

University Policy on Plagiarism and Collusion

A. STATEMENT OF POLICY

1 Introduction

The University takes allegations of plagiarism or collusion seriously. Students who plagiarise or collude threaten the values and beliefs that underpin academic work and devalue the integrity of the University's awards, whether or not such plagiarism or collusion is intentional. Where plagiarism and/or collusion has occurred, offenders may be punished, and the punishment may extend to failing their degree, temporary suspension or permanent expulsion from further study at the University. Suspected plagiarism and/or collusion, at any point of a student's course, whether discovered before or after graduation, will be investigated and dealt with appropriately by the University.

All summative and formative work submitted for assessment by students is accepted on the understanding that it is the student's own effort and written from their own understanding, without falsification of any kind. Students are expected to offer their own analysis and presentation of information gleaned from research, even when group exercises are carried out. In so far as students rely on sources, they should indicate what these are in accordance with the appropriate convention in their discipline.

2 Definitions

Plagiarism and collusion are defined as follows:

2.1 Plagiarism

Plagiarism can take the following forms:

- (a) The reproduction without acknowledgement of work (including the work of fellow students), published or unpublished, either verbatim or in close paraphrase. In this context, the work of others includes material downloaded from computer files and the internet, discussions in seminars, ideas, text and diagrams from lecture handouts.
- (b) Poor academic practice which is un-intentional.
- (c) The reproduction without acknowledgement of a student's own previously submitted work.

It can occur in 'open-book' examinations and/or coursework assessments which may take a variety of forms, including, but not exclusively confined to: essays, reports, presentations, dissertations and projects.

2.2 Collusion

Collusion is a form of plagiarism, involving unauthorised co-operation between at least two people. Various forms of collaborative assessment undertaken in accordance with published requirements do

not fall under the heading of collusion; please see further guidance on authorised collaboration in the “Guidance Note – Assessing Group Work

(<https://www.uea.ac.uk/ltqo/taughtprogs/Guidance+Note+on+Groupwork>) and the “Policy on use of proof readers”

([https://intranet.uea.ac.uk/ltqo/taughtprogs/plagiarism/Policyonuseofproofreaders\(Aug10\)](https://intranet.uea.ac.uk/ltqo/taughtprogs/plagiarism/Policyonuseofproofreaders(Aug10)))

Collusion can take the following forms:

- (a) The conspiring by two or more students to produce a piece of work together with the intention that at least one passes it off as his or her own work.
- (b) The submission by a student of the work of another student, in circumstances where the latter has willingly provided the work, and where it should be evident that the recipient of the work is likely to submit it as their own. In such cases **both** students are guilty of collusion.
- (c) Unauthorised co-operation between a student and another person in the preparation and production of work which is presented as the student's own.
- (d) The commissioning and submission of work as the student's own, where the student has purchased or solicited another individual to produce work on the student's behalf.

3 Obligations of students

- 3.1 **All** students should be willing to sign a declaration on registration that the work they are submitting during that academic year (coursework, projects, dissertations etc) is their own work and that there is no unacknowledged use of another person's work and that there has been no unauthorised co-operation between them and another person in the preparation and production of work. Even when this is not required, the assumption is that all submitted work is the student's own.
- 3.2 Students are expected to familiarise themselves with and make use of the method(s) of citing other people's work in accordance with the appropriate conventions in their discipline.
- 3.3 Students must not mislead examiners by submitting another person's work for assessment in a way which intentionally and/or negligently and/or recklessly suggests that factual information has been collected and/or analysed which has not in fact been collected and/or analysed by the student.
- 3.4 Research students are required to sign certifications of originality when submitting their thesis. In circumstances where incidents of plagiarism for postgraduate research students appear to constitute misconduct in research, students may be referred to the Senate Student Discipline Committee for disciplinary action.

4 Graduates

Where plagiarism and/or collusion is found to have occurred in the work of a graduate of the University the matter shall be referred by the member(s) of staff who has/have discovered the offence to the Head of the student's School of registration (or most appropriate successor) in accordance with the University's Disciplinary Procedures. The Senate has the authority to reduce the classification of a Degree conferred, or to revoke a Degree, Diploma or Certificate or other distinction conferred by the University.

5 Use of software for matching text to detect plagiarism

'TURNITIN' (software that searches for text in work submitted to it that matches text contained in its databases to aid the detection of plagiarism) may be used for students taking level 0, level 1, level 2 or level 3 undergraduate modules or postgraduate modules.

Schools that make use of 'TURNITIN' shall:

- (a) appoint a 'TURNITIN' specialist (a member of academic staff who shall be familiar with the use of 'TURNITIN' and the interpretation of its reports);
- (b) monitor its use for equality impact assessment.

