sections of the paper for Renier.

GWsoc_2_rate How would you consider the activity in Scenario 2?

- Fully acceptable (5)
- Somewhat acceptable (4)
- Not sure (3)
- Somewhat unacceptable (2)
- Fully unacceptable (1)
- It depends (9)

Display This Question:

If How would you consider the activity in Scenario 2? = Fully unacceptable
Or How would you consider the activity in Scenario 2? = Somewhat unacceptable

GWsoc_2_unaCH Which characteristics make the activity in Scenario 2 unacceptable? (Tick all that apply)

- Activity creates an unfair advantage (1)
- Amount (quantity) of help is inappropriate (2)
- Financial transaction takes place (3)
- Independent knowledge/ability is not measurable (4)
- Lack of active participation in aspect(s) of assessment task (5)
- Level (quality) of help is inappropriate (6)
- Source of help is inappropriate (7)
- Other (8) _____

Display This Question:

If How would you consider the activity in Scenario 2? = It depends

GWsoc_2_depCH Which characteristics make Scenario 2 an 'it depends' situation? (Tick all that apply)

- Amount (quantity) of help (1)
- Amount of student's active participation (2)
- Level (quality) of help (3)
- Source of help (4)
- Specific directions from instructor (5)
- Other (8) _____

Display This Question:

If How would you consider the activity in Scenario 2? = Not sure

GWsoc_2_notCH What characteristics or parts of the activity in Scenario 2 make you not sure whether it is acceptable?

End of Block: Scenario 2 GWsoc_2

Start of Block: Scenario 3 EDsoc_1

EDsoc_1_sce

Scenario 3:

Renier asks his older sister to help him by proofreading his drafted paper. She sits with him, pointing out mistakes she says he needs to address. Through their discussion, Renier understands all the comments she makes. Renier then sits at the computer and revises his paper.

EDsoc_1_rate How would you consider the activity in Scenario 3?

- Fully acceptable (5)
- Somewhat acceptable (4)
- Not sure (3)
- Somewhat unacceptable (2)
- Fully unacceptable (1)
- It depends (9)

Display This Question:

If How would you consider the activity in Scenario 3? = Fully unacceptable
Or How would you consider the activity in Scenario 3? = Somewhat unacceptable

EDsoc_1_unaCH Which characteristics make the activity in Scenario 3 unacceptable? (Tick all that apply)

- Activity creates an unfair advantage (1)
- Amount (quantity) of help is inappropriate (2)
- Financial transaction takes place (3)
- Independent knowledge/ability is not measurable (4)
- Lack of active participation in aspect(s) of assessment task (5)
- Level (quality) of help is inappropriate (6)
- Source of help is inappropriate (7)
- Other (8) _____

Display This Question:

If How would you consider the activity in Scenario 3? = It depends

EDsoc_1_depCH Which characteristics make Scenario 3 an 'it depends' situation? (Tick all that apply)

- Amount (quantity) of help (1)
- Amount of student's active participation (2)
- Level (quality) of help (3)
- Source of help (4)
- Specific directions from instructor (5)
- Other (8) _____

Display This Question:

If How would you consider the activity in Scenario 3? = Not sure

EDsoc_1_notCH What characteristics or parts of the activity in Scenario 3 make you not sure whether it is acceptable?

GWcomm_1_sce

Scenario 4:

Renier gets a paper written by someone he does not know from a website. He purchases the paper and pays through the website.

GWcomm_1_rate How would you consider the activity in Scenario 4?

- Fully acceptable (5)
- Somewhat acceptable (4)
- Not sure (3)
- Somewhat unacceptable (2)
- Fully unacceptable (1)
- It depends (9)

Display This Question:

If How would you consider the activity in Scenario 4? = Fully unacceptable
Or How would you consider the activity in Scenario 4? = Somewhat unacceptable

GWcomm_1_unaCH Which characteristics make the activity in Scenario 4 unacceptable? (Tick all that apply)

- Activity creates an unfair advantage (1)
- Amount (quantity) of help is inappropriate (2)
- Financial transaction takes place (3)
- Independent knowledge/ability is not measurable (4)
- Lack of active participation in aspect(s) of assessment task (5)
- Level (quality) of help is inappropriate (6)
- Source of help is inappropriate (7)
- Other (8) _____

Display This Question:

If How would you consider the activity in Scenario 4? = It depends

GWcomm_1_depCH Which characteristics make Scenario 4 an 'it depends' situation? (Tick all that apply)

- Amount (quantity) of help (1)
- Amount of student's active participation (2)
- Level (quality) of help (3)
- Source of help (4)
- Specific directions from instructor (5)
- Other (8) _____

Display This Question:

If How would you consider the activity in Scenario 4? = Not sure

GWcomm_1_notCH What characteristics or parts of the activity in Scenario 4 make you not sure whether it is acceptable?

End of Block: Scenario 4 GWcomm_1

Start of Block: Scenario 5 RPtec_3

RPtec_3_sec

Scenario 5:

Renier tries to paraphrase part of a reference he wants to include in his paper, but feels like it is not working. He uses the thesaurus/synonym tool in Word to replace certain words in the source text with similar words.

RPtec_3_rate How would you consider the activity in Scenario 5?

- Fully acceptable (5)
- Somewhat acceptable (4)
- Not sure (3)
- Somewhat unacceptable (2)
- Fully unacceptable (1)
- It depends (9)

Display This Question:

If How would you consider the activity in Scenario 5? = Fully unacceptable
Or How would you consider the activity in Scenario 5? = Somewhat unacceptable

RPtec_3_unaCH Which characteristics make the activity in Scenario 5 unacceptable? (Tick all that apply)

- Activity creates an unfair advantage (1)
- Amount (quantity) of help is inappropriate (2)
- Financial transaction takes place (3)
- Independent knowledge/ability is not measurable (4)
- Lack of active participation in aspect(s) of assessment task (5)
- Level (quality) of help is inappropriate (6)
- Source of help is inappropriate (7)
- Other (8) _____

Display This Question:

If How would you consider the activity in Scenario 5? = It depends

RPtec_3_depCH Which characteristics make Scenario 5 an 'it depends' situation? (Tick all that apply)

- Amount (quantity) of help (1)
- Amount of student's active participation (2)
- Level (quality) of help (3)
- Source of help (4)
- Specific directions from instructor (5)
- Other (8) _____

Display This Question:

If How would you consider the activity in Scenario 5? = Not sure

RPtec_3_notCH What characteristics or parts of the activity in Scenario 5 make you not sure whether it is acceptable?

End of Block: Scenario 5 RPtec_3

Start of Block: Scenario 6 EDsoc_4

EDsoc_4_sce

Scenario 6:

Renier takes his drafted paper to another lecturer to review before submitting it to his course instructor. The lecturer provides Renier with feedback in the form of both comments and rewritten sentences. Renier revises his paper to include the rewritten sentences.

EDsoc_4_rate How would you consider the activity in Scenario 6?

- Fully acceptable (5)
- Somewhat acceptable (4)
- Not sure (3)
- Somewhat unacceptable (2)
- Fully unacceptable (1)
- It depends (9)

Display This Question:

If How would you consider the activity in Scenario 6? = Fully unacceptable
Or How would you consider the activity in Scenario 6? = Somewhat unacceptable

EDsoc_4_unaCH Which characteristics make the activity in Scenario 6 unacceptable? (Tick all that apply)

- Activity creates an unfair advantage (1)
- Amount (quantity) of help is inappropriate (2)
- Financial transaction takes place (3)
- Independent knowledge/ability is not measurable (4)
- Lack of active participation in aspect(s) of assessment task (5)
- Level (quality) of help is inappropriate (6)
- Source of help is inappropriate (7)
- Other (8) _____

Display This Question:

If How would you consider the activity in Scenario 6? = It depends

EDsoc_4_depCH Which characteristics make Scenario 6 an 'it depends' situation? (Tick all that apply)

- Amount (quantity) of help (1)
- Amount of student's active participation (2)
- Level (quality) of help (3)
- Source of help (4)
- Specific directions from instructor (5)
- Other (8) _____

Display This Question:

If How would you consider the activity in Scenario 6? = Not sure

EDsoc_4_notCH What characteristics or parts of the activity in Scenario 6 make you not sure whether it is acceptable?

