

## **Policy on Plagiarism and Collusion**

## **Policy for Partners**

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# Policy on Plagiarism and Collusion

## 1 Introduction

The University and institution take 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 of East Anglia'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 module or degree, temporary suspension or permanent expulsion from further study at the institution. 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 institution.

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:

- 2.1.1 The reproduction, without acknowledgement, of work (including the work of fellow students), published or unpublished, either verbatim or in close paraphrase.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.
- 2.1.2 Poor academic practice which is unintentional.
- 2.1.3 The reproduction, without acknowledgement, of a student's own previously submitted work, sometimes referred to as self-plagiarism.

Plagiarism 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 a student and at least one other person. 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*" and "*Policy on the Use of Proof Readers*". Some actions may be considered as either

plagiarism or collusion: a student copying another's work with permission is an example of both. For plagiarism, only the submitting student has committed an offence, whilst for collusion both are guilty of misconduct. Care needs to be taken in deciding the form of the offence.

Collusion can take the following forms:

- 2.2.1 The conspiring by two or more students to produce a piece of work together in an unauthorised manner with the intention that at least one student passes it off as their own work.
- 2.2.2 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.
- 2.2.3 Unauthorised co-operation between a student and another person in the preparation and production of work which is presented as the student's own.
- 2.2.4 The commissioning and submission of work as the student's own, where the student has purchased or solicited a third party to produce work on the student's behalf. Third parties can include a friend, family member, fellow student or academic member of staff, or a commercial provider. This is also known as Contract Cheating, and includes both paid and unpaid services.

### **2.3 Obligations of students**

- 2.3.1 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, 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.
- 2.3.2 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. 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.

### **2.4 Graduates**

Where plagiarism and/or collusion is found to have occurred in the work of a graduate, the matter shall be referred by the member(s) of staff who has/have discovered the offence to the Plagiarism Officer.

The Senate of the University 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.

## **2.5 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 undergraduate and postgraduate modules for all elements of assessment including online examinations.

## **2.6 Online examinations**

In addition to understanding that plagiarism and collusion constitute misconduct students are required to familiarise themselves with the expected behaviour required in examinations.

# **3 Procedures for Dealing with Suspected Cases of Plagiarism and/or Collusion**

## **3.1 Plagiarism Officer**

The Plagiarism Officer is responsible for investigation into cases of suspected plagiarism and/or collusion in accordance with paragraphs 3, 4 and 5 below.

## **3.2 Collection of Evidence**

If a marker suspects plagiarism and/or collusion, they will continue to mark the work as if not plagiarised, keeping a separate copy of the annotated work as evidence. They will gather the necessary evidence to allow the Plagiarism Officer to pursue the appropriate investigation. All online examination submissions may automatically be checked by text matching software that will detect any similarity between different students' submissions and to detect similarity with web based sources. Wherever possible or appropriate, the main evidence for plagiarism and/or collusion will be the original source(s) that has/have been drawn on/copied from. In cases identified as Medium or High Level, the Plagiarism Officer may also review other work completed by the student, which will allow them 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 Plagiarism Officer 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 institution 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 timescale 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, They 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/Collusion Meeting. If a Turnitin report has been used as evidence to show that plagiarism and/or collusion 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/Collusion Meeting.

### **3.3 Initial screening of evidence**

The Plagiarism Officer shall review the evidence as presented by the marker and classify it as being of Low, Medium or High Level. For cases classified as Low Level, the Plagiarism Officer will proceed as stated in 3.6.1 below and may recommend an action plan setting out an appropriate learning package (may include referral to the relevant Programme or Course Leader without having a formal Plagiarism/Collusion Meeting). The student may either accept the action plan and learning package as offered by the Plagiarism Officer or can request that a formal Plagiarism/Collusion Meeting takes place. In all other cases, a formal Plagiarism/Collusion Meeting should be held.

### **3.4 Formal Plagiarism/Collusion Meeting**

Where a formal Plagiarism/Collusion Meeting is held, the case shall be considered by a panel consisting of the Plagiarism Officer, and another suitable qualified academic staff member hereafter referred to as the Panel. The Marker will act as the presenter and put forward the case to the members. 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 3.2 by the meeting's Secretary, who shall normally be a senior member of administrative staff. In addition to the summons, the student will be provided with a copy of the annotated work and the Turnitin report, if appropriate. The student will also be advised within the summons to bring along any supporting evidence to assist with the investigation (documents normally in hard copy format), including those relating to any mitigating circumstances. The summons shall be delivered to the student's e-mail address and home address at least five working days (Saturdays, Sundays and institution closure days excepted) before the meeting. Alternative arrangements will be made for correspondence with students who are on a permitted absence.

