



## Plagiarism Policy

Area: Teaching Learning and Assessment

Effective from: 17/05/2022

# Plagiarism Policy

## 1. Policy Statement

This policy outlines the approach taken to address issues of authenticity of work submitted by a learner. The organisation is obligated to ensure that a learner's work and the associated assessment decision are a fair and accurate representation of a learner's performance. Plagiarised work could lead to the following:

- Reduce the legitimacy of an assessment
- Undermine the credibility of an assessment
- Reduce the value of qualification or standard
- Be unfair to others that have met the assessment standard fairly

Plagiarism is a serious threat to the integrity of the organisation, its duty as an educational institution, and its responsibilities as a 'Centre' with its awarding body partners. Moreover, learners who succeed in achieving/passing an assessment, qualification or standard with plagiarised work may not be properly prepared for the next step in their learning, programme of study, or their career.

## 2. Definition

The Joint Council for Qualifications defines plagiarism as, "unacknowledged copying from or reproduction of published sources or incomplete referencing".

Plagiarism is a form of cheating and is a serious offence. Mostly, plagiarism occurs when a learner submits work that is (either in part, or completely) taken from another source.

### What constitutes plagiarism?

- A learner turning in someone else's work as their own
- Copying words or ideas from someone else without giving credit
- Failing to put a direct quotation in quotation marks and citing the source
- Giving incorrect information about the source of a quotation
- Changing words but copying the sentence structure of a source without giving credit

### 'Accidental' Plagiarism

The organisation understands that there may be genuine cases of unintentional plagiarism, for example:

- A learner is unable to reference correctly due to knowledge, understanding or skill deficits
- A learner unfamiliar with academic expectations e.g. a learner that hasn't been involved in a form of formal study for some time
- Unintentional omissions
- Unintentional errors in bibliography/reference list

It is also possible for a learner to unintentionally plagiarise by citing a source in the bibliography but failing to reference specific aspects of the text, particularly in instances where the same source is used multiple times throughout the piece of work.

The organisation is aware of the sensitivity and the need to take a sympathetic approach when handling cases suspected of unintentional plagiarism.

### **3. Plagiarism Detection Software**

The organisation is committed to deploying efficient, visible, and transparent systems to detect plagiarism. The organisation uses a software-based analysis of learners' work using the 'Turnitin' software. Turnitin is a plagiarism software used to determine the integrity of work submitted by learners.

Turnitin is not deployed for use as a replacement for human judgement, and the organisation must be assured that there are sufficient grounds for concern. The organisation will not make decisions based solely on Turnitin reports. Learners will be able to view the Turnitin report.

### **4. Procedure**

#### **Step 1 - Submission of work**

To authenticate the learner's work, the organisation requires assessments to be submitted using Turnitin software.

#### **Step 2 - Identification of suspected plagiarism**

Suspected plagiarism will normally be identified in the following ways:

- Turnitin score (see Appendix 1)
- Assignment marking
- Report from other learners

#### **Step 3 - Review of case**

The tutor reviews the suspected case of plagiarism. An allegation of plagiarism is not proof of plagiarism. The tutor will conduct a thorough investigation of the allegation to establish the facts. If an allegation is not proven the case will be dismissed.

#### **Step 4 - Penalty**

If the case is upheld the penalty is applied (Appendix 2).

## 5. Appeals

A learner has the right to appeal a penalty decision under the organisation's Appeals Policy.

## 6. Referencing Style

The organisation is committed to providing learners, tutors, and assessors with clarity about its expectations and standards in respect of referencing. As such the organisation adopts Harvard referencing as its preferred referencing style.

Information, advice and guidance are provided to learners, tutors and assessors on how to use Harvard style referencing in the intranet, resources and teaching lessons.

### Can another referencing style be used?

The organisation understands that in some instances a reference style other than Harvard referencing may be used by learners. (Haynes, 1947). This may be due to the nature of the assignment, the level of study, or a learner's capability to apply Harvard style referencing correctly. The organisation may permit another referencing style to be used on a case by case basis.

The organisation is accredited by several awarding bodies and some assessments explicitly require learners to use a specific reference style. (University, n.d.) In all such instances, the organisation will adopt the reference style imposed by the awarding body for the specific assessment.

## References

Qualifications, J. C. f., n.d. *Plagiarism in Assessments*. [Online]  
Available at: <https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/malpractice/plagiarism-in-assessments---guidance-for-teachersassessors/>  
[Accessed Monday July 2021].

University, O., n.d. *Plagiarism*. [Online]  
Available at:  
<https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/guidance/skills/plagiarism>  
[Accessed Monday July 2021].

## Related Documents

- Malpractice Policy
- Appeals Policy
- Plagiarism & Turnitin Guidance for Learners
- Plagiarism & Turnitin Guidance for Tutors
- Plagiarism Investigation Report

## Appendix 1 - Turnitin Similarity Score



Typically, an orange or red similarity score is indicative of plagiarised work, as it means that over 50% of the submission matches sources identified within the Turnitin database. As such, orange and red scores should always be investigated and reported by the tutor/person responsible for the assessment via the Plagiarism Investigation Report form in MyAC.

However, tutor discretion is required as plagiarism may also be present in submissions with lower similarity scores (e.g. a green score could consist of up to 24% unoriginal content, or could contain flags that suggest a deliberate attempt to deceive the system).

## Appendix 2 - Penalties for Plagiarism Offences

Offences are counted cumulatively.

1 <sup>st</sup> Upheld Offence	2 <sup>nd</sup> Upheld Offence	3 <sup>rd</sup> Upheld Offence	4 <sup>th</sup> Upheld Offence
The sections of plagiarised work are excluded from the assignment	Fail/zero marks for the whole assignment	Fail/zero marks for the whole assignment	Fail/zero marks for the whole assignment
Reduction in marks based on the exclusion of the plagiarised work	Information, advice and guidance session with tutor/person responsible for the assessment to discuss the findings and seek improvement	Interview with operations manager in the subject area to issue a final warning about conduct and to discuss implications of a 4 <sup>th</sup> offence	The case is referred to a different operations manager to whom dealt with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> upheld offence through the malpractice procedure with the recommendation of suspension from the programme of study pending investigation
Information, advice and guidance session with tutor/person responsible for the assessment to discuss the findings, support with correct referencing, and advise the	Formal first written reprimand issued by the operations manager in the subject area.  A copy of the reprimand is placed on the learner's file	Formal final written reprimand issued by the operations manager in the subject area.  A copy of the reprimand is	A formal investigation by the operations manager in line with the Malpractice Policy  The outcome is recorded on the learner's file

improvement required		placed on the learner's file	
Informal verbal warning issued to the learner by the tutor/person responsible for the assessment			