



## PRESS RELEASE:

### University assessment practices can encourage or discourage plagiarism

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University assessment practices can encourage or discourage plagiarism. External assessment, found to be a weakness in the HSC prior to the review of external assessment leading to the creation of more robust assessment processes, has evidently undermined university assessment. The complicating factor for universities is the lure of the dollars associated with international students. This factor may have been an influence in the types of assessment utilised within the courses chosen by some of these students.

When external assessment comprises a high proportion of the overall assessment, problems of plagiarism can arise. In a proportion of cases where robust assessment would have caught students who should have failed, the lack of robustness has evidently allowed students to pass or better.

ATA CEO, Mohan Dhall said, *“Universities can work with the tutoring sector to better understand the issues that arise with respect to assessment and the overlay of a commercial imperative that can drive less savoury business practices. Robust assessment is creative but is well-supervised and involves an application of skills. Face-to-face presentations before an expert panel, for example can assess the strength of a student’s ability and understanding. There is also place for a stronger emphasis on examinations in universities. However, this does not preclude the application of higher order thinking skills. Application of thinking to scenario-based questions and other creative forms of assessment ensure that the possibility of plagiarism and also rote memorisation are limited.”*

The ATA Code of Conduct prohibits members from engaging in any form of plagiarism or creating dependencies. ATA members who tutor students at any level, university or school, are banned from doing the work in place of the student. The outsourcing of student work to so-called ‘tutors’ is a scam based on a false belief that passing is more important than understanding and that knowledge and understanding can be purchased. Both of these are falsehoods.

**ATA Media contacts:**

<b>Mohan Dhall (ATA CEO)</b>	<b>(02) 9704 5724</b>	<b>or</b>	<b>0408 619 714</b>
<b>Storm McGrath</b>	<b>(02) 4929 6711</b>	<b>or</b>	<b>0419 295 637</b>