If a student wishes to appear and can prove that s/he is unable to appear at the Plagiarism/Collusion meeting for good reason by notifying the Secretary of the Plagiarism/Collusion meeting at the earliest convenience, the meeting may be rescheduled or alternative arrangements made, e.g. virtually or by correspondence. 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 Plagiarism Officer. If the Plagiarism Officer is also the marker, another suitably qualified academic staff member shall act as Chair. The Plagiarism/Collusion Meeting should establish the relevant facts. The marker who has identified the alleged plagiarism and/or collusion shall also be in attendance. The student may, if they wish, bring an accompanying person, who shall not take an active part in the proceedings. In all cases, the student themselves shall answer any questions raised in the meeting. The accompanying person shall not be a member of academic staff. If, in the opinion of the Panel, the accompanying person is, or appears to be, interfering with the proper conduct of the business of the meeting, the Panel has the right to i) adjourn the meeting and reconvene it at a later date, and ii) exclude that person from attending the reconvened meeting. A record of the meeting shall be taken by the Secretary to the Plagiarism/Collusion Meeting.

The meeting shall proceed in the following order:

- 1.1 the marker who has initially raised the suspicion of

- plagiarism/collusion presents their concerns but is not part of the outcome decision-making process;
- 1.2 the Panel shall then provide the student with an opportunity to respond to the concerns of the marker;
  - 1.3 the Panel may ask further questions;
  - 1.4 the Panel shall advise the student that, where plagiarism/collusion is denied, the case shall be referred to a formal interview with the Head of HE or equivalent and the student will be able to present their case at that time;
  - 1.5 the Panel shall ask the student if there are any mitigating circumstances that they would like to raise in the meeting. In cases where the Panel is aware of mitigating circumstances these should be taken into consideration when determining an outcome.
  - 1.6 the marker, student and accompanying person shall then leave the meeting;
  - 1.7 the Panel shall decide on the suitable outcome;
  - 1.8 the student shall be advised of the outcome of the meeting in writing within five working days;
  - 1.9 the student can reconsider their plea within five working days of the formal meeting;

### 3.5 Outcomes

In the event that the student admits plagiarism or collusion, the Panel 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 Panel 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.

<b>PLAGIARISM AND COLLUSION CLASSIFICATION GUIDE</b>			
	<b>Classification</b>		
<b>Criterion</b>	<b>Low Level</b>	<b>Medium Level</b>	<b>High Level</b>
<p><b>Experience of student</b>  <i>Considers the extent to which the institution can expect that the student is aware of the requirements and expectations of academic writing, the nature of plagiarism and collusion and the seriousness of their</i></p>	<p><b>Indicator:</b>                      The institution cannot rely on an assumption that the student is familiar with the requirements and expectations of academic writing</p>	<p><b>Indicator:</b>                      The institution is entitled to assume familiarity with the requirements and expectations of academic writing and the rules governing plagiarism and collusion but the student may be uncertain as to their precise nature and application</p>	<p><b>Indicator:</b>                      The institution is entitled to assume understanding of the requirements and expectations of academic writing and knowledge of the regulations governing plagiarism and collusion</p>

	<p><b>For example:</b></p> <p>The student is unaware; has not been instructed, advised or informed about plagiarism and collusion;</p> <p>No instructions re group work were made known;</p> <p>Student(s) is/are in first year or first semester of their course;</p> <p>The student(s) is/are undertaking their first module at the institution;</p> <p>No previous record of plagiarism or collusion.</p>	<p><b>For example:</b></p> <p>The student has received guidance or instruction about plagiarism and collusion but has not fully understood or demonstrated its application;</p> <p>Instructions re group work are ambiguous, incomplete or unclear;</p> <p>Student(s) is/are in the second or later semester/term of their course;</p> <p>Student has transferred in from another course/institution;</p> <p>Student has completed known instruction(s) in avoiding plagiarism and/or collusion;</p> <p>Previous low level case detected.</p>	<p><b>For example:</b></p> <p>The student is aware, e.g. has undertaken instruction in plagiarism and collusion;</p> <p>Clear instructions re group work have been given but have been ignored;</p> <p>Student(s) has spent 2 years or more in UK HEI or similar;</p> <p>Student(s) has already been awarded an undergraduate degree or has completed 50% of modules towards completion of the degree;</p> <p>Previous medium or high level case detected.</p>
	<b>Classification</b>		
<b>Criterion</b>	<b>Low Level</b>	<b>Medium Level</b>	<b>High Level</b>



