

Revised Code of Practice on Plagiarism

3. Detection of Plagiarism (continued from original Code – no changes to this point)

3.4 If a member of Staff considers that a Registered Student's work contains plagiarism they should notify the School Plagiarism Officer immediately. If an External Examiner considers that a Registered Student's work contains plagiarism, the External Examiner should notify either the Head of School (for taught modules) or the Internal Examiner (for research projects or theses) immediately.

3.5 Where plagiarism is suspected in a project or thesis submitted by a Registered Student on a postgraduate research Programme of Study, examination of the project or thesis must be suspended until it is established whether plagiarism has occurred or not.

4 The Plagiarism Meeting

4.1 The Registered Student must be invited by way of a 'Notification Letter' (which may be sent by post and/or email) to a Plagiarism Meeting. The Notification Letter must:

4.1.1 state that the Registered Student is suspected of plagiarism;

4.1.2 set out a summary of the suspected plagiarism which must be sufficient to enable the Registered Student to understand the allegation of plagiarism and which may but which need not include a Turnitin report;

4.1.3 set out the Registered Student's right to be accompanied by a 'friend' defined as meaning a member of the staff of the University or a registered student of the University or a Sabbatical Officer of the Guild of Students; and

4.1.4 set out the Registered Student's right to respond in writing to the allegation of plagiarism within 5 working days of receipt (or pro rata reasonable adjustment if abroad) which may include a written explanation and should indicate whether the Registered Student agrees to attend the Plagiarism Meeting.

4.2 A Plagiarism Meeting should normally be convened within not less than 5 working days and not more than 10 working days from the date of the Notification Letter.

4.3 The Registered Student should be encouraged to attend the Plagiarism Meeting. Where a Registered Student does not wish or is unable to attend the School must use an appropriate means of communicating with the Registered Student in lieu of the Plagiarism Meeting, which may include exchanges of emails, in order to obtain a detailed response to the allegation of plagiarism.

4.4 If a Registered Student does not respond to a Notification Letter in accordance with paragraph 4.1.4 of this Code of Practice or fails to attend a Plagiarism Meeting having indicated that he or she will do so, the member(s) of staff shall proceed with the Plagiarism Meeting in the absence of the Registered Student. A written record of the decision to proceed in the absence of the Registered Student should be made, setting out the grounds on which this decision was taken.

4.5 If a Registered Student is unable to attend a Plagiarism Meeting the Head of School or nominee or the Plagiarism Officer may, if satisfied that the Registered Student is unable to attend for good reason, decide:

- 4.5.1 that any decision on progression or degree outcome must be suspended until the Registered Student is available to attend; or
- 4.5.2 with the consent of the Registered Student, that the matter may proceed by appropriate means of communicating with the Registered Student in lieu of the Plagiarism Meeting; or
- 4.5.3 with the consent of the Registered Student and when the Head of School or nominee/School Plagiarism Officer is satisfied that the Registered Student has submitted a full and detailed written response, that the Plagiarism Meeting may proceed in the absence of the Registered Student.
- 4.6 The Plagiarism Meeting should normally be conducted jointly by two members of Academic Staff appointed by the Head of School (which will normally include the Plagiarism Officer) although Plagiarism Meetings may proceed with one member of staff (normally the Plagiarism Officer) present. During the Plagiarism Meeting, the reasons for suspecting that plagiarism has taken place should be given and the Registered Student should be invited to explain his or her position and, if necessary, to refute the allegation.
- 4.7 The member(s) of staff conducting the Plagiarism Meeting will consider the allegation and the Registered Student's response and will reach a decision as to whether plagiarism has been found to have taken place. If plagiarism is found to have occurred the member(s) of staff will proceed to assign a category of plagiarism as set out below and, if appropriate, to apply a penalty.
- 4.8 The Plagiarism Meeting may be adjourned to another date if further evidence or clarification is required.
- 4.9 If it is found that no plagiarism has occurred the Registered Student will be informed accordingly and no further action will be taken.
- 4.10 The Registered Student may be advised of the decision and any penalty during the Plagiarism Meeting unless the member(s) of staff require more time for consideration in which case the decision may be issued in writing within 5 working days of the meeting.
- 4.11 Whether or not the Registered Student is advised of the decision during the Plagiarism Meeting, within 5 working days of the Plagiarism Meeting the Registered Student will be sent an 'Outcome Letter' confirming the outcome of the Plagiarism Meeting, the reasoning behind the decision and right of review and shall enclose a copy of the notes of the Plagiarism Meeting. The notes of the Plagiarism Meeting should be retained on the Registered Student's file by the School.