Page Break

End of Block: Scenario 6 EDsoc_4

Start of Block: Scenario 7 GWsoc_1

GWsoc_1_sce

Scenario 7:

Renier gets a paper written by his friend who owes him a favour. He did not pay for the paper.

GWsoc_1_rate How would you consider the activity in Scenario 7?

- Fully acceptable (5)
- Somewhat acceptable (4)
- Not sure (3)
- Somewhat unacceptable (2)
- Fully unacceptable (1)
- It depends (9)

Display This Question:

If How would you consider the activity in Scenario 7? = Fully unacceptable
Or How would you consider the activity in Scenario 7? = Somewhat unacceptable

GWsoc_1_unaCH Which characteristics make the activity in Scenario 7 unacceptable? (Tick all that apply)

- Activity creates an unfair advantage (1)
- Amount (quantity) of help is inappropriate (2)
- Financial transaction takes place (3)
- Independent knowledge/ability is not measurable (4)
- Lack of active participation in aspect(s) of assessment task (5)
- Level (quality) of help is inappropriate (6)
- Source of help is inappropriate (7)
- Other (8) _____

Display This Question:

If How would you consider the activity in Scenario 7? = It depends

GWsoc_1_depCH Which characteristics make Scenario 7 an 'it depends' situation? (Tick all that apply)

- Amount (quantity) of help (1)
- Amount of student's active participation (2)
- Level (quality) of help (3)
- Source of help (4)
- Specific directions from instructor (5)
- Other (8) _____

Display This Question:

If How would you consider the activity in Scenario 7? = Not sure

GWsoc_1_notCH What characteristics or parts of the activity in Scenario 7 make you not sure whether it is acceptable?

Page Break

End of Block: Scenario 7 GWsoc_1

Start of Block: Scenario 8 COLsoc_1

COLsoc_1_sce

Scenario 8:

Renier starts writing his paper and asks for help from his father. Renier and his father talk about Renier's ideas for the paper, including topic choice, organisation, and possible references. Renier reflects upon the discussion with his father and returns to writing his paper.

COLsoc_1_rate How would you consider the activity in Scenario 8?

- Fully acceptable (5)
- Somewhat acceptable (4)
- Not sure (3)
- Somewhat unacceptable (2)
- Fully unacceptable (1)
- It depends (9)

Display This Question:

If How would you consider the activity in Scenario 8? = Fully unacceptable
Or How would you consider the activity in Scenario 8? = Somewhat unacceptable

COLsoc_1_unaCH Which characteristics make the activity in Scenario 8 unacceptable? (Tick all that apply)

- Activity creates an unfair advantage (1)
- Amount (quantity) of help is inappropriate (2)
- Financial transaction takes place (3)
- Independent knowledge/ability is not measurable (4)
- Lack of active participation in aspect(s) of assessment task (5)
- Level (quality) of help is inappropriate (6)
- Source of help is inappropriate (7)
- Other (8) _____

Display This Question:

If How would you consider the activity in Scenario 8? = It depends

COLsoc_1_depCH Which characteristics make Scenario 8 an 'it depends' situation? (Tick all that apply)

- Amount (quantity) of help (1)
- Amount of student's active participation (2)
- Level (quality) of help (3)
- Source of help (4)
- Specific directions from instructor (5)
- Other (8) _____

Display This Question:

If How would you consider the activity in Scenario 8? = Not sure

COLsoc_1_notSCH What characteristics or parts of the activity in Scenario 8 make you not sure whether it is acceptable?

Page Break

End of Block: Scenario 8 COLsoc_1

Start of Block: Scenario 9 EDcomm_1

EDcomm_1_sce

Scenario 9:

Renier pays a professional editor to review his drafted paper. The editor corrects spelling, grammar, and punctuation. The editor also recommends changes to improve the clarity of Renier's statements through comments written in the margins. Renier discusses the comments with the editor and changes his writing based on the comments.

EDcomm_1_rate How would you consider the activity in Scenario 9?

- Fully acceptable (5)
- Somewhat acceptable (4)
- Not sure (3)
- Somewhat unacceptable (2)
- Fully unacceptable (1)
- It depends (9)

Display This Question:

If How would you consider the activity in Scenario 9? = Fully unacceptable
Or How would you consider the activity in Scenario 9? = Somewhat unacceptable

EDcomm_1_unaCH Which characteristics make the activity in Scenario 9 unacceptable? (Tick all that apply)

- Activity creates an unfair advantage (1)
- Amount (quantity) of help is inappropriate (2)
- Financial transaction takes place (3)
- Independent knowledge/ability is not measurable (4)
- Lack of active participation in aspect(s) of assessment task (5)
- Level (quality) of help is inappropriate (6)
- Source of help is inappropriate (7)
- Other (8) _____

Display This Question:

If How would you consider the activity in Scenario 9? = It depends

EDcomm_1_depCH Which characteristics make Scenario 9 an 'it depends' situation? (Tick all that apply)

- Amount (quantity) of help (1)
- Amount of student's active participation (2)
- Level (quality) of help (3)
- Source of help (4)
- Specific directions from instructor (5)
- Other (8) _____

Display This Question:

If How would you consider the activity in Scenario 9? = Not sure

EDcomm_1_notSCH What characteristics or parts of the activity in Scenario 9 make you not sure whether it is acceptable?

Page Break

End of Block: Scenario 9 EDcomm_1

Start of Block: Scenario 10 RPown_1

RPown_1_sce

Scenario 10:

Renier locates a paper he previously wrote and submitted for a different course. Since the assessment prompt was similar, he updates the title page to reflect the current course and instructor name.

RPown_1_rate How would you consider the activity in Scenario 10?

- Fully acceptable (5)
- Somewhat acceptable (4)
- Not sure (3)
- Somewhat unacceptable (2)
- Fully unacceptable (1)
- It depends (9)

Display This Question:

If How would you consider the activity in Scenario 10? = Fully unacceptable
Or How would you consider the activity in Scenario 10? = Somewhat unacceptable

RPown_1_unaCH Which characteristics make the activity in Scenario 10 unacceptable? (Tick all that apply)

- Activity creates an unfair advantage (1)
- Amount (quantity) of help is inappropriate (2)
- Financial transaction takes place (3)
- Independent knowledge/ability is not measurable (4)
- Lack of active participation in aspect(s) of assessment task (5)
- Level (quality) of help is inappropriate (6)
- Source of help is inappropriate (7)
- Other (8) _____

Display This Question:

If How would you consider the activity in Scenario 10? = It depends

RPown_1_depCH Which characteristics make Scenario 10 an 'it depends' situation? (Tick all that apply)

- Amount (quantity) of help (1)
- Amount of student's active participation (2)
- Level (quality) of help (3)
- Source of help (4)
- Specific directions from instructor (5)
- Other (8) _____

Display This Question:

If How would you consider the activity in Scenario 10? = Not sure

RPown_1_notCH What characteristics or parts of the activity in Scenario 10 make you not sure whether it is acceptable?