<p><b>Nature of plagiarism</b></p> <p><i>Nature of the breach of academic scholarship</i></p>	<p><b>Indicator:</b></p> <p>Poor academic practice;</p> <p><b><u>Plagiarism</u></b></p> <p><b>For example:</b></p> <p>Suspect text is incidental to fundamental argument and is largely descriptive rather than analytical or supportive of argument or conclusions;</p> <p>Referencing or attribution of work is not clear or is inadequate, or has numerous errors;</p> <p>Inappropriate paraphrasing.</p> <p><b><u>Collusion</u></b></p> <p><b>For example:</b></p> <p>Misunderstanding of what constitutes collective activity;</p> <p>Lending own work to another student in the belief that it will not be copied;</p>	<p><b>Indicator:</b></p> <p>Bad academic practice;</p> <p><b><u>Plagiarism</u></b></p> <p><b>For example:</b></p> <p>Suspect text contributes to or supports analysis, argument or conclusions but student's own work can be identified and is of greater or at least comparable significance;</p> <p>Failure to reference and/or cite adequately;</p> <p>Copying phrases, sentences or paragraphs of material from websites, book or other publications;</p> <p>Writing style improved beyond proof-reading limits.</p> <p><b><u>Collusion</u></b></p> <p><b>For example:</b></p> <p>Copying segments of other students' assignment work;</p> <p>Lending own work to another student in the knowledge that it may be copied.</p>	<p><b>Indicator:</b></p> <p>Clear breach of acceptable academic practice;</p> <p><b><u>Plagiarism</u></b></p> <p><b>For example:</b></p> <p>Suspect text contributes the sole or greater part of analysis argument or conclusion and the student's own work cannot readily be discerned;</p> <p>Fabricated references or citations;</p> <p>Whole work is copied (from other students without their knowledge or consent or from other sources published or unpublished);</p> <p>Writing style improved far beyond proof-reading limits;</p> <p><b><u>Collusion</u></b></p> <p><b>For example:</b></p> <p>Whole/substantial parts of the work is copied from other students without their knowledge/consent;</p> <p>The sharing of work or content in the knowledge that it will be copied;</p> <p>Deliberate concealment of the collective activity.</p>
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	Classification		
Criterion	Low Level	Medium Level	High Level
<p><b>Extent of plagiarism/ collusion</b></p> <p><i>Amount or proportion of assessment item or work that is not the students' own;</i></p> <p><i>Extent to which the assessment process is compromised;</i></p> <p><i>Note: in determining the volume of work in question, it is likely that reliance will be placed on a Turnitin or similar plagiarism detection report.</i></p>	<p><b>Indicator:</b></p> <p>Suspect text constitutes less than 5% by volume of the whole.</p> <p><b>For non-text content:</b></p> <p>One (minor) graphic; A few elements of computer source code; Simple mathematical or scientific proof/algorithm/ formulae.</p>	<p><b>Indicator:</b></p> <p>Suspect text constitutes more than 5% but less than 20% by volume of the whole;</p> <p><b>For non-text content:</b></p> <p>More than one graphic; Several lines or segments of computer source code; Several or major/more complex mathematical or scientific proof/algorithm/ formulae.</p>	<p><b>Indicator:</b></p> <p>Suspect text constitutes more than 20% by volume of the whole; There is significant appropriation of ideas, artistic work or elements of the argument/conclusion.</p> <p><b>For non-text content:</b></p> <p>Multiple graphics copied; Little or no own work can be identified with certainty ; Complex, advanced proofs or algorithms have been copied.</p>
	Classification		
Criterion	Low Level	Medium Level	High Level
<p><b>Intent of student to cheat by way of plagiarism or collusion</b></p> <p><i>Intentionality of the act of plagiarism and/or collusion and intent to cheat by way of plagiarism and/or collusion</i></p>	<p><b>For example:</b></p> <p>On the balance of probability, intent to cheat is unlikely or doubtful;</p> <p>The evidence indicates that the act of plagiarism and/or collusion was unintentional or due to lack of knowledge.</p>	<p><b>For example:</b></p> <p>On the balance of probability, intent to cheat is probable but cannot clearly be substantiated;</p> <p>The evidence indicates that the act of plagiarism or collusion was as a result of negligence or carelessness;</p> <p>The student(s) will be aware of the nature of the offence of plagiarism or collusion but has/have disregarded or ignored it.</p>	<p><b>For example:</b></p> <p>On the balance of probability, intent to cheat is evidence and can be substantiated;</p> <p>The evidence indicates that the act of plagiarism and/or collusion was deliberate and planned;</p> <p>The student(s) will be aware of the nature of the offence of plagiarism or collusion but have deliberately attempted to conceal the activity.</p>

