ASKe (Assessment Standards Knowledge exchange) is a Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL) based in the Business School at Oxford Brookes University. It was set up in summer 2005 with a £4.5 million award from HEFCE in recognition of good practice based on pedagogic research into aspects of assessment.

The work of ASKe has been organised into three strands of activity

Strand 1: Replicating proven practice through:

- A pre-assessment intervention which the **ASK**e team has shown to work. A simple intervention such as a marking workshop prior to undertaking an assessed task can significantly increase students' understanding of the assessment criteria and improve their performance of the task. **ASK**e has supported the development of this kind of intervention on all Business School programmes, as well as in three other Schools (Built Environment, Health and Social Care, and Westminster Institute of Education). This same support is available for the remaining four Schools plus five partner institutions.

- The Academic Conduct Officer (ACO) system which the **ASK**e team is further developing, in addition to researching effective ways of encouraging and promoting academic integrity.

- The Peer Assisted Learning (PAL) programme, long used by the Business School, which **ASK**e has extended across the School. Support is also offered to help at least three other Schools introduce PAL.

Strand 2: Pioneering evidence-based practice

Appropriate development projects will be funded, both within the Business School and across the whole University. Projects will seek out and support ways to develop and enhance assessment practices.

Strand 3: Cultivating a community of practice

The **ASK**e team has developed a new, £2 million building on Brookes' Wheatley Campus. This provides a physical environment to support student learning outside structured class time, in which staff and students can meet to develop a shared understanding of academic standards.

But it's more than just a building. The **ASK**e team argues that only a true community of practice will ensure shared understanding, so **ASK**e (in conjunction with other parties at Brookes) is also developing the social environment necessary to colonise this physical space.

To find out more about **ASK**e's work, please contact:
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ASKe

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Reduce the risk of **plagiarism** in just 30 minutes!

ASKe
Assessment Standards Knowledge exchange
The Centre for Excellence in Assessment at the Business School

ASKe

Do you want to avoid spending hours searching for plagiarism in your students' work?

Do you want to design out easy opportunities for copying and 'faking' learning?

Do you want to encourage your students' activity as a way of encouraging their learning?

If so, why don't you try our three-step exercise?

It takes approximately 30 minutes of your time, and it works...

...here's how you do it:

when you think you have designed the assessment task, test it. Does the design encourage 'making' or 'finding and faking'?

1

Reduce the risk of plagiarism that has resulted from students finding answers.

You encourage **making** by:
- requesting a new format (a poster instead of a report; a submission to a parliamentary committee instead of an essay)
- giving your students individual or unique data sets or contexts
- requiring your students to catalogue, critique, plan, defend, justify or rank, rather than to explain or describe.

You encourage **finding** by:
- setting the same task as last year
- setting a task that has only one answer
- setting a task that requires your students to show concrete knowledge (eg 'what is the best way to manage a patient with advanced emphysema?')
- allowing last minute changes of topic.

2

Ask yourself: if I need to request evidence of how my students made the coursework, could I do that? To reduce the risk of plagiarism, you should ask to see activity.

Evidence of making coursework includes:
- drafts, existence of plans and electronic versions
- copies of research papers used
- records of supervision meetings
- observations of the effort required (organising the work, writing it, the group working together).

There will be no evidence of activity if you:
- put all the marks on the final product
- (where supervision is required) bypass supervision, yet mark the final result.

3

Can't do 1 or 2? Then build in checks to confirm who wrote/did the coursework.

You can collect evidence of authenticity by:
- setting brief vivas for a percentage of your students submitting
- setting a post-hand-in writing task to be done under exam conditions. This should examine either understanding of the content of the final product or understanding of the process used to make the final product (eg 'What were two key resources you used and why were they important?')
- asking your students to alter the final product under exam conditions (eg 'You wrote the programme to do X, how would you change it to do Y?')
- comparison of exam performance and coursework performance.

These ideas are collected from investigations by Parapadakis, D. (2004), 'Using IT to combat plagiarism -10 years of success and failures', in conference proceedings of Plagiarism: Prevention, Practice and Policy, 143-150, and Culwin, F. (2006), 'Either my students are getting naughtier, or the tools are getting better!', paper presented at 2nd International Plagiarism Conference, July 2006, available at www.jiscpas.ac.uk/conference2006. See also http://www.cshe.unimelb.edu.au/assessinglearning/03/index.html