5 Categorisation of Plagiarism

- 5.1 When plagiarism has been found to have occurred the member(s) of staff conducting the Plagiarism Meeting must assign the plagiarism to one of three categories set out below. A number of factors will be taken into account in this categorisation, including:
- 5.2.1 the academic level of the Registered Student;
- 5.2.2 the proportion of the assignment affected; and
- 5.2.3 any previous recorded instance of plagiarism by that Registered Student;
- 5.2.4 whether there is a reasonable expectation that the Registered Student should have learned appropriate referencing skills and received sufficient guidance with regard to the attribution of source material.

5.2 Serious Plagiarism

Serious plagiarism is an attempt by a Registered Student to deceive the marker by passing off as the Registered Student's own work, work which the Registered Student has not done. This may include the fabrication of data, whereby a Registered Student claims to have undertaken work to produce submitted data when they have not actually done the work at all. Serious plagiarism may also be judged to apply in a case where a Registered Student suspected of moderate plagiarism (see 5.2.2) has previously been found to have engaged in moderate plagiarism. This category includes any occurrence of reasonably extensive quantities of un-attributed or incorrectly attributed copying. It would also include any use of essay material obtained from a website or other source that involve a commercial transaction and the production of academic work by a third party for gain, in all cases regardless of actual extent. There is also an expectation that plagiarism located within the research element of a research or a taught postgraduate programme would be placed within this category, unless the extent of the plagiarism was considered to be minimal.

5.3 Moderate Plagiarism

Moderate plagiarism is plagiarism that arises from failing to follow guidelines on what is regarded as a Registered Student's own work. The determination that a suspected case of plagiarism is moderate plagiarism should therefore normally be informed by the suspected plagiarism being most likely to derive from ignoring conventions and acceptable academic practice. This category includes limited collusion, auto plagiarism (submission of an assignment identical or closely related to one submitted at an earlier point and for which a mark has been received) or a moderate inclusion of un-attributed or incorrectly attributed copying. It also includes repeated low-level plagiarism. It is likely cases of plagiarism at Levels I and H will generally be at least moderate plagiarism.

5.4 Low-level Plagiarism

Low-level plagiarism is plagiarism through lack of following academic conventions by a Registered Student who may not yet be familiar with the requirements of University level assessment. This category would normally be restricted to Level F or C studies and would include any first offence amounting to inadequate referencing, inclusion of a small amount of paraphrasing or very small amounts of un-attributed or incorrectly attributed copying.

6. Consequences of a finding that Plagiarism has occurred

6.1 Finding of Low Level Plagiarism:

Where low level plagiarism has been found to have occurred, the member(s) of staff must ensure the Registered Student is aware of what he or she has done wrong and has been given appropriate instruction on how to avoid the problem in future. A record should be kept by the School and the piece of work may be required to be resubmitted, but no further measures shall be taken.

6.2 Finding of Moderate Plagiarism:

Where moderate plagiarism has been found to have occurred one of the penalties set out in paragraph 7 of this Code of Practice will be applied.