'TURNITIN' may only be used to assist with the identification of the source(s) of information that has/have been drawn on/copied from, once a marker suspects plagiarism and/or collusion and needs to collect evidence in accordance with paragraph B(2) below.

B. PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH SUSPECTED CASES OF PLAGIARISM AND/OR COLLUSION

1 Plagiarism Officer

The Head of each School shall appoint a Plagiarism Officer (who shall not be the Head of School). The role of the Plagiarism Officer is to hear cases of suspected plagiarism and/or collusion as set out in paragraphs 3, 4 and 5 below. The Plagiarism Officer shall consider alleged offences committed by students enrolled on the module(s) offered by the Plagiarism Officer's School.

2 Collection of Evidence

If a marker suspects plagiarism or collusion, s/he will gather the necessary evidence to allow the Plagiarism Officer to pursue the appropriate investigation. Wherever possible or appropriate, the main evidence for plagiarism will be the original sources(s) that has/have been drawn on/copied from. In cases identified as Medium or High Level, the Plagiarism Officer may collect other work completed by the student whether produced for modules located in their own School or produced for modules located in other Schools and may seek help from the relevant School 'TURNITIN' specialist. Where an allegation of plagiarism and/or collusion concerns a module in a School other than the School in which the student is registered, the Plagiarism Officer of the School 'owning' the module shall deal with the allegation and during the investigation will liaise

with the Plagiarism Officer in the School in which the student is registered. If the student's work completed within the Stage is to be recalled and is for a module(s) which is (are) not located in the student's School of registration, the Plagiarism Officer in the student's School of registration will initiate the process of recalling the work. Subsequently, the Plagiarism Officer in the School in which the module(s) is/are located, will arrange for relevant Plagiarism meetings (as detailed under B4) to be held and inform the Plagiarism Officer of the student's School of registration of the outcome(s) of the relevant Plagiarism meeting(s). This will allow the Plagiarism Officer in the student's School of registration to complete the investigation having knowledge of all the relevant information.

Where there is an allegation of plagiarism and/or collusion in respect of assessed work that has been submitted in word-processed format and "TURNITIN" is used during the investigation for the particular module(s) under review, a student will be asked in writing (or by e-mail) by the relevant Office within the Learning & Teaching Service to submit an electronic copy of the assessed work in question. The student will be given five working days from the date of the letter or e-mail of the request (Saturdays, Sundays and University closure days excepted) within which to provide an electronic copy. Where a student does not provide an electronic copy in word format of the assessed work in question within the required time-scale and there are no extenuating circumstances to account for the delay or non-submission, an automatic mark of zero will be recorded for the assessment item. Where the electronic copy is corrupted or is different from the original submission a mark of zero will be recorded for the assessed work in question.

If an internal marker suspects plagiarism and/or collusion but is unable to identify the original sources, s/he should collect what evidence is available and present it to the Plagiarism Officer who will decide if there is a prima facie case for plagiarism and/or collusion which would warrant a plagiarism and/or collusion meeting at the School level. If a Turnitin report has been used as evidence to show that plagiarism has been committed, then this should be referenced within the Plagiarism Officer's hard-copy report and should form part of the documentation for the plagiarism meeting at the School level.

3 Initial screening of evidence

The Plagiarism Officer will review the evidence as presented by the marker or module organiser and classify as being of Low, Medium or High Level. For cases classified as a Low Level, the Plagiarism Officer will proceed as stated in B5.2(1) below and may recommend an action plan setting out an appropriate learning package without having a formal plagiarism meeting at School level. The student may either accept the action plan and learning package as offered by the Plagiarism Officer or can request that a formal School plagiarism meeting take place. In all other cases a Plagiarism meeting should be held.

4 Meeting to Discuss Plagiarism/Collusion in the School

If a formal School plagiarism/collusion meeting is held, the student will be summoned to a meeting to discuss the alleged plagiarism and/or collusion for the module(s) in question, which may also include other work being recalled as set out under B2, by the meeting's Secretary who shall normally be a senior member of administrative staff in the relevant Office within the Learning & Teaching Service. The summons shall be delivered to the student's pigeon-hole in his or her Faculty/School of Studies and/or University e-mail address at least five working days (Saturdays, Sundays and University closure days excepted) before the meeting. Alternative arrangements will be made for correspondence with students who are on placement or other permitted absence.

