

Plagiarism

PURPOSE

This procedure is a means of addressing issues surrounding plagiarism.

SCOPE

This applies to all enrolled learners.

INTRODUCTION

The college is committed to encouraging academic excellence and integrity from learners and confidence among all who deal with the college, including parents, employers, awarding organisations and higher education institutions. To achieve this, the college will not tolerate plagiarism.

Plagiarism is a learner using another person's work or idea and presenting it as if it was his or her own. The work may be written work, music, a computer program, dance, picture etc. The source of that work may be:

- Published work e.g. book, magazine, play, photograph, painting, music, web-site etc.
- Unpublished work e.g. teacher's notes, class handouts, another learner's work (used with or without permission) and material from the Internet.

Using any work produced by someone else in any of these ways without giving them credit is plagiarism and is academic misconduct. Sometimes this plagiarism is done unintentionally due to poor research skills and a lack of understanding of referencing conventions.

Sometimes it is done deliberately. In either case plagiarism is not acceptable and should be addressed.

PROCEDURE

This procedure should be followed whenever plagiarism is suspected:

1. Whoever suspects that a learner has committed an act of plagiarism should contact the relevant Curriculum Manager.

2. The Curriculum Manager will agree the severity of incident with the teacher/assessor and instruct them on a course of action based on categories detailed below. This may result in the learner being interviewed by the Curriculum Manager.

If the learner maintains that he/she has not engaged in an act of plagiarism, then in conjunction with his/her teacher /assessor, the Curriculum Manager may require the learner to participate in:

- Oral questioning on the work where plagiarism is suspected.
- A 'blanks' test, under supervised conditions, where the learner is required to fill in every fifth word on his/her assignment which has been blanked out for this purpose by the Curriculum Manager.
- The learner's work being submitted to the electronic plagiarism detection tool on Blackboard and administrated by the Curriculum Manager.
- Other procedures as deemed necessary by the Curriculum Manager.

If as a result of investigation the teacher /assessor, in conjunction with the Curriculum Manager are satisfied that on the balance of probabilities the learner has committed an act of plagiarism then it will be categorised as one of the following: a **minor, intermediate** or **major** act of plagiarism and the appropriate **Disciplinary Sanction** will be applied.

Minor acts of plagiarism can be dealt with by the teacher/assessor, but need to be reported to the Curriculum Manager; these are considered to be:

- Sloppy referencing.
- Mixing up references.
- Changing a few words from a copied passage of work, and passing it off as original work.

Although these offences may be described as minor, if an assignment has a significant percentage of this type of plagiarism, then the sanction given to the learner should reflect this.

DISCIPLINARY SANCTIONS FOR MINOR ACTS OF PLAGIARISM IF:

- The amount of plagiarism does not exceed 10% of the total assignment:
 - Sanction 1
- The learner has committed a previous act(s) of plagiarism, or the plagiarism exceeds 10% of the total assignment:
 - Sanction 2, 3 or 4
- The learner has committed numerous previous plagiarism offences over the period of their course of study:
 - Sanction 5, 6 or 7

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Intermediate acts of plagiarism must be referred to and dealt with by the Curriculum Manager and reported to the appropriate Head of Learning or Assistant Principal – Curriculum and Standards; these are considered to be:

- Two learners on the same course copying from each other.
- A learner copying from a past learner on the same course.
- Verbatim copying from a source(s) without acknowledgement i.e. cutting and pasting from the Internet.

As with minor acts of plagiarism, the sanction given to the learner within this category may vary taking into account the percentage of copying involved. A learner who has copied a paragraph or two should not receive the same sanction as a learner who has copied the whole or a significant amount of work from another learner or from the Internet.

DISCIPLINARY SANCTIONS FOR INTERMEDIATE ACTS OF PLAGIARISM IF:

- The total amount of plagiarism does not exceed 10% of the total assignment, or the plagiarism advisor accepts that there are mitigating circumstances in relation to a particular learner:
 - Sanction 2, 3 or 4
- The learner has committed a previous act(s) of plagiarism, or the plagiarism exceeds 10% of the total assignment:
 - Sanction 5, 6 or 7
- The learner has been found guilty of numerous previous plagiarism offences over the period of their course of study:
 - Sanction 8 or 9

Major acts of plagiarism must be referred to and dealt with by the appropriate Head of Learning or Assistant Principal – Curriculum and Standards and reported to the Vice Principal or College Principal; these are considered to be:

- Recycling of assignments from essay banks on the Internet (whether paid for or not)
- Purchasing 'custom-made assignments' from an Internet site or getting others (including parents) to write the assignment.
- 'Stealing' an assignment from another learner without permission.

Disciplinary Sanctions for Major acts of plagiarism if:

- The Vice Principal or College Principal is satisfied that the learner has established mitigating circumstances in relation to this plagiarism:
 - Sanction 5, 6 or 7
 -
- There are no mitigating circumstances:

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- Sanction 8, 9 or 10

Disciplinary Sanctions for Plagiarised Work

The following sanctions are prescribed to punish plagiarism, subject to the **type** of plagiarism, the **severity** of the plagiarism and the consideration of any **mitigating** circumstances. They are instigated after **full consultation** with the teacher, personal tutor and/or senior management.

- 1 Discussion with the Curriculum Manager, course tutor and/or module leader and learner. Learner resubmits plagiarised work for full marks and no formal record is kept.
- 2 Discussion with Curriculum Manager, course tutor and/or module leader and learner. Learner resubmits plagiarised work for full marks with a record being kept.
- 3 Resubmission of work for full marks using either a different task or new work.
- 4 Re-marking of the original plagiarised work with the plagiarised section removed and the marks reflecting the remaining work.
- 5 Resubmission of new work for a reduced mark.
- 6 Resubmission of new work for a pass grade only.
- 7 Zero marks/fail grade for the piece of work with no resubmission.
- 8 Failure of the whole unit (where applicable).
- 9 Failure of the academic programme for that academic year.
- 10 Permanent removal from the academic programme and/or college.

Note: *With sanctions 1 and 2 the learner will be required to undertake verbal questioning if the plagiarised section includes a key part of an assessment criteria, in order to ensure that they have a full understanding.*

COLLEGE DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE

After a sanction is applied for plagiarism, it is at the discretion of the Curriculum Manager, Head of Learning or Vice Principal whether the learner should receive a further sanction in the form of a formal verbal or written warning in accordance with the college's Discipline - Student procedure.

Appeals

Appeals against the decision by the Curriculum Manager, Head of Learning, Assistant Principal – Curriculum and Standards or Vice Principal will be subject to the normal college appeals procedures in relation to learner discipline.

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Mitigation

Mitigating circumstances are circumstances presented by the learner which may have contributed in some way to the learner's behaviour. These circumstances do not acquit the learner but allow the reduction of the disciplinary sanction applied. Mitigating circumstances may include things such as ill health, family problems, work problems etc. The list is not exhaustive and the investigating manager may take into account any factors he/she considers pertinent in relation to a particular case.

Associated Documents

POL-003 – Assessment Malpractice and Maladministration

Assessment Malpractice and Maladministration

Discipline – Staff

Discipline – Student

BTEC Plagiarism Factsheet (QS/I62)