



Plagiarism Policy

Approved by Academic Board for Implementation September 2015

1. Plagiarism Definition

Plagiarism is the act of presenting the material, ideas, and arguments of another person/persons as one's own. To copy sentences, phrases or even particular striking expressions without acknowledgement in a manner which may deceive the reader as to the source is plagiarism; to paraphrase in a manner which may deceive the reader is likewise plagiarism. Plagiarism is identified in the composition of the work submitted by a student for assessment.

2. Philosophy

Our policy on plagiarism is designed to foster an awareness both of the sound scholarly practices which constitute academic integrity and of the ways in which plagiarism can compromise this.

Academic misconduct threatens fair assessment, which in itself can then disadvantage all students and challenge the quality of awards made by the University. Plagiarism is one aspect of academic misconduct, but it is also a subject which raises important learning and teaching issues. In both areas, consistency is key, as is a dovetailing of governance, regulations, conventions and penalties, with support, guidance and education of both staff and students in good anti-plagiarism practice. Our philosophy takes plagiarism seriously, but also acknowledges that in a complex learning climate an education-led approach is desirable and more sustainable than a merely corrective or punitive approach.

The University is therefore committed to:

1. operating a programme of support and education at School or programme level which is aligned with University policy and procedures, deals fairly with all students, and gives them the confidence to study and succeed in a culture free from plagiarism;
2. ensuring that University policy and procedures are clearly recognised and understood by students and staff alike, and are implemented consistently across programmes;
3. underpinning its promotion of academic integrity with effective measures for the detection and countering of plagiarism.

3. Designing out plagiarism

Wherever possible, assessment strategies should be designed in such a way as to minimise the opportunity for plagiarism, e.g. those that require a critical, applied or evaluative personal response which is difficult to plagiarise or the use of tried and tested assessment instruments such as Computer Aided Assessments using randomised questions from a question bank.

4. Education to avoid plagiarism

The education for effective academic writing is a key part of avoiding plagiarism and necessarily continues at all levels. Learning to write in a formal register, whilst ensuring that the work of others is acknowledged, should be seen as a progression which may take time and skills to refine. Education strategies and expectations should be sensitive to the level at which the work is being presented, as indeed are the progressive penalties associated with cases of detected plagiarism. Within each programme:

1. Handbooks will contain a standard statement that explains the policy and procedures for dealing with alleged plagiarism. This may be supplemented if required, to clarify particular aspects of plagiarism related to the discipline.
2. The formative use of an electronic originality checking system will be an integral part of all programmes' learning experience. Understanding the meaning of originality reports should be supported by tutors, to help educate for avoidance of plagiarism, e.g. discussion of example originality reports, individual/group feedback on students' own originality reports and sources of further support signposted (e.g. study skills advice).
3. Expectations of standards of citation and referencing should conform to those agreed institutionally. The University recognises that some disciplines require alternative systems, e.g. to meet professional standards at a national level. Where this is the case students must be given clear guidance on using the alternative system equivalent to that provided for the University standard, and this guidance will be demonstrable within programme documentation.
4. In addition to any local discipline specific resources, a central suite of educational resources relevant to plagiarism and academic writing is available to students and tutors via a web interface or the VLE.

5. Detection of plagiarism

Staff will have their own strategies for monitoring plagiarism within a piece of work, e.g. awareness of key texts, the consistency of style within the writing or the use of web search engines such as Google to check phrases. To support academic judgement, the University provides an electronic originality checking system, linked to the e-submission tool in the VLE, which can be used by staff to review overall levels of originality and where necessary to establish cases where action may be taken.

- All summative coursework across Levels 4-7 should be subject to University electronic originality checking unless there are compelling pedagogic, technical or administrative reason not to (see section 7 below) .
- Where the electronic originality checking system is used:
 - Students will be advised in advance, i.e. no retrospective use
 - For each assignment, all students' work in cohort will be submitted for checking
 - Students will be able to check at least one draft for each piece of summative work through the system prior to submission.

6. Procedures for dealing with cases of alleged plagiarism

In the submission of all summative work, students will confirm that work is their own work except where they have acknowledged the work of others.

The investigation of allegations of plagiarism and the actions taken where plagiarism is deemed to have occurred will follow a staged approach. The progressive severity of the penalties applied recognises that students should acquire a higher level of skill as the programme progresses.

The procedures for handling allegations for plagiarism and the actions which can be taken are set out in the Assessment Procedures Manual.

7. Monitoring and Support for the Policy

Faculty Quality Committees will record assignments exempted from submission to the University electronic text matching system for pedagogic or administrative reasons along with a short rationale for each. Where appropriate, they will be reported at Departmental Annual Review within a wider review of the Department's implementation of the Plagiarism Policy. Faculty Directors of Quality will comment on the operation of the Policy within the annual quality report to the Quality and Standards Committee. This will in turn feed into an annual review of the Plagiarism Policy by the appropriate committee of Academic Board.

Assessment types expected to be submitted to Turnitin include word-processed original pieces of writing such as essays, reports and individual studies. Assignment submissions required in a format

which cannot be originality-checked do not need recording as exceptions. Information on compatible file types for text-matching is available from Learning Technology. Pedagogic reasons not to submit to Turnitin will mainly be where opportunities for plagiarism are designed out by nature of the assessment e.g. log books, lab reports, practical work. Administrative reasons not to submit to Turnitin will be where submission demands significant additional work over and above the norm (e.g. students submit own work comprising two or more files per assignment). Such exceptions are expected to be rare.

Professional development sessions and training materials will be available from Learning, Teaching and Enhancement.