End of Block: Scenario 10 RPOwn_1

Start of Block: Scenario 11 EDcomm_2

EDcomm_2_sce

Scenario 11:

Renier pays a professional editor to review his drafted paper. The editor corrects spelling, grammar, and punctuation. The editor also recommends changes to improve the clarity of Renier's statements and provides rewritten sentences via Word's track changes mode. The editor emails the paper back to Renier and they do not discuss the comments. Renier accepts all the changes made.

EDcomm_2_rate How would you consider the activity in Scenario 11?

- Fully acceptable (5)
- Somewhat acceptable (4)
- Not sure (3)
- Somewhat unacceptable (2)
- Fully unacceptable (1)
- It depends (9)

Display This Question:

If How would you consider the activity in Scenario 11? = Fully unacceptable
Or How would you consider the activity in Scenario 11? = Somewhat unacceptable

EDcomm_2_unaCH Which characteristics make the activity in Scenario 11 unacceptable? (Tick all that apply)

- Activity creates an unfair advantage (1)
- Amount (quantity) of help is inappropriate (2)
- Financial transaction takes place (3)
- Independent knowledge/ability is not measurable (4)
- Lack of active participation in aspect(s) of assessment task (5)
- Level (quality) of help is inappropriate (6)
- Source of help is inappropriate (7)
- Other (8) _____

Display This Question:

If How would you consider the activity in Scenario 11? = It depends

EDcomm_2_depCH Which characteristics make Scenario 11 an 'it depends' situation? (Tick all that apply)

- Amount (quantity) of help (1)
- Amount of student's active participation (2)
- Level (quality) of help (3)
- Source of help (4)
- Specific directions from instructor (5)
- Other (8) _____

Display This Question:

If How would you consider the activity in Scenario 11? = Not sure

EDcomm_2_notsCH What characteristics or parts of the activity in Scenario 11 make you not sure whether it is acceptable?

Page Break

End of Block: Scenario 11 EDcomm_2

Start of Block: Scenario 12 COLsoc_3

COLsoc_3_sce

Scenario 12:

Renier asks to see a classmate's paper to get an idea about what they are expected to do for the assessment. The classmate provides their paper to Renier to review. Later, Renier writes his own paper based on what he liked and remembered from the classmate's paper.

COLsoc_3_rate How would you consider the activity in Scenario 12?

- Fully acceptable (5)
- Somewhat acceptable (4)
- Not sure (3)
- Somewhat unacceptable (2)
- Fully unacceptable (1)
- It depends (9)

Display This Question:

If How would you consider the activity in Scenario 12? = Fully unacceptable
Or How would you consider the activity in Scenario 12? = Somewhat unacceptable

COLsoc_3_unaCH Which characteristics make the activity in Scenario 12 unacceptable? (Tick all that apply)

- Activity creates an unfair advantage (1)
- Amount (quantity) of help is inappropriate (2)
- Financial transaction takes place (3)
- Independent knowledge/ability is not measurable (4)
- Lack of active participation in aspect(s) of assessment task (5)
- Level (quality) of help is inappropriate (6)
- Source of help is inappropriate (7)
- Other (8) _____

Display This Question:

If How would you consider the activity in Scenario 12? = It depends

COLsoc_3_depCH Which characteristics make Scenario 12 an 'it depends' situation? (Tick all that apply)

- Amount (quantity) of help (1)
- Amount of student's active participation (2)
- Level (quality) of help (3)
- Source of help (4)
- Specific directions from instructor (5)
- Other (8) _____

Display This Question:

If How would you consider the activity in Scenario 12? = Not sure

COLsoc_3_notsCH What characteristics or parts of the activity in Scenario 12 make you not sure whether it is acceptable?

Page Break

End of Block: Scenario 12 COLsoc_3

Start of Block: Scenario 1 GWtec_2

GWtec_2_sce

Scenario 1:

Renier copies a passage from a journal and pastes it into a paraphrase tool website, like Quillbot, that then provides a paraphrased version of the original text. Renier puts this paraphrased text in his paper and cites the original reference according to APA style.

GWtec_2_rate How would you consider the activity in Scenario 1?

- Fully acceptable (5)
- Somewhat acceptable (4)
- Not sure (3)
- Somewhat unacceptable (2)
- Fully unacceptable (1)
- It depends (9)

Display This Question:

If How would you consider the activity in Scenario 1? = Fully unacceptable
Or How would you consider the activity in Scenario 1? = Somewhat unacceptable

GWtec_2_unaCH Which characteristics make the activity in Scenario 1 unacceptable? (Tick all that apply)

- Activity creates an unfair advantage (1)
- Amount (quantity) of help is inappropriate (2)
- Financial transaction takes place (3)
- Independent knowledge/ability is not measurable (4)
- Lack of active participation in aspect(s) of assessment task (5)
- Level (quality) of help is inappropriate (6)
- Source of help is inappropriate (7)
- Other (8) _____

Display This Question:

If How would you consider the activity in Scenario 1? = It depends

GWtec_2_depCH Which characteristics make Scenario 1 an 'it depends' situation? (Tick all that apply)

- Amount (quantity) of help (1)
- Amount of student's active participation (2)
- Level (quality) of help (3)
- Source of help (4)
- Specific directions from instructor (5)
- Other (8) _____

Display This Question:
If How would you consider the activity in Scenario 1? = Not sure

GWtec_2_notCH What characteristics or parts of the activity in Scenario 1 make you not sure whether it is acceptable?

Page Break

End of Block: Scenario 1 GWtec_2

Start of Block: Scenario 2 RPtec_1

RPtec_1_sce

Scenario 2:

While writing his paper, Renier uses the University of Manchester's Academic Phrasebank* to help make his writing sound more scholarly. He copies phrases from the phrasebank into his paper, plugging in his topic words.

RPtec_1_rate How would you consider the activity in Scenario 2?

- Fully acceptable (5)
- Somewhat acceptable (4)
- Not sure (3)
- Somewhat unacceptable (2)
- Fully unacceptable (1)
- It depends (9)

Display This Question:
If How would you consider the activity in Scenario 2? = Fully unacceptable
Or How would you consider the activity in Scenario 2? = Somewhat unacceptable

RPtec_1_unaCH Which characteristics make the activity in Scenario 2 unacceptable? (Tick all that apply)

- Activity creates an unfair advantage (1)
- Amount (quantity) of help is inappropriate (2)
- Financial transaction takes place (3)
- Independent knowledge/ability is not measurable (4)
- Lack of active participation in aspect(s) of assessment task (5)
- Level (quality) of help is inappropriate (6)
- Source of help is inappropriate (7)
- Other (8) _____

Display This Question:
If How would you consider the activity in Scenario 2? = It depends

RPtec_1_depCH Which characteristics make Scenario 2 an 'it depends' situation? (Tick all that apply)

- Amount (quantity) of help (1)
- Amount of student's active participation (2)
- Level (quality) of help (3)
- Source of help (4)
- Specific directions from instructor (5)
- Other (8) _____

Display This Question:
If How would you consider the activity in Scenario 2? = Not sure

RPtec_1_1notsch What characteristics or parts of the activity in Scenario 2 make you not sure whether it is acceptable?

Page Break

End of Block: Scenario 2 RPtec_1

Start of Block: Scenario 3 RPtec_2

RPtec_2_sce

Scenario 3:

Renier visits a student file sharing site where he has previously found helpful lecture notes from class sessions he was unable to attend. He finds assessments similar to his assigned research paper. Adding to his draft, he takes short sections from multiple papers and inserts them into his paper, rewriting some of them.

RPtec_2_2rate How would you consider the activity in Scenario 3?