If a student wishes to appear and can prove that s/he is unable to appear at the School Plagiarism meeting for good reason by notifying the Secretary of the Plagiarism meeting at the earliest convenience, the meeting may be rescheduled or alternative arrangements made, e.g. by correspondence or video-conferencing facilities. If a student fails to appear at the meeting without providing good reason, the meeting shall proceed in the student's absence.

The meeting shall be chaired by the School Plagiarism Officer. If the School Plagiarism Officer is also the module organiser/internal marker, then a Plagiarism Officer from another School will act as chair. The Plagiarism meeting should establish the relevant facts. The internal marker who has identified the alleged plagiarism and/or collusion shall also be in attendance. The student may, if s/he wishes, be accompanied by a friend who may present the student's case, but in all cases the student themselves shall answer any questions raised in the meeting. The friend shall not be a member of UEA academic staff or a member of the legal profession. If in the opinion of the Plagiarism Officer, the friend is or appears to be, interfering with the proper conduct of the business of the meeting, the Plagiarism Officer has the right to i) adjourn the meeting and reconvene it at a later date and ii) to exclude that friend from attending the reconvened meeting. A record of the meeting shall be taken by the Secretary to the School Plagiarism/Collusion meeting.

The meeting shall proceed in the following order:

- (1) the marker who has initially raised the suspicion of plagiarism and/or collusion sets out his/her concerns;
- (2) the Plagiarism Officer shall then provide the student with an opportunity to respond to the concerns of the marker;
- (3) the Plagiarism Officer may ask further questions
- (4) the student will be advised of the outcome of the meeting in writing within five working days.

5 Outcomes

- 5.1 In the event that the student **admits** plagiarism or collusion, the Plagiarism Officer shall determine the seriousness of the offence and classify it as a Low Level, Medium Level, or High Level offence using the grid below as guidance. When making a judgement on the level of the offence, the Plagiarism Officer shall apply the principle of “balance of probability”, weighing-up all the evidence and reaching a judgement on what was the most probable scenario to allow classification of the plagiarism/collusion offence to be set at the appropriate level. The grid should be interpreted with reference to the associated guidance notes which can be viewed at:

<https://www.uea.ac.uk/ltqo/taughtprogs/plagiarism/Guidance+Note>

In cases where the School Plagiarism Officer is aware of any mitigating circumstances which should be taken into consideration before the outcome of the Plagiarism meeting is conveyed in writing to the student he/she should bring these to the attention of the Head of the School. Where a Head of School (or Head of School designate) believes that the mitigating circumstances should reduce the level of an offence from a High Level offence to a Medium Level offence or from a Medium Level offence to a Low Level offence, the Chair of the Student Senate Discipline Committee should be consulted for a view to ensure consistency of practice across UEA.

Plagiarism/Collusion Classification Guide

Criteria	Low Level	Medium Level	High Level
Experience of student <i>Relates to the expectation that the student should be aware of the seriousness of their actions</i>	For example: student unaware, e.g.: first year student or first semester of course; cultural considerations and/or mitigating circumstances; no previous plagiarism detected	For example: student likely to be aware, e.g.: students after first semester of course but before final year; after completion of known instruction(s) in avoiding plagiarism and/or collusion; previous level 1 case detected	For example: student is aware, e.g.: experienced student; where student is expected to fully understand and exhibit academic integrity; previous level 2 or level 3 case detected
Nature of plagiarism <i>Nature of the</i>	For example: poor academic practice, e.g.:	For example: bad academic practice, e.g.:	For example: clear breach of acceptable academic

<p><i>breach of academic scholarship</i></p>	<p>referencing or attribution of work is not clear or is inadequate, or has numerous errors; inappropriate paraphrasing</p>	<p>copying segments of other students' assignment work; copying fragments of material from websites, book or other publications</p>	<p>practice, e.g.: fabricated references or citations; whole works copied (from students or other sources published or unpublished); commissioning and submission of work which has been purchased or solicited from another individual or source</p>
<p>Extent of plagiarism/collusion <i>Amount or proportion of assessment item or work that is not the students' own; Extent to which the assessment process is compromised</i></p>	<p>For example: minor, e.g.: few sentences, one paragraph, one (minor) graphic; few elements of computer source code; few descriptive elements</p>	<p>For example: extensive, e.g.: two to three paragraphs or a segment of the work; segments of computer source code</p>	<p>For example: substantial, e.g.: significant appropriation of ideas, artistic work or substantial elements of the argument/conclusion multiple pages or sections of text or graphics copied</p>
<p>Intent of student to cheat by way of plagiarism <i>Intentionality of the act of plagiarism and intent to cheat by way of plagiarism</i></p>	<p>For example: plagiarism and/or collusion appears unintentional or due to lack of knowledge; intent to cheat is unlikely or doubtful</p>	<p>For example: plagiarism appears as the result of negligence; intent to cheat is probable but cannot clearly be substantiated;</p>	<p>For example: plagiarism appears deliberate and planned; actions contravene clear instructions; intent to cheat is evident and can be substantiated</p>

