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## Open Letter

### Global Academic Integrity Network urges leading social media and online platforms to take a stand against academic dishonesty

Worldwide, the credibility of our educational systems depends on society's confidence in academic qualifications. A credible education system delivers trust in professions – from lawyers to accountants, doctors, teachers, engineers, physicists and a broad range of others. This trust underpins the fabric of our knowledge-based societies and in recent years it has become threatened by academic dishonesty.

Today, the Global Academic Integrity Network (GAIN), representing 40 education regulatory bodies from countries around the world, calls on major social media and online platforms to take a stand and join the fight against academic dishonesty. GAIN asks these platforms to take action to stop the advertising of academic cheating services.

Recent years have witnessed a proliferation in the marketing and promotion of online cheating services across digital platforms. These services allow students to pay someone else to complete assignments or take their exams on their behalf, undermining students' learning and their qualifications. Further, online cheating services can expose students to criminals and leave them vulnerable to the threat of identity theft and blackmail.

In the age of digital interconnectedness, essay mill and contract cheating sites have proliferated across borders and become a global problem. Ease of internet access mean these services are readily available, but the solutions they provide are short-sighted. These services devalue academic achievements, they compromise the credibility of educational systems worldwide and they undermine society's trust in qualified, and essential, professionals.

This is not an issue which educators and institutions can tackle alone. It is the shared responsibility of all – from tech companies to regulators, individual higher education institutions and learners – to address this challenge. It is only through a more systematic, global approach and unified action that we can hope to enhance and safeguard the integrity of academic quality and qualifications, and protect student wellbeing and society's trust in the professions we rely upon.

GAIN calls on social media and online platforms worldwide to demonstrate commitment to corporate responsibility and take action to prevent academic cheating services being advertised. GAIN believes this action would significantly reduce the visibility and impact of essay mills and contract cheating services and send a powerful message worldwide about the value of legitimate academic achievements.

GAIN extends an open invitation to leaders and decision-makers of these platforms to initiate a dialogue and collaborate on actions to address the pressing concern of contract cheating.

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