- Fully acceptable (5)
- Somewhat acceptable (4)
- Not sure (3)
- Somewhat unacceptable (2)
- Fully unacceptable (1)
- It depends (9)

Display This Question:
If How would you consider the activity in Scenario 3? = Fully unacceptable
Or How would you consider the activity in Scenario 3? = Somewhat unacceptable

RPtec_2_2unaCH Which characteristics make the activity in Scenario 3 unacceptable? (Tick all that apply)

- Activity creates an unfair advantage (1)
- Amount (quantity) of help is inappropriate (2)
- Financial transaction takes place (3)
- Independent knowledge/ability is not measurable (4)
- Lack of active participation in aspect(s) of assessment task (5)
- Level (quality) of help is inappropriate (6)
- Source of help is inappropriate (7)
- Other (8) _____

Display This Question:
If How would you consider the activity in Scenario 3? = It depends

RPtec_2_2depCH Which characteristics make Scenario 3 an 'it depends' situation? (Tick all that apply)

- Amount (quantity) of help (1)
- Amount of student's active participation (2)
- Level (quality) of help (3)
- Source of help (4)
- Specific directions from instructor (5)
- Other (8) _____

Display This Question:
If How would you consider the activity in Scenario 3? = Not sure

RPtec_2_2CH What characteristics or parts of the activity in Scenario 3 make you not sure whether it is acceptable?

Page Break

End of Block: Scenario 3 RPtec_2

Start of Block: Scenario 4 EDsoc_3

EDsoc_3_sce

Scenario 4:

Renier asks his flatmate to help him by proofreading his drafted paper. The flatmate sits at the computer and changes grammar, sentence structure, and the organisation of the paper. Renier is not sure why some of the changes were made.

EDsoc_3_rate How would you consider the activity in Scenario 4?

- Fully acceptable (5)
- Somewhat acceptable (4)
- Not sure (3)
- Somewhat unacceptable (2)
- Fully unacceptable (1)
- It depends (9)

Display This Question:
If How would you consider the activity in Scenario 4? = Fully unacceptable
Or How would you consider the activity in Scenario 4? = Somewhat unacceptable

EDsoc_3_unaCH Which characteristics make the activity in Scenario 4 unacceptable? (Tick all that apply)

- Activity creates an unfair advantage (1)
- Amount (quantity) of help is inappropriate (2)
- Financial transaction takes place (3)
- Independent knowledge/ability is not measurable (4)
- Lack of active participation in aspect(s) of assessment task (5)
- Level (quality) of help is inappropriate (6)
- Source of help is inappropriate (7)
- Other (8) _____

Display This Question:
If How would you consider the activity in Scenario 4? = It depends

EDsoc_3_depCH Which characteristics make Scenario 4 an 'it depends' situation? (Tick all that apply)

- Amount (quantity) of help (1)
- Amount of student's active participation (2)
- Level (quality) of help (3)
- Source of help (4)
- Specific directions from instructor (5)
- Other (8) _____

Display This Question:
If How would you consider the activity in Scenario 4? = Not sure

EDsoc_3_notCH What characteristics or parts of the activity in Scenario 4 make you not sure whether it is acceptable?

Page Break

End of Block: Scenario 4 EDSoc_3

Start of Block: Scenario 5 COLsoc_2

COLsoc_2_sce

Scenario 5:

Renier and a classmate get together to work on their papers. They discuss their topics and ideas about what to write. They share references. They draft their papers independently and review each other's work making corrections to spelling and grammar.

COLsoc_2_rate How would you consider the activity in Scenario 5?

- Fully acceptable (5)
- Somewhat acceptable (4)
- Not sure (3)
- Somewhat unacceptable (2)
- Fully unacceptable (1)
- It depends (9)

Display This Question:
If How would you consider the activity in Scenario 5? = Fully unacceptable
Or How would you consider the activity in Scenario 5? = Somewhat unacceptable

COLsoc_2_unaCH Which characteristics make the activity in Scenario 5 unacceptable? (Tick all that apply)

- Activity creates an unfair advantage (1)
- Amount (quantity) of help is inappropriate (2)
- Financial transaction takes place (3)
- Independent knowledge/ability is not measurable (4)
- Lack of active participation in aspect(s) of assessment task (5)
- Level (quality) of help is inappropriate (6)
- Source of help is inappropriate (7)
- Other (8) _____

Display This Question:
If How would you consider the activity in Scenario 5? = It depends

COLsoc_2_depCH Which characteristics make Scenario 5 an 'it depends' situation? (Tick all that apply)

- Amount (quantity) of help (1)
- Amount of student's active participation (2)
- Level (quality) of help (3)
- Source of help (4)
- Specific directions from instructor (5)
- Other (8) _____

Display This Question:
If How would you consider the activity in Scenario 5? = Not sure

COLsoc_2_notCH What characteristics or parts of the activity in Scenario 5 make you not sure whether it is acceptable?

Page Break

End of Block: Scenario 5 COLsoc_2

Start of Block: Scenario 6 GWtec_1

GWtec_1_sce

Scenario 6:

Renier gets a paper written by someone he does not know from a website. He did not pay for the paper.

GWtec_1_rate How would you consider the activity in Scenario 6?

- Fully acceptable (5)
- Somewhat acceptable (4)
- Not sure (3)
- Somewhat unacceptable (2)
- Fully unacceptable (1)
- It depends (9)

Display This Question:
If How would you consider the activity in Scenario 6? = Fully unacceptable
Or How would you consider the activity in Scenario 6? = Somewhat unacceptable

GWtec_1_unaCH Which characteristics make the activity in Scenario 6 unacceptable? (Tick all that apply)

- Activity creates an unfair advantage (1)
- Amount (quantity) of help is inappropriate (2)
- Financial transaction takes place (3)
- Independent knowledge/ability is not measurable (4)
- Lack of active participation in aspect(s) of assessment task (5)
- Level (quality) of help is inappropriate (6)
- Source of help is inappropriate (7)
- Other (8) _____

Display This Question:
If How would you consider the activity in Scenario 6? = It depends

GWtec_2_depCH Which characteristics make Scenario 6 an 'it depends' situation? (Tick all that apply)

- Amount (quantity) of help (1)
- Amount of student's active participation (2)
- Level (quality) of help (3)
- Source of help (4)
- Specific directions from instructor (5)
- Other (8) _____

Display This Question:
If How would you consider the activity in Scenario 6? = Not sure

GWtec_2_notCH What characteristics or parts of the activity in Scenario 6 make you not sure whether it is acceptable?

Page Break

End of Block: Scenario 6 GWtec_1

Start of Block: Scenario 7 EDsoc_5

EDsoc_5_sce

Scenario 7:

Renier asks his mother to proofread his drafted paper before he submits it. She makes corrections to spelling and punctuation. She makes adjustments to the content and the wording that alters Renier's argument in the paper.

EDsoc_5_rate How would you consider the activity in Scenario 7?

- Fully acceptable (5)
- Somewhat acceptable (4)
- Not sure (3)
- Somewhat unacceptable (2)
- Fully unacceptable (1)
- It depends (9)

Display This Question:
If How would you consider the activity in Scenario 7? = Fully unacceptable
Or How would you consider the activity in Scenario 7? = Somewhat unacceptable

EDsoc_5_unaCH Which characteristics make the activity in Scenario 7 unacceptable? (Tick all that apply)

- Activity creates an unfair advantage (1)
- Amount (quantity) of help is inappropriate (2)
- Financial transaction takes place (3)
- Independent knowledge/ability is not measurable (4)
- Lack of active participation in aspect(s) of assessment task (5)
- Level (quality) of help is inappropriate (6)
- Source of help is inappropriate (7)
- Other (8) _____

Display This Question:

If How would you consider the activity in Scenario 7? = It depends

EDsoc_5_depCH Which characteristics make Scenario 7 an 'it depends' situation? (Tick all that apply)

- Amount (quantity) of help (1)
- Amount of student's active participation (2)
- Level (quality) of help (3)
- Source of help (4)
- Specific directions from instructor (5)
- Other (8) _____

Display This Question:

If How would you consider the activity in Scenario 7? = Not sure

EDsoc_5_notCH What characteristics or parts of the activity in Scenario 7 make you not sure whether it is acceptable?