5.2 After classification of the offence, the following outcomes should apply:

(1) LOW LEVEL (technical breach to be dealt with educatively):

The Plagiarism Officer shall not impose a marks penalty and the student may be given the opportunity of resubmitting the work as if for the first time to be submitted not later than 5 days after the adjudication of the decision regardless of whether it is a summative or formative assessment item. In order to help the student avoid plagiarism and/or collusion in future assignments, the student shall be offered support which may be in the form of an appropriate learning support package.

(2) MEDIUM LEVEL:

(a) Plagiarism

The Marker shall record a mark for a summative item of assessment which assesses the work as far as possible excluding the plagiarised material. This ensures that the recorded mark reflects the student's own work. As no marks deduction is possible for a formative item of assessment, the offence should be recorded as a Medium level plagiarism offence for future reference.

(b) Collusion (Summative and formative work)

(i) Summative work

Where two or more students have worked together and it is impossible to determine who has produced the work, the pieces of work will be marked as they stand and the highest mark of those awarded will be divided equally among the number of students deemed to have colluded.

If, however, it is clear that one of the students has produced most/all of the work and lent it to the others, the Plagiarism Officer shall record marks to take account of the effort put in by the student who produced the work, and the lack of effort from the other students who colluded.

(ii) Formative work

If possible determine which student has produced which proportion of the work, note the proportion of work attributable to each student and record this as a Medium

¹ UEA kindly acknowledges permission from Curtin University, Australia to use its table of determining the seriousness of plagiarism as published in: "Dealing with Student Plagiarism: Guidelines for Staff 2007"

level plagiarism offence for future reference.

(3) HIGH LEVEL:

(a) Serial plagiarism or collusion

(i) Summative work only

Where a High Level offence is judged to be the result of serial plagiarism, (i.e. there have been previous instances of Medium Level plagiarism as set out below under 3 (a) (ii), the work should be marked in accordance with a Medium Level offence.

(ii) Formative and summative work

A formal judgement of serial plagiarism cannot result from previous work being identified as plagiarised without plagiarism in this work having been drawn formally to the student's attention either via the procedure as stipulated under paragraph B3 of this policy or via a formal School plagiarism meeting (i.e. serial plagiarism cannot result from work having been recalled in accordance with B2, but in which plagiarism had not been identified at the time). An example of a serial offence being classed as a High Level offence will normally be at least three previous occasions of Medium Level offences relating to formative and/or summative work all of which would need to have been formally drawn to the student's attention via a School plagiarism meeting.

(b) High Level– not serial plagiarism or collusion

Where the offence is serious and has been identified as a High Level offence, but there is no evidence of serial plagiarism committed by the student, the Plagiarism Officer shall record a mark of 0% for summative work and record the offence as a High level offence for both summative and formative work.

(c) Disciplinary action

After identifying a High Level offence as described under paragraphs 5.2 (3) (a) or 5.2 (3) (b) above, the Head of School in which the student is registered shall refer the case to the Senate Student Discipline Committee for further action regardless of whether the work is of a summative or formative nature.

(d) Fitness to Practise Panel

Where programmes lead to professional qualifications, a Head of School may refer a student with a confirmed High Level offence to a Fitness to Practise Panel.

- 5.3 The documentation relating to the (i) record of the meeting, (ii) the assessed work in question and (iii) the findings and (iv) for summative work the mark recorded by the Plagiarism Officer, shall be retained on the student's file in the appropriate Office within the Learning & Teaching Service (this shall be the case even where a student is found not to have plagiarised or colluded).

The student will be given a copy of the documentation relating to (i)–(iv) above. The Secretary of the meeting shall also inform the Head of School in which the student is registered by sending the documentation relating to points (iii) and (iv) to her/him.

The Secretary to the meeting shall ensure that for summative work the correct mark is recorded for the student to be forwarded for confirmation to the relevant Board of Examiners. The Board of Examiners may be made aware by the Chair of the Board of any marks recorded reflecting plagiarism and/or collusion. It is however the responsibility of the Chair of the Board of Examiners to ensure that any decisions on progression, classification or the award of academic qualifications are not further influenced by a student having plagiarised and/or colluded.

