

Plagiarism and Collusion

'Plagiarism occurs when a student misrepresents, as his/her own work, the work, written or otherwise, of any other person (including another student) or of any institution. Examples of forms of plagiarism include¹:

- the verbatim (word for word) copying of another's work without appropriate and correctly presented acknowledgement;
- the close paraphrasing of another's work by simply changing a few words or altering the order of presentation, without appropriate and correctly presented acknowledgement;
- unacknowledged quotation of phrases from another's work;
- the deliberate and detailed presentation of another's concept as one's own.'

All types of work submitted by students are covered by this definition, including, written work, diagrams, designs, engineering drawings and pictures.

'Collusion occurs when, unless with official approval (e.g. in the case of group projects), two or more students consciously collaborate in the preparation and production of work which is ultimately submitted by each in an identical, or substantially similar, form and/or is represented by each to be the product of his or her individual efforts. Collusion also occurs where there is unauthorised co-operation between a student and another person in the preparation and production of work which is presented as the student's own. (ibid)'

Plagiarism and collusion are particularly difficult issues for Engineering disciplines such as Materials, in which team work and interaction with industry are the norm. Most university departments now insist that a statement is attached to every piece of work submitted by a student, asserting that the submission is the work of the student alone. They also encourage proper acknowledgement and referencing of ideas, concepts and statements which originated with others. However there will always be difficulties at the interfaces between individual and team outputs, and with the appropriate attribution of the origin of ideas.



It is sometimes asserted that students from outside the UK find it difficult to cope with our attitudes towards plagiarism. Some international students come from academic backgrounds where plagiarism is not considered wrong or may be considered a mark of respect to the original author. Some students may not feel confident enough to integrate the views of the original author in their work and so lift wording directly from the text.

Students can also plagiarise without being aware that they are quoting another source. Students may repeat ideas from a textbook or a lecture without realizing that they are doing so, and therefore do not reference the source. Hence, early advice on the nature of plagiarism and training in appropriate methods of citation and referencing is important to help students avoid committing plagiarism¹.

Resources

There is a good survey of the key issues on the Oxford Brookes web site at http://www.jisc.ac.uk/uploaded_documents/brookes.pdf entitled 'Plagiarism – A Good Practice Guide' by Jude Carroll and Jon Appleton, Oxford Brookes University/JISC, May 2001.

Also available online, the Joint Information Systems Committee, JISC, provide a Plagiarism Advisory Service at <http://www.jiscpas.ac.uk/>. This service provides generic advice and guidance on all aspects of plagiarism prevention and detection to institutions, academics and students.



Higher Education Academy Resources

The Higher Education Academy's (HEA) mission is to help institutions, discipline groups and all staff to provide the best possible learning experience for their students. Resources are available through the website at <http://www.heacademy.ac.uk> which provide practical information including papers, case studies and current projects in the area of plagiarism. Some useful resources are:

- Work in the HEA includes reviews of the advice given by various institutions and agencies on how to specify assignments that are less prone to plagiarism, including plagiarism detection with a significant deterrent effect, available at http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/assets/York/documents/resources/resourcedatabase/id426_plagiarism_prevention_deterrence_detection.pdf
- The HEA is also coordinating the 'Student Diversity and Academic Writing Project' to develop and disseminate the necessary resources to deal with plagiarism amongst international students. The outcomes of this

project will also be potentially relevant to international students in many disciplines. Further details are available at <http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/projects/detail/projectfinder/projects/pf2256>

- Managing Assessment: student and staff perspectives is a practical tool developed by the Managing Effective Student Assessment (MESA) special interest group. It consists of a set of case studies on assessment-related topics including plagiarism and aims to give senior management, educational developers, teachers and support staff insight into assessment issues along with ideas and tools to help them improve student learning and reduce the burden on staff. It is available at <http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/assets/York/documents/ourwork/tla/a.MESA.pdf>

How can we help?

UKCME can help by:

- Putting you in contact with one or more staff at UK universities who have encountered and considered plagiarism and collusion;
- Running an awareness-raising workshop in your Department, Faculty, School or College to provide advice on the nature of plagiarism and how to help both home and international students avoid committing plagiarism.

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¹ Guidelines for dealing with plagiarism and collusion, Liverpool University at http://www.liv.ac.uk/tqsd/pol_strat_cop/plag_pol_final_17_Feb05.doc