Page Break

End of Block: Scenario 7 EDsoc_5

Start of Block: Scenario 8 EDuni_1

EDuni_1_sce

Scenario 8:

Renier takes his drafted paper to the Centre for Teaching and Learning. A Learning Advisor suggests changes to grammar and structure and explains the comments to Renier. Renier sits at the computer and makes edits based on the Learning Advisor's comments.

EDuni_1_rate How would you consider the activity in Scenario 8?

- Fully acceptable (5)
- Somewhat acceptable (4)
- Not sure (3)
- Somewhat unacceptable (2)
- Fully unacceptable (1)
- It depends (9)

Display This Question:

If How would you consider the activity in Scenario 8? = Fully unacceptable
Or How would you consider the activity in Scenario 8? = Somewhat unacceptable

EDuni_1_unaCH Which characteristics make the activity in Scenario 8 unacceptable? (Tick all that apply)

- Activity creates an unfair advantage (1)
- Amount (quantity) of help is inappropriate (2)
- Financial transaction takes place (3)
- Independent knowledge/ability is not measurable (4)
- Lack of active participation in aspect(s) of assessment task (5)
- Level (quality) of help is inappropriate (6)
- Source of help is inappropriate (7)
- Other (8) _____

Display This Question:

If How would you consider the activity in Scenario 8? = It depends

EDuni_1_depCH Which characteristics make Scenario 8 an 'it depends' situation? (Tick all that apply)

- Amount (quantity) of help (1)
- Amount of student's active participation (2)
- Level (quality) of help (3)
- Source of help (4)
- Specific directions from instructor (5)
- Other (8) _____

Display This Question:

If How would you consider the activity in Scenario 8? = Not sure

EDuni_1_notSCH What characteristics or parts of the activity in Scenario 8 make you not sure whether it is acceptable?

Page Break

End of Block: Scenario 8 EDuni_1

Start of Block: Scenario 9 RPsoc_1

RPsoc_1_sce

Scenario 9:

Renier gets permission from a friend to use their marked paper from an earlier semester. Renier rewords each sentence so that the wording is different while the original meaning is retained.

RPsoc_1_rate How would you consider the activity in Scenario 9?

- Fully acceptable (5)
- Somewhat acceptable (4)
- Not sure (3)
- Somewhat unacceptable (2)
- Fully unacceptable (1)
- It depends (9)

Display This Question:

If How would you consider the activity in Scenario 9? = Fully unacceptable
Or How would you consider the activity in Scenario 9? = Somewhat unacceptable

RPsoc_1_unaCH Which characteristics make the activity in Scenario 9 unacceptable? (Tick all that apply)

- Activity creates an unfair advantage (1)
- Amount (quantity) of help is inappropriate (2)
- Financial transaction takes place (3)
- Independent knowledge/ability is not measurable (4)
- Lack of active participation in aspect(s) of assessment task (5)
- Level (quality) of help is inappropriate (6)
- Source of help is inappropriate (7)
- Other (8) _____

Display This Question:

If How would you consider the activity in Scenario 9? = It depends

RPsoc_1_depCH Which characteristics make Scenario 9 an 'it depends' situation? (Tick all that apply)

- Amount (quantity) of help (1)
- Amount of student's active participation (2)
- Level (quality) of help (3)
- Source of help (4)
- Specific directions from instructor (5)
- Other (8) _____

Display This Question:

If How would you consider the activity in Scenario 9? = Not sure

RPsoc_1_notSCH What characteristics or parts of the activity in Scenario 9 make you not sure whether it is acceptable?

Page Break

End of Block: Scenario 9 RPsoc_1

Start of Block: Scenario 10 COLsoc_4

COLsoc_4_sce

Scenario 10:

Renier drafts a paper and asks a friend to proofread it. The friend reviews his paper and circles all the spelling and grammatical errors that Renier should correct, as well as offering ideas on additional content to support Renier's argument in the paper. Renier goes through and makes changes to his paper, correcting errors and adding supporting information his friend told him about.

COLsoc_4_rate How would you consider the activity in Scenario 10?

- Fully acceptable (5)
- Somewhat acceptable (4)
- Not sure (3)
- Somewhat unacceptable (2)
- Fully unacceptable (1)
- It depends (9)

Display This Question:

If How would you consider the activity in Scenario 10? = Fully unacceptable
Or How would you consider the activity in Scenario 10? = Somewhat unacceptable

COLsoc_4_unaCH Which characteristics make the activity in Scenario 10 unacceptable? (Tick all that apply)

- Activity creates an unfair advantage (1)
- Amount (quantity) of help is inappropriate (2)
- Financial transaction takes place (3)
- Independent knowledge/ability is not measurable (4)
- Lack of active participation in aspect(s) of assessment task (5)
- Level (quality) of help is inappropriate (6)
- Source of help is inappropriate (7)
- Other (8) _____

Display This Question:

If How would you consider the activity in Scenario 10? = It depends

COLsoc_4_depCH Which characteristics make Scenario 10 an 'it depends' situation? (Tick all that apply)

- Amount (quantity) of help (1)
- Amount of student's active participation (2)
- Level (quality) of help (3)
- Source of help (4)
- Specific directions from instructor (5)
- Other (8) _____

Display This Question:

If How would you consider the activity in Scenario 10? = Not sure

COLsoc_4_notCH What characteristics or parts of the activity in Scenario 10 make you not sure whether it is acceptable?

Page Break

End of Block: Scenario 10 COLsoc_4

Start of Block: Scenario 11 EDsoc_2

EDsoc_2_sce

Scenario 11:

Renier drafts a paper and asks a friend to edit it. The friend reviews his paper and circles all the spelling and grammatical errors that Renier should correct. Renier goes through and makes corrections to his paper.

EDsoc_2_rate How would you consider the activity in Scenario 11?

- Fully acceptable (5)
- Somewhat acceptable (4)
- Not sure (3)
- Somewhat unacceptable (2)
- Fully unacceptable (1)
- It depends (9)

Display This Question:

If How would you consider the activity in Scenario 11? = Fully unacceptable
Or How would you consider the activity in Scenario 11? = Somewhat unacceptable

EDsoc_2_unaCH Which characteristics make the activity in Scenario 11 unacceptable? (Tick all that apply)

- Activity creates an unfair advantage (1)
- Amount (quantity) of help is inappropriate (2)
- Financial transaction takes place (3)
- Independent knowledge/ability is not measurable (4)
- Lack of active participation in aspect(s) of assessment task (5)
- Level (quality) of help is inappropriate (6)
- Source of help is inappropriate (7)
- Other (8) _____

Display This Question:

If How would you consider the activity in Scenario 11? = It depends

EDsoc_2_depCH Which characteristics make Scenario 11 an 'it depends' situation? (Tick all that apply)

- Amount (quantity) of help (1)
- Amount of student's active participation (2)
- Level (quality) of help (3)
- Source of help (4)
- Specific directions from instructor (5)
- Other (8) _____

Display This Question:

If How would you consider the activity in Scenario 11? = Not sure

EDsoc_2_notCH What characteristics or parts of the activity in Scenario 11 make you not sure whether it is acceptable?