In cases where the Panel is aware of any mitigating circumstances which should be taken into consideration before the outcome of the Plagiarism/Collusion meeting is conveyed in writing to the student, the Plagiarism Officer should bring these to the attention of the Head of HE or equivalent. Where the Head of HE (or equivalent) believes that the mitigating circumstances should reduce the level of an offence from High Level to Medium Level or from Medium Level to Low Level, the UEA Academic Director of Partnerships should be consulted for a view to ensure consistency of practice with UEA.

**3.6** After classification of the offence, the following outcomes should apply:

**3.6.1 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 five 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.

**3.6.2 MEDIUM LEVEL**

**3.6.2.1 Plagiarism:**

This applies to any incident of plagiarism which occurs at a point where the institution is confident that the student has received sufficient Plagiarism and Collusion training. 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.

**3.6.2.2 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, the Plagiarism Officer shall 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 Level collusion offence for future reference.

### **3.6.3 HIGH LEVEL**

#### **3.6.3.1 Serial plagiarism or collusion**

This applies to any incident of plagiarism and/or collusion which occurs at a point where the School is confident that the student has received sufficient Plagiarism and Collusion training.

##### **(i) Summative work only**

Where a High Level offence is judged to be the result of serial plagiarism and/or collusion, i.e. there have been previous instances of Medium Level plagiarism and/or collusion as set out below, the Plagiarism Officer shall not record a mark of for summative work and record the offence as a High level offence for both summative and formative work.

##### **(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 this policy or via a formal Plagiarism/Collusion Meeting (i.e. serial plagiarism cannot result from work having been recalled in accordance with the Policy 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 Plagiarism/Collusion meeting.

#### **3.6.3.2 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/collusion committed by the student, the Plagiarism Officer shall not record a mark of for summative work and record the offence as a High level offence for both summative and formative work.

#### **3.6.3.3 Disciplinary action**

After identifying a High Level offence as described under paragraphs 3.6.3.1 or 3.6.3.2 above, the case should be referred to formal interview with the Head of HE or equivalent for further action, regardless of whether the work is of a summative or formative nature.

The documentation relating to the (i) record of the meeting, (ii) the assessed work in question, (iii) the findings and (iv) for summative work, the mark recorded by the Plagiarism Officer, shall be retained on the student's file (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 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.

3.7 Where the student has decided not to proceed to a formal Plagiarism/Collusion Meeting when a Low Level offence has been identified by the Plagiarism Officer, as described under 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.

#### **4 Denial**

In the event that a student denies that he or she is guilty of plagiarism or collusion after a Medium or High Level case of plagiarism or collusion has been identified by the Plagiarism Officer, the case is referred formal interview with the Head of HE or equivalent for further action.

#### **5 Appeals**

A student may appeal against a **penalty** (i.e. the level and consequences) applied and should do so in writing to the within ten 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 and Complaints Procedure*.

#### **6 Reporting Plagiarism**

Where the student is a member of a professional body, any proven dishonest academic work such as plagiarism or collusion may be considered to breach professional code of conduct the institution may inform the student's relevant professional body and the student's line manager/employer.

**These regulations apply to UEA validated Awards at the following institutions:**

SMB Group (Brooksby Melton College)

Colchester Institute

City College Norwich

Mountview Academy of Theatre Arts

The Royal Marsden School

South Essex College

West Suffolk College