- 5.4 Where the student has decided not to proceed to a formal School plagiarism meeting when a Low Level offence has been identified by the Plagiarism Officer as described under paragraph B3 of this policy, the student will receive a paper copy of the action plan/learning package as identified by the Plagiarism Officer. A copy of the action plan/learning package shall be retained for the duration of the student's period of registration on the student's file in the appropriate Office within the Learning and Teaching Service.

6. Denial

- 6.1 In the event that a student denies that he or she is guilty of plagiarism or collusion, the following outcomes are possible:

(1) if the Plagiarism Officer at the original Plagiarism meeting is persuaded by the student's account of events and agrees that no offence has been committed, no further action will be taken but a record of the meeting and its outcomes will be retained on the student's file for the duration of their period of registration;

(2) if, on the basis of the evidence collected, the Plagiarism Officer is not persuaded by the student's account of events, the matter shall be reported to a Faculty Plagiarism and Collusion Committee comprising the Faculty Associate Dean (Learning, Teaching and Quality) as Chair and one other academic representative from the Faculty who should not be a member of the School offering the modules or a member of the School in which the student is registered (should this be different)

(2)(i) The Faculty Plagiarism and Collusion Committee shall

be from within the Faculty to which the School offering the module(s) in question belongs. There shall be a Secretary to the Faculty Plagiarism and Collusion Committee who shall normally be a senior member of administrative staff in the relevant Office within the Learning and Teaching Service.

(2) (ii) The Plagiarism Officer shall submit:

- (i) the record of the meeting with the student and
- (ii) the assessed work in question and
- (iii) their findings (the judgement of whether an offence has been committed and the level of the offence)

6.2 The Faculty Plagiarism and Collusion Committee shall normally consider only the evidence presented at the School plagiarism meeting and shall not normally invite the student to attend the meeting of the committee. The Committee may seek further information and evidence from the student and/or the School/Plagiarism Officer as it shall deem appropriate. The Faculty Plagiarism and Collusion Committee shall consider whether the student has committed an offence of plagiarism and/or collusion. In making its decision, the Faculty Plagiarism and Collusion Committee shall be guided by the principles laid out in the grid under 5.1 above. A record of the meeting shall be taken by the Secretary to the Faculty Plagiarism and Collusion Committee.

6.3 If the Faculty Plagiarism and Collusion Committee decide that the student has committed plagiarism and/or collusion, it shall take action in accordance with paragraph 5.2 above. The Secretary shall inform the marker concerned, the Plagiarism Officer of the School offering the module(s) and the Head of the School in which the student is registered.

6.4 If the student is deemed not to have plagiarised and/or colluded, the Faculty Plagiarism and Collusion Committee shall inform the marker, the Plagiarism Officer of the School offering the module(s) and the Head of the School in which the student is registered that no offence was committed and that no further action shall be taken.

6.5 The Secretary of the Faculty Plagiarism and Collusion Committee shall notify in writing the findings to the student in respect of the outcome of the meeting of the Faculty Plagiarism and Collusion Committee. A record of the outcomes of the meeting shall nonetheless be retained on the student's file for the duration of their period of registration.

7 Appeals

A student may appeal against the **ruling** (i.e. the decision of guilt) of the Faculty Plagiarism and Collusion Committee under paragraph 6.3 as to whether plagiarism and/or collusion has occurred. A student who wishes to appeal should do so in writing to the Director of University Services (Learning and Teaching) within 10 working days of the notification of the

outcome, setting out the grounds for the appeal. The appeal shall be heard at Stage 2 of the *Academic Appeals Procedure*.

A student may appeal against a **penalty** (i.e. the level and consequences) applied under paragraphs 5.2 (section B) or 6.3 (section B) and should do so in writing to the Head of School offering the module within 10 working days of the notification of the outcome, setting out the grounds for the appeal. The appeal shall be heard at Stage 1 of the *Academic Appeals Procedure*. (Paragraph 12.2 of the Academic Appeals Procedure sets out how, if an appeal against a penalty applied under paragraph B5.2 or B6.2 of this Plagiarism and Collusion policy is accepted, the reconsideration of the work in question to be carried out.)

A student may not appeal against the ruling of the School Plagiarism Officer. Where a student denies that plagiarism or collusion has occurred, the matter shall be automatically referred to the Faculty Plagiarism and Collusion Committee.

Where a student is appealing against a ruling made by the Faculty Plagiarism and Collusion Committee or against a penalty imposed by the Plagiarism Officer such an appeal will be considered before any potential referral by the Head of School to the Senate Discipline Committee.

8 Reporting Plagiarism

School Plagiarism Officers shall complete an annual report to the Learning and Teaching Committee of Senate which should include equality monitoring data and a summary of any use of TURNITIN by the School for the year of the report.