

PROCEDURE 2.8 Plagiarism					
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Procedure Issued : April 2014

Procedure Owner : Principal / CEO

- ❖ This procedure is shared with our students and/or can be obtained:
 - on our website <https://docklandsacademy.co.uk/policies-and-procedures>,
 - on the desktops of all computers in the library on the top floor,
 - by emailing us at info@docklandsacademy.co.uk in the case of remote learning.
- ❖ Also, our students are informed about the related main aspects of the procedure in the Student Handbooks, Induction Seminar and Learning Agreement.
- ❖ The procedure is reviewed and monitored on a regular basis for currency and fitness as part of our Annual 1.9 Policy and Procedures Review.

1. Introduction

1.1 Docklands Academy London, (The Academy), is committed to fair assessment procedures for all students.

1.2 Academic misconduct threatens fair assessment, which in itself can then disadvantage all students and challenge the quality of awards made by the Academy. Plagiarism is one aspect of academic misconduct, but it is also a subject which raises important learning and teaching issues. The Academy takes plagiarism seriously, but also acknowledges that in a complex learning climate, an educational driver is more important and more effective than a merely corrective or punitive approach.

1.3 The Academy is therefore committed to:

- enabling students to avoid plagiarism through a programme of support and education at programme level aligned with Academy's policy and procedures,
- ensuring that staff have a shared understanding of policy and procedure, and implementing this consistently across programmes,

1.4 Awareness of plagiarism and effective means to avoid it in scholarly work is an important element of higher education. The acquisition of higher-level skills is progressive. The approach to educating students, particularly in levels 4 and 5, should therefore be student-friendly, for example in language and exemplar material.

1.5 Inevitably, cases of plagiarism occurring at more advanced levels of study will tend to attract a more penalty-driven approach, but the Academy wish still to emphasize the importance of developmental training and education at every level.

1.6 Wherever possible, assessment strategies across a programme of study should be designed in such a way as to minimize the opportunity for plagiarism.



2. Definitions

2.1 Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the act of presenting the material, ideas, and arguments of other person/persons as one's own. To copy sentences, phrases or even particular striking expressions without acknowledgement, in a manner which may deceive the reader as to the source, is plagiarism; to paraphrase, in a manner which may deceive the reader, is likewise plagiarism. Plagiarism is identified in the composition of the work submitted by a student for assessment.

2.2 Copying

Incorporating into an assessment material from books, journals, the web, the work of another student or any other source, without acknowledgement and submitting it in verbatim or paraphrased form as one's own, is an act of plagiarism.

2.3 Collusion

Collusion through the submission of work for assessment that purports to be the student's own work but is in fact jointly written with another student or other students, is an act of plagiarism.

2.4 Duplication

Duplication of material means the inclusion in coursework (including essays, projects, reports, dissertations and theses) of a significant amount of material that is identical or substantially similar to material which has already been submitted by the student for the same or any other programme or course at this Academy or elsewhere.

2.5 Text boxes

The use of text boxes in work submitted to an anti-plagiarism software is undetectable therefore, as of 1st October 2019, assessors should not accept work that makes use of text boxes. The work should be returned to the student to so the text boxes can be removed and resubmitted in the correct format. Assessors should be wary of text boxes which have clear / white borders which may not be immediately seen when first looking at a document.

2.6 Essay mills

Contract cheating is where a student submits a work as their own but has in fact, had a third party complete the work for them. This may include third companies, who have developed over the past few years and can be disguised as 'student support' or 'tuition' that complete the work for the student entirely. Contract cheating or essay mills are not limited to paying a company to complete the set work but could also be a friend or family member. There may not be a financial relationship involved at all. Essay mills or contract cheating is an act of plagiarism.

3. Signposting

- 3.1** To support consistency across the Academy, all assignment coversheets will carry the following statement:
- 3.2** *The Academy is committed to fair assessment procedures for all students. Our plagiarism procedure is designed to help you in understanding what plagiarism is and how to avoid it in your work. To this end, please read your handbook carefully.*
- 3.3** Students will also be required to sign declarations on coversheets. No student will be able to demonstrate that help was not offered in clearly indicated ways.
- 3.4** Staff will be asked periodically to review with students the importance of both the statement and the declaration and to demonstrate this at programme level by an appropriate record and possibly by minutes from a staff-student liaison meeting.



4. Institutional Support in Educating Students to Avoid Plagiarism

4.1 Appropriate support, information and educational materials are crucial, for example in programme handbooks, web-based support, classroom teaching and tutorials. Personal tutoring and workshops can also be used to identify students' concerns at an early stage.

4.2 Clarity of guidance for students

Clear guidance on what constitutes plagiarism and strategies to avoid it will be provided as generic text for use in handbooks.

4.3 Developing academic skills

4.3.1 The avoidance of plagiarism is part of education for effective academic writing and necessarily continues at all levels. Learning to write in a formal register, whilst ensuring that the work of others is acknowledged, takes time to learn and should be seen as a progression which may take time and skills to refine.

4.3.2 Education and formative development of students' understanding of plagiarism should be emphasized at all phases, particularly pre-detection, but also in the detection and investigation phase, so that no student