

Essay mills to be banned under plans to reform post-16 education

Services offering to provide students with essays for money, known as essay mills, are to be made illegal under plans announced by the government today (5 October).

The government intends to make it a criminal offence to provide, arrange or advertise these cheating services for financial gain to students taking a qualification at any institution in England providing post-16 education including universities.

The move is one of a number of measures being introduced to the [Skills and Post-16 Education Bill](#), to transform the skills and training landscape and help level up opportunities across the country.

The law will also be changed to give equality to technical education in careers advice in schools, so all pupils understand the wide range of career routes and training available to them, such as apprenticeships, T Levels or traineeships, not just a traditional academic route.

Minister for Skills Alex Burghart said:

Essay mills are completely unethical and profit by undermining the hard work most students do. We are taking steps to ban these cheating services.

We have also announced a new measure to make sure all young people receive broader careers guidance so everyone can get the advice that's right for them.

Banning essay mills will help to safeguard the academic integrity and standards of post-16 and higher education in England and protect students from falling prey to the deceptive marketing techniques of contract cheating services.

This follows a number of steps already taken to tackle unscrupulous essay mills, including government working alongside the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, Universities UK and the National Union of Students to produce guidance for institutions on how to combat the threat of contract cheating and guidance for students to make them better aware of the consequences, sending a clear message that these services are not legitimate.

Additional measures being introduced to the Bill include enabling sixth form colleges with a religious faith designation to become a 16-19 Academy, boosting diversity in 16-19 academies and allowing more faith school providers to open 16-19 academies with a religious character.

The Bill, which will enter its report stage in the House of Lord on 12 October, underpins the government's transformation of post-16 education and skills as set out in the [Skills for Jobs White Paper](#). The reforms outlined in the Bill will help to create more routes into skilled employment in sectors the economy needs such as engineering, digital, clean energy and manufacturing, so more people can secure well-paid jobs in their local areas, levelling up the nation and supporting communities to thrive.