Page Break

End of Block: Scenario 11 EDsoc_2

Start of Block: Scenario 12 COLsoc_5

COLsoc_5_sce

Scenario 12:

Renier and a classmate get together to work on their papers. They divide the task between themselves, with Renier writing his sections and the classmate writing their sections. They then combine the sections into one paper, each editing their own copy.

COLsoc_5_rate How would you consider the activity in Scenario 12?

- Fully acceptable (5)
- Somewhat acceptable (4)
- Not sure (3)
- Somewhat unacceptable (2)
- Fully unacceptable (1)
- It depends (9)

Display This Question:

If How would you consider the activity in Scenario 12? = Fully unacceptable
Or How would you consider the activity in Scenario 12? = Somewhat unacceptable

COLsoc_5_unaCH Which characteristics make the activity in Scenario 12 unacceptable? (Tick all that apply)

- Activity creates an unfair advantage (1)
- Amount (quantity) of help is inappropriate (2)
- Financial transaction takes place (3)
- Independent knowledge/ability is not measurable (4)
- Lack of active participation in aspect(s) of assessment task (5)
- Level (quality) of help is inappropriate (6)
- Source of help is inappropriate (7)
- Other (8) _____

Display This Question:

If How would you consider the activity in Scenario 12? = It depends

COLsoc_5_depCH Which characteristics make Scenario 12 an 'it depends' situation? (Tick all that apply)

- Amount (quantity) of help (1)
- Amount of student's active participation (2)
- Level (quality) of help (3)
- Source of help (4)
- Specific directions from instructor (5)
- Other (8) _____

Display This Question:

If How would you consider the activity in Scenario 12? = Not sure

COLsoc_5_not What characteristics or parts of the activity in Scenario 12 make you not sure whether it is acceptable?

Page Break

End of Block: Scenario 12 COLsoc_5

Start of Block: Demographics

DEMS Almost finished! The final section of this survey covers demographic information. Please remember, this information will be reported only in aggregate form or in a manner that does not allow individual responses to be identified.

ROLE What is your current teaching role?

- Tutor (1)
 - Lecturer (2)
 - Senior Lecturer (3)
 - Associate Professor (4)
 - Professor (5)
 - Other (6) _____
-

QUAL What is your highest academic qualification?

- Certificate or diploma (1)
 - Graduate certificate or diploma (2)
 - Bachelor's degree (3)
 - Bachelor's Honours degree (4)
 - Postgraduate certificate or diploma (5)
 - Master's degree (6)
 - Doctoral degree (7)
-

EXPC How many years of tertiary-level teaching experience do you have?

- Less than 1 year (0)
 - 1-4 years (1)
 - 5-8 years (2)
 - 9-12 years (3)
 - 13-16 years (4)
 - 17-20 years (5)
 - 21 or more years (6)
-

UNIV For which institution(s) do you work?

COLL In which discipline do you primarily work?

▼ Business (1) ... Sciences (5)

FILD In what field do you primarily work? (e.g., psychology; nursing; ELL)

Display This Question:
If If False

SCHL In which school do you primarily work?

Display This Choice:
If In which discipline do you primarily work? = Business
 Accountancy (1.1)

Display This Choice:
If In which discipline do you primarily work? = Business
 Aviation (1.2)

Display This Choice:
If In which discipline do you primarily work? = Business
 Communication, Journalism, and Marketing (1.3)

Display This Choice:
If In which discipline do you primarily work? = Business
 Economics and Finance (1.4)

Display This Choice:
If In which discipline do you primarily work? = Business
 Management (1.5)

Display This Choice:
If In which discipline do you primarily work? = Business
 Executive Development (1.6)

Display This Choice:
If In which discipline do you primarily work? = Creative Arts
 Art (2.1)

Display This Choice:
If In which discipline do you primarily work? = Creative Arts
 Design (2.2)

Display This Choice:
If In which discipline do you primarily work? = Creative Arts
 Music and Creative Media Production (2.3)

Display This Choice:
If In which discipline do you primarily work? = Health
 Health Sciences (3.1)

Display This Choice:
If In which discipline do you primarily work? = Health
 Nursing (3.2)

Display This Choice:
If In which discipline do you primarily work? = Health
 Social Work (3.3)

Display This Choice:
If In which discipline do you primarily work? = Health
 Sport, Exercise, and Nutrition (3.4)

Display This Choice:
If In which discipline do you primarily work? = Humanities and Social Sciences
 Education (4.1)

Display This Choice:
If In which discipline do you primarily work? = Humanities and Social Sciences
 Humanities, Media, and Creative Communication (4.3)

Display This Choice:
If In which discipline do you primarily work? = Humanities and Social Sciences
 Te Pūtahi-a-Toi --- Māori Knowledge (4.4)

Display This Choice:
If In which discipline do you primarily work? = Humanities and Social Sciences
 People, Environment, and Planning (4.5)

Display This Choice:
If In which discipline do you primarily work? = Humanities and Social Sciences
 Psychology (4.6)

Display This Choice:
If In which discipline do you primarily work? = Sciences
 Agriculture and Environment (5.1)

Display This Choice:
If In which discipline do you primarily work? = Sciences
 Built Environment (5.2)

Display This Choice:
If In which discipline do you primarily work? = Sciences
 Food and Advanced Technology (5.3)

Display This Choice:
If In which discipline do you primarily work? = Sciences
 Fundamental Sciences (5.4)

Display This Choice:
If In which discipline do you primarily work? = Sciences
 Natural and Computational Sciences (5.5)

Display This Choice:

Page Break

GNDR How do you currently describe your gender identity?

- Female (1)
- Male (2)
- Another gender (please specify) (8) _____

ETHN How do you currently describe your primary ethnicity?

- New Zealand European (0)
- Māori (1)
- Samoan (2)
- Cook Island Māori (3)
- Tongan (4)
- Niuean (5)
- Chinese (6)
- Indian (7)
- Another ethnicity (please specify) (8) _____

NATL

How do you currently describe your primary nationality?

- Native-born New Zealander (0)
- Foreign-born New Zealander (1)
- Australian (2)
- British (3)
- Chinese (4)
- Indian (5)
- Samoan (6)
- South African (7)
- Another nationality (please specify) (8) _____

LANG What is your first language?

- Afrikaans (1)
- Chinese (incl. Mandarin and Cantonese) (2)
- English (3)
- French (4)
- Hindi (5)
- Samoan (6)
- Te Reo Māori (7)
- Another language (please specify) (8) _____

End of Block: Demographics

Block: Intro / Consent (2 Questions)
Standard: Plagiarism (2 Questions)
Standard: Scenario Intro (1 Question)

BlockRandomizer: 1 - Evenly Present Elements

Group: VERSION_A

Standard: Scenario 1 set EDtec_1 (5 Questions)
Standard: Scenario 2 GWsoc_2 (5 Questions)
Standard: Scenario 3 EDsoc_1 (5 Questions)
Standard: Scenario 4 GWcomm_1 (5 Questions)
Standard: Scenario 5 RPtec_3 (5 Questions)
Standard: Scenario 6 EDsoc_4 (5 Questions)
Standard: Scenario 7 GWsoc_1 (5 Questions)
Standard: Scenario 8 COLsoc_1 (5 Questions)
Standard: Scenario 9 EDcomm_1 (5 Questions)
Standard: Scenario 10 RPown_1 (5 Questions)
Standard: Scenario 11 EDcomm_2 (5 Questions)
Standard: Scenario 12 COLsoc_3 (5 Questions)

Group: VERSION_B

Standard: Scenario 1 GWtec_2 (5 Questions)
Standard: Scenario 2 RPtec_1 (5 Questions)
Standard: Scenario 3 RPtec_2 (5 Questions)
Standard: Scenario 4 EDsoc_3 (5 Questions)
Standard: Scenario 5 COLsoc_2 (5 Questions)
Standard: Scenario 6 GWtec_1 (5 Questions)
Standard: Scenario 7 EDsoc_5 (5 Questions)
Standard: Scenario 8 EDuni_1 (5 Questions)
Standard: Scenario 9 RPsoc_1 (5 Questions)
Standard: Scenario 10 COLsoc_4 (5 Questions)
Standard: Scenario 11 EDsoc_2 (5 Questions)
Standard: Scenario 12 COLsoc_5 (5 Questions)

Standard: Demographics (12 Questions)

EndSurvey: Advanced

Appendix J: Students' Acceptability Ratings – Full Table

This table shows the full collection of scenarios, as rated by students, ordered from unanimously acceptable to unanimously unacceptable. Acceptability ratings are displayed as counts and percentages for each rating option (*acceptable, not sure, unacceptable*), for each scenario.