6.3 Finding of Serious Plagiarism:

When serious plagiarism has been found to have occurred, the case will become a student conduct case under section 8 of the Regulations. The matter must be treated as a non-summary case and the procedures in non-summary hearings set out in the Code of Practice on Misconduct and Fitness to Practise Committee shall be followed. The member of Academic Staff designated the School Investigating Officer may act as the Investigating Officer and/or Case Presenter for the purpose of the student conduct case.

7. Penalties for Moderate Plagiarism

7.1 Where moderate plagiarism has been found to have occurred, one of the following penalties shall be applied:

7.1.1 For Registered Students on taught programmes of study, or Registered Students on research-based programmes of study, where moderate plagiarism has been found to have occurred on a taught module taken as part of that programme:

(a) Resubmission of the assignment in question, with the resultant mark being capped at the lowest possible grade that would signify a minimum pass within the relevant pass structure.

(b) The mark obtained in the assessment may be downwardly adjusted to an appropriate level (reflecting the actual contribution of the Registered Student), including zero with no opportunity to resit.

(c) The mark obtained in the assessment may be downwardly adjusted to an appropriate level (reflecting the actual contribution of the Registered Student), including zero. Should this lead to failure of the module, a further attempt at passing the module shall be permitted, with the mark awarded capped at the pass mark.

(d) The mark obtained in the module may be downwardly adjusted to an appropriate level (reflecting the actual contribution of the Registered Student), including zero with no opportunity of re-assessment permitted.

7.2 For Registered Students on research-based programmes of study, where moderate plagiarism has been found to have occurred within the research element, the Registered Student may resubmit his or her dissertation/thesis for the original qualification with the offending sections/data removed within one month of the Plagiarism Meeting. No further work should be undertaken.

8. Review

8.1 A Registered Student may request a review of a decision made at a Plagiarism Meeting on one or more of the following grounds:

(a) That there has been an administrative irregularity or procedural failure;

(b) That new evidence is available which was unknown to the Registered Student at the time of the Plagiarism Meeting; or

(c) That the categorisation assigned or penalty applied is disproportionate.

8.2 The Registered Student may request a review of:

(a) The finding that plagiarism has occurred; and/or

(b) The assignment of a category to the plagiarism; and/or

(c) The penalty applied to a finding of moderate plagiarism.

8.3 The request must be made in writing and must be received by the Head of School or nominee (who shall not be the Plagiarism Officer) within 5 working days of the date of the Outcome Letter.

8.4 The request must clearly set out the matters the Registered Student wishes to be reviewed and the reasons for the request.

8.5 The Head of School or nominee will decide whether the Registered Student has established prima facie grounds for a review based on the matters presented by the Registered Student in the request. The Head of School or nominee will decide either that:

- (a) the review should be rejected on the basis that no prima facie grounds for review have been presented;
- (b) the review should proceed.

8.6 If the Head of School or nominee decides that the review will proceed, it will take the form of a fresh Plagiarism Meeting. It shall be conducted by 2 members of academic staff who did not attend the Plagiarism Meeting and who have had no previous involvement in the case and shall proceed in accordance with paragraphs 4.6 – 4.11 of this Code of Practice save that the Registered Student will not be entitled to request a further review of the decision reached.

8.7 A 'Review Outcome Letter' will be sent (by post or email) to the Registered Student within 5 working days of the review meeting and will set out the outcome of the review and the reasoning behind the decision.

9. Group-based Work or Study and Collusion

9.1 Where an allegation of plagiarism involves group-based work or study, or involves suspected collusion, and it is unclear where responsibility for the suspected plagiarism lies, a Plagiarism Meeting should be held individually with each Registered Student. It may be necessary to conduct the meeting with some or all members of the group of Registered Students involved with the suspected plagiarism present. Having investigated the circumstances, the School would expect then to be in a position to be able to differentiate between members of the group's involvement in the plagiarism and to be able to avoid the imposition of a group penalty.

9.2 In cases of collusion, where a copy of a Registered Student's work is being shown to another Registered Student as part of the evidence for suspected plagiarism, care must be taken to make such copies anonymous wherever possible.