Plagiarism Procedure

This procedure should be followed whenever plagiarism is suspected.

Definition

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, computer program, dance, picture etc.

The source of that work may be:

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- Unpublished work e.g. teacher's notes, class handouts, another learner's work (used with or without permission) and material from the Internet.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

Text Comparison Software

Plagiarism primarily takes one of two forms:

i) students misuse of information from the web or other sources, where they 'cut and paste' sections of text from these resources directly into their assignments without acknowledging the original source; and

ii) students working too closely with one or more individuals to help solve and/or answer an assessed task or question, resulting in the production of a joint answer or solution (whether intentionally or not) to gain an unfair advantage over others in their assignments. This form of plagiarism is called collusion.

To check students are working in a fair and academically appropriate manner, Cardiff & Vale College uses text comparison software to detect potential cases of plagiarism in work that is submitted for assessment. This is:

- Turnitin which carries out the equivalent of an internet search, looks for matches between the text included in a piece of work submitted by a student with all forms of information and resources publicly available on the internet. Turnitin is used to check for cases of direct copying, and/or not properly referencing various types of source materials. It can also be used to compare each student's assignments with the module materials and other commonly used or provided references. For each assignment submitted to Turnitin, an 'originality' report is produced showing the percentage of text that matches specific websites.

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What happens?

Depending on the questions being asked and the format of the submitted answer, some level of matching between scripts and with other sources is expected. For example, you may have used information obtained from other sites and/or scientific papers as a direct quote to support your answer or illustrate a particular point (making sure that you have referenced this in the appropriate and expected manner). Likewise, you will probably use terms and phrases, which can be described as 'common knowledge' within your particular subject area and level of study, which do not need to be referenced, but are likely to arise in a similar format on a number of sites and other students' answers.

The course team will take all such matters into account when reviewing the reports from Turnitin and deciding whether a student has plagiarised. If there are concerns:

- the course team may decide that some students need further guidance or support to develop their academic writing skills; or
- the course team may decide that what the reports are showing is more serious, in which case they will refer the matter to the Dean of Quality Improvement for consideration.

Data Protection

When using these systems, Cardiff & Vale College will not submit any personal details about you, although it is likely your work will have your PI number on it from which you can be identified. Furthermore, your work will not be stored on any external system and so will not be accessible to anyone outside of Cardiff & Vale College.

Expected Practice

Any quotation from the published or unpublished works of other persons must be clearly identified as such by being placed inside quotation marks, and learners should identify their sources as accurately and fully as possible.

A series of short quotations from several different sources, should be clearly identified as such, or it will constitute plagiarism just as much as does a single unacknowledged long quotation from a single source.

If a learner summarises another person's ideas, judgements, figures, software or diagrams, a reference to that person in the text must be made and the work referred to must be included in the bibliography.

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Dealing with suspected plagiarism where the source cannot be identified

Occasionally, a marker may be faced with a piece of work that is suspected to be substantially plagiarised, but where the source cannot be identified. In such circumstances, there may be a suspicion that someone else has written the essay.

The recommended course is that the student be given notice that they will be asked academic questions on the submitted essay.

The questions should be prepared in advance and the answers to the questions should be recorded in writing. These answers may provide simple evidence that the student has not written the work in question through the inability to answer questions on the substance of the work.

Managing Suspected Plagiarism

Stage 1

Whoever suspects that a learner has committed an act of plagiarism should contact the relevant Head of Department.

The Head of Department will then carry out an initial interview with the learner.

If the learner maintains that he/she has not engaged in an act of plagiarism, then in conjunction with his/her teacher, the Head of Department may require the following:

- The learner to participate in oral questioning on the work where plagiarism is suspected.
- The learner's work being submitted to an electronic plagiarism detection tool administrated by the Head of Department.
- Other as suggested by the awarding body.

Stage 2

If as a result of investigation the Head of Department is satisfied that on the balance of probabilities the learner has committed an act of plagiarism then the Dean of Quality Improvement shall consider whether the plagiarism constitutes a minor, intermediate or major act of plagiarism and apply an appropriate sanction.

This procedure will link to the Learner Relationship Management procedure. Any awarding body sanctions will supersede those outlined below.

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Possible Outcomes

Minor acts of plagiarism can be dealt with by the Head of Department and 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.

Plagiarism	**Sanction**
The amount of plagiarism does not exceed 10% of the total assignment: Sanction 1.	Discussion with the Head of Department, course tutor and/or tutor and learner. Learner resubmits plagiarised work for full marks and no formal record is kept. This should be recorded as a Notice of Concern
The learner has committed a previous act(s) of plagiarism, or the plagiarism exceeds 10% of the total assignment.	Discussion with Head of Department, course tutor and/or tutor and learner. Learner resubmits plagiarised work for full marks with a record being kept. OR Resubmission of work for full marks using either a different task or new work. OR Re-marking of the original plagiarised work with the plagiarised section removed and the marks reflecting the remaining work. This should be recorded as a First Behaviour Warning
The learner has committed numerous previous plagiarism offences over the period of their course of study.	Resubmission of new work for a reduced mark. OR Resubmission of new work for a pass grade only. OR Zero marks/fail grade for the piece of work with no resubmission. This should be recorded as a First Behaviour Warning.

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.

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Intermediate acts of plagiarism can be dealt with by the Head of Department 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.

Plagiarism	**Sanction**
The total amount of plagiarism does not exceed 10% of the total assignment, or the plagiarism advisor accepts that that there are mitigating circumstances in relation to a particular learner.	Discussion with Head of Department, course tutor and/or tutor and learner. Learner resubmits plagiarised work for full marks with a record being kept. OR Resubmission of work for full marks using either a different task or new work. OR Re-marking of the original plagiarised work with the plagiarised section removed and the marks reflecting the remaining work. This should be recorded as a First Behaviour Warning
The learner has committed a previous act(s) of plagiarism, or the plagiarism exceeds 10% of the total assignment.	Resubmission of new work for a reduced mark. OR Resubmission of new work for a pass grade only. OR Zero marks/fail grade for the piece of work with no resubmission. This should be recorded as a Final Behaviour Warning
The learner has been found guilty of numerous previous plagiarism offences over the period of their course of study.	Failure of the whole unit (where applicable). OR Failure of the academic programme for that academic year.

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Major Acts of plagiarism are dealt with by the Dean of Quality Improvement and 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.

Plagiarism	**Sanction**
The Dean of Quality Improvement is satisfied that the learner has established mitigating circumstances in relation to this plagiarism.	Resubmission of new work for a reduced mark. OR Resubmission of new work for a pass grade only. OR Zero marks/fail grade for the piece of work with no resubmission. This should be recorded as a Final Behaviour Warning
There are no mitigating circumstances.	Failure of the whole unit (where applicable). OR Failure of the academic programme for that academic year. OR 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.

Stage 3 - Appeals

Appeals against the decision made by the Head of Department or Dean of Quality Improvement will be subject to the normal college appeals procedures in relation to learner discipline.

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.

There is a Welsh version of this document available.

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Approved by: Quality Standards Board	**Executive Lead:** Deputy Principal Curriculum and Standards
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