



PLAGIARISM: NOTES OF GUIDANCE FOR MARKERS

This document provides guidance to staff on the appropriate response to varying types and extents of possible plagiarism.

Regulations on Student Discipline C1.2 define plagiarism as: 'where a student uses, without acknowledgement, the work of other people and presents it as their own which may give an unfair advantage over others. **Both reckless disregard of expected academic practice regarding plagiarism and deliberate plagiarism may be construed as offences.**'

Regulation C1.5 states: "It is the responsibility of members of staff to refer cases of suspected academic offences to the Academic Offences Officer of the School in which the student is enrolled, or the person designated by the Senate in the case of a student enrolled on an inter-School or collaborative programme.

A member of staff must exercise judgement when the apparent offence is limited in extent, or may arise out of ignorance of the academic culture within UK HE institutions (e.g. school leavers submitting their first coursework, international MSc students). In such cases it will normally be most appropriate to take the opportunity of normal assessment procedures to penalise what amounts to poor technique and to offer formative feedback to the student to prevent further error. It is important that such feedback must attribute the mark penalty for this sort of error to poor technique rather than to plagiarism (which is by definition a disciplinary matter). However it may be appropriate to mention the risk of being accused of plagiarism in future if the error is repeated. This would be construed by the University as an 'informal warning' and should be notified to the Academic Offences Officer in the appropriate School.

A member of staff may consider that plagiarism has occurred, for example because of the extent of copying, attempts to conceal copying, or because the student is well versed in what is required (e.g. a second year student). Then it is necessary to refer the case to the Academic Offences Officer in the appropriate School, who will make a final judgement on whether there is a

case to answer. Thus students accused of plagiarism have their work seen by at least two members of staff before a charge is brought.

Summary

Some common indicators of incorrect referencing	Some common indicators of plagiarism
Accidental	Deliberate
Arising from lack of understanding of UK HE requirements	Showing reckless disregard for expected standard of referencing guidelines/advice
Small number of 'problem' references	Greater number of 'problem' areas (suggesting systematic approach)
No substantial advantage gained from 'problem' references	Substantial advantage gained from 'problematic' references (suggesting deliberate offence)
No attempt to conceal	Attempt to conceal (suggesting deliberate offence)
First assessment	Subsequent assessment (suggesting deliberate offence)
Action in the event of poor referencing	Action in the event of plagiarism
Reduce the mark given to the assignment by an appropriate amount due to poor referencing. Ensure student has appropriate information to ensure the problem is not repeated. Students should be warned if they are 'in danger of committing plagiarism' (informal warning – report to School assessment offences officer) BUT plagiarism has not been committed in this assignment.	Mark as if plagiarism has not been committed. Refer work immediately to School Assessment Offences Officer indicating that marker suspects offence of plagiarism has been committed. Students may be told plagiarism is suspected, and the work has been referred to the School Assessment Offences Officer who will contact them separately.

Senate has agreed a Tariff of Penalties which will be applied by the Academic Offences Officer. If the student chooses or fails to respond to a written charge (after reasonable attempts have been made to contact him or her) or if the alleged offence is of high severity the case will be referred to the University Disciplinary Board which has a range of more severe penalties at its disposal.

GS Last updated September 2013