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'Many university students cheating'

A survey has revealed widespread cheating among university students, with one in three copying ideas from books or the internet.

One in six students admitted to copying from friends while 10% said they had attempted to find essays online.

The poll by the Times Higher Education Supplement found men were more likely to copy work from their fellow undergraduates than women.

The Opinionpanel Research survey of 1,022 undergraduates at 119 universities and colleges found that more than one in five men - 21% - admitted they had cheated by copying work from their colleagues, compared with 14% of women.

More students admit to copying ideas than work itself - 37% said they had copied ideas from books, and 35% said they copied from online sources while 3% of students admitted copying text word-for-word from a book or from online sources.

Professor Jean Underwood, an expert on plagiarism based at Nottingham Trent University, told the Times Higher that cheating should be taken more seriously.

"Society has to see plagiarism as a real issue, rather like drink driving," she said.

"It is only when the majority see this as unacceptable that it will be brought under control. At the moment, giving a child, whether he or she is 12 or 20, a competitive edge through malpractice is seen as legitimate by many."

On average one in 10 students said they had looked for essays online. More than half (54%) of all third year students surveyed said they knew someone who had plagiarised work.

Dr Fiona Duggan, a plagiarism expert at Northumbria University, told the paper that students were clearly still confused about what counted as cheating.

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