No.	Scenario	Acceptable		Not sure		Unacceptable	
		C	%	C	%	C	%
XVIII	Renier takes his drafted paper to the Centre for Teaching and Learning. A Learning Advisor suggests changes to grammar and structure and explains the comments to Renier. Renier sits at the computer and makes edits based on the Learning Advisor's comments.	5	100	0	0	0	0
VI	Renier asks his older sister to help him by proofreading his drafted paper. She sits with him, pointing out mistakes she says he needs to address. Through their discussion, Renier understands all the comments she makes. Renier then sits at the computer and revises his paper.	5	100	0	0	0	0
XXIII	Renier drafts a paper and asks a friend to edit it. The friend reviews his paper and circles all the spelling and grammatical errors that Renier should correct. Renier goes through and makes corrections to his paper.	5	100	0	0	0	0
XXII	Renier drafts a paper and asks a friend to proofread it. The friend reviews his paper and circles all the spelling and grammatical errors that Renier should correct, as well as offering ideas on additional content to support Renier's argument in the paper. Renier goes through and makes changes to his paper, correcting errors and adding supporting information his friend told him about.	4	100	0	0	0	0
XIV	Renier pays a professional editor to review his drafted paper. The editor corrects spelling, grammar, and punctuation. The editor also recommends changes to improve the clarity of Renier's statements through comments written in the margins. Renier discusses the comments with the editor and changes his writing based on the comments.	4	80	1	20	0	0
XII	Renier starts writing his paper and asks for help from his father. Renier and his father talk about Renier's ideas for the paper, including topic choice, organisation, and possible references. Renier reflects upon the discussion with his father and returns to writing his paper.	3	75	1	25	0	0
XIII	Renier and a classmate get together to work on their papers. They discuss their topics and ideas about what to write. They share references. They draft their papers independently and review each other's work making corrections to spelling and grammar.	3	75	0	0	1	25
IX	Renier tries to paraphrase part of a reference he wants to include in his paper but feels like it is not working. He uses the thesaurus/synonym tool in Word to replace certain words in the source text with similar words.	3	75	0	0	1	25
X	Renier takes his drafted paper to another lecturer to review before submitting it to his course instructor. The lecturer provides Renier with feedback in the form of both comments and rewritten sentences. Renier revises his paper to include the rewritten sentences.	3	60	0	0	2	40
XXI	Renier asks to see a classmate's paper to get an idea about what they are expected to do for the assessment. The classmate provides their paper to Renier to review. Later, Renier writes his own paper based on what he liked and remembered from the classmate's paper.	2	50	0	0	2	50
IV	While writing his paper, Renier uses the University of Manchester's Academic Phrasebank to help make his writing sound more scholarly. He copies phrases from the phrasebank into his paper, plugging in his topic words.	2	50	1	25	1	25
I	Renier writes a draft and puts it through Grammarly, making all the changes the programme suggests.	2	40	3	60	0	0

No.	Scenario	Acceptable		Not sure		Unacceptable	
		C	%	C	%	C	%
XIX	Renier pays a professional editor to review his drafted paper. The editor corrects spelling, grammar, and punctuation. The editor also recommends changes to improve the clarity of Renier's statements and provides rewritten sentences via Word's track changes mode. The editor emails the paper back to Renier and they do not discuss the comments. Renier accepts all the changes made.	2	40	1	20	2	40
XVII	Renier locates a paper he previously wrote and submitted for a different course. Since the assessment prompt was similar, he updates the title page to reflect the current course and instructor name.	1	25	1	25	2	50
VIII	Renier asks his flatmate to help him by proofreading his drafted paper. The flatmate sits at the computer and changes grammar, sentence structure, and the organisation of the paper. Renier is not sure why some of the changes were made.	1	20	1	20	3	60
XVI	Renier asks his mother to proofread his drafted paper before he submits it. She makes corrections to spelling and punctuation. She makes adjustments to the content and the wording that alters Renier's argument in the paper.	0	0	2	40	3	60
III	Renier copies a passage from a journal and pastes it into a paraphrase tool website, like Quillbot, that then provides a paraphrased version of the original text. Renier puts this paraphrased text in his paper and cites the original reference according to APA style.	0	0	1	25	3	75
XX	Renier gets permission from a friend to use their marked paper from an earlier semester. Renier rewords each sentence so that the wording is different while the original meaning is retained.	0	0	1	25	3	75
XXIV	Renier and a classmate get together to work on their papers. They divide up the task between themselves, with Renier writing his sections and the classmate writing their sections. They then combine the sections into one paper, each editing their own copy.	0	0	0	0	4	100
II	Renier starts writing but feels he cannot seem to get going. He takes what he has written to a friend and asks them for help. The friend corrects the spelling, grammar, and sentence structure of what Renier wrote. The friend also writes additional sections of the paper for Renier.	0	0	0	0	4	100
VII	Renier gets a paper written by someone he does not know from a website. He purchases the paper and pays through the website.	0	0	0	0	4	100
XI	Renier gets a paper written by his friend who owes him a favour. He did not pay for the paper.	0	0	0	0	4	100
XV	Renier gets a paper written by someone he does not know from a website. He did not pay for the paper.	0	0	0	0	4	100
V	Renier visits a student file sharing site where he has previously found helpful lecture notes from class sessions he was unable to attend. He finds assessments similar to his assigned research paper. Adding to his draft, he takes short sections from multiple papers and inserts them into his paper, rewriting some of them.	0	0	0	0	4	100

Note. For collaborating, ghostwriting, and repurposing set N=4; for editing set N=5

Appendix K: Staff's Acceptability Ratings – Five-point Scale

These four tables show the ratings assigned by teaching staff, organised by scenario subgroup. Each table includes the following columns: scenario roman numeral, scenario description, the number of respondents (n), the count and percentage for each of the ratings (*fully acceptable, somewhat acceptable, not sure/it depends, somewhat unacceptable, fully unacceptable*), and total count and percentage for acceptable and unacceptable.

Staff's Acceptability Ratings for Ghostwriting Scenarios

No.	Scenario	n	Acceptable				Not Sure / It Depends	Unacceptable						
			Fully		Somewhat			TOTAL		Somewhat		Fully		TOTAL
			C	%	C	%	C	%	C	%	C	%	C	%
VII	Renier gets a paper written by someone he does not know from a website. He purchases the paper and pays through the website.	51	2	3.9	0	0.0	2	3.9	1	2.0	0	0.0	48	94.1
XI	Renier gets a paper written by his friend who owes him a favour. He did not pay for the paper.	50	4	8.0	0	0.0	4	8.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	46	92.0
XV	Renier gets a paper written by someone he does not know from a website. He did not pay for the paper.	49	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	6	12.2	0	0.0	43	87.8
II	Renier starts writing but feels he cannot seem to get going. He takes what he has written to a friend and asks them for help. The friend corrects the spelling, grammar, and sentence structure of what Renier wrote. The friend also writes additional sections of the paper for Renier.	52	1	1.9	5	9.6	6	11.5	4	7.7	21	40.4	21	40.4
III	Renier copies a passage from a journal and pastes it into a paraphrase tool website, like Quillbot, that then provides a paraphrased version of the original text. Renier puts this paraphrased text in his paper and cites the original reference according to APA style.	51	2	3.9	5	9.8	7	13.7	10	19.6	19	37.3	15	29.4

Staff's Acceptability Ratings for Collaborating Scenarios

No.	Scenario	n	Acceptable				Not Sure / It Depends	Unacceptable								
			Fully		Somewhat			TOTAL		Somewhat		Fully		TOTAL		
			C	%	C	%	C	%	C	%	C	%	C	%		
XXI	Renier asks to see a classmate's paper to get an idea about what they are expected to do for the assessment. The classmate provides their paper to Renier to review. Later, Renier writes his own paper based on what he liked and remembered from the classmate's paper.	46	2	4.3	6	13.0	8	17.4	8	17.4	17	37.0	13	28.3	30	65.2
XXIV	Renier and a classmate get together to work on their papers. They divide up the task between themselves, with Renier writing his sections and the classmate writing their sections. They then combine the sections into one paper, each editing their own copy.	49	3	6.1	5	10.2	8	16.3	12	24.5	8	16.3	21	42.9	29	59.2
XXII	Renier drafts a paper and asks a friend to proofread it. The friend reviews his paper and circles all the spelling and grammatical errors that Renier should correct, as well as offering ideas on additional content to support Renier's argument in the paper. Renier goes through and makes changes to his paper, correcting errors and adding supporting information his friend told him about.	49	35	71.4	10	20.4	45	91.8	2	4.1	1	2.0	1	2.0	2	4.0
XIII	Renier and a classmate get together to work on their papers. They discuss their topics and ideas about what to write. They share references. They draft their papers independently and review each other's work making corrections to spelling and grammar.	49	39	79.6	7	14.3	46	93.9	2	4.1	1	2.0	0	0.0	1	2.0
XII	Renier starts writing his paper and asks for help from his father. Renier and his father talk about Renier's ideas for the paper, including topic choice, organisation, and possible references. Renier reflects upon the discussion with his father and returns to writing his paper.	49	43	87.8	6	12.2	49	100.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0

Staff's Acceptability Ratings for Editing Scenarios

No.	Scenario	n	Acceptable				Not Sure / It Depends	Unacceptable								
			Fully		Somewhat			TOTAL		Somewhat		Fully		TOTAL		
			C	%	C	%	C	%	C	%	C	%	C	%		
XVI	Renier asks his mother to proofread his drafted paper before he submits it. She makes corrections to spelling and punctuation. She makes adjustments to the content and the wording that alters Renier's argument in the paper.	49	1	2.0	5	10.2	6	12.2	5	10.2	24	49.0	14	28.6	38	77.6
VIII	Renier asks his flatmate to help him by proofreading his drafted paper. The flatmate sits at the computer and changes grammar, sentence structure, and the organisation of the paper. Renier is not sure why some of the changes were made.	49	1	2.0	15	30.6	16	32.7	4	8.2	25	51.0	4	8.2	29	59.2
XIX	Renier pays a professional editor to review his drafted paper. The editor corrects spelling, grammar, and punctuation. The editor also recommends changes to improve the clarity of Renier's statements and provides rewritten sentences via Word's track changes mode. The editor emails the paper back to Renier and they do not discuss the comments. Renier accepts all the changes made.	46	5	10.9	10	21.7	15	32.6	8	17.4	10	21.7	13	28.3	23	50.0
X	Renier takes his drafted paper to another lecturer to review before submitting it to his course instructor. The lecturer provides Renier with feedback in the form of both comments and rewritten sentences. Renier revises his paper to include the rewritten sentences.	50	4	8.0	13	26.0	17	34.0	11	22.0	18	36.0	4	8.0	22	44.0

(continued) *Editing Scenarios*

No.	Scenario	n	Acceptable						Not Sure/It Depends	Unacceptable						
			Fully		Somewhat		Total			Somewhat		Fully		Total		
			C	%	C	%	C	%	C	%	C	%	C	%		
XIV	Renier pays a professional editor to review his drafted paper. The editor corrects spelling, grammar, and punctuation. The editor also recommends changes to improve the clarity of Renier’s statements through comments written in the margins. Renier discusses the comments with the editor and changes his writing based on the comments.	49	17	34.7	17	34.7	34	69.4	8	16.3	6	12.2	1	2.0	7	14.3
I	Renier writes a draft and puts it through Grammarly, making all the changes the programme suggests.	53	39	73.6	9	17.0	48	90.6	4	7.5	1	1.9	0	0.0	1	1.9
XVIII	Renier takes his drafted paper to the Centre for Teaching and Learning. A Learning Advisor suggests changes to grammar and structure and explains the comments to Renier. Renier sits at the computer and makes edits based on the Learning Advisor’s comments.	49	44	89.8	2	4.1	46	93.9	2	4.1	1	2.0	0	0.0	1	2.0
XXIII	Renier drafts a paper and asks a friend to edit it. The friend reviews his paper and circles all the spelling and grammatical errors that Renier should correct. Renier goes through and makes corrections to his paper.	49	44	89.8	2	4.1	46	93.9	2	4.1	1	2.0	0	0.0	1	2.0
VI	Renier asks his older sister to help him by proofreading his drafted paper. She sits with him, pointing out mistakes she says he needs to address. Through their discussion, Renier understands all the comments she makes. Renier then sits at the computer and revises his paper.	51	43	84.3	7	13.7	50	98.0	1	2.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0

Staff's Acceptability Ratings for Repurposing Scenarios

No.	Scenario	n	Acceptable						Not Sure / It Depends	Unacceptable						
			Fully		Somewhat		TOTAL			Somewhat		Fully		TOTAL		
			C	%	C	%	C	%	C	%	C	%	C	%	C	%
XX	Renier gets permission from a friend to use their marked paper from an earlier semester. Renier rewords each sentence so that the wording is different while the original meaning is retained.	49	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	4.1	10	20.4	37	75.5	47	95.9
V	Renier visits a student file sharing site where he has previously found helpful lecture notes from class sessions he was unable to attend. He finds assessments similar to his assigned research paper. Adding to his draft, he takes short sections from multiple papers and inserts them into his paper, rewriting some of them.	50	1	2.0	2	4.0	3	6.0	4	8.0	19	38.0	24	48.0	43	86.0
XVII	Renier locates a paper he previously wrote and submitted for a different course. Since the assessment prompt was similar, he updates the title page to reflect the current course and instructor name.	48	4	8.3	2	4.2	6	12.5	2	4.2	14	29.2	26	54.2	40	83.4
IX	Renier tries to paraphrase part of a reference he wants to include in his paper but feels like it is not working. He uses the thesaurus/synonym tool in Word to replace certain words in the source text with similar words.	51	12	23.5	10	19.6	22	43.1	8	15.7	17	33.4	4	7.8	21	41.2
IV	While writing his paper, Renier uses the University of Manchester's Academic Phrasebank to help make his writing sound more scholarly. He copies phrases from the phrasebank into his paper, plugging in his topic words.	51	4	7.8	18	35.3	22	43.1	14	27.5	11	21.6	4	7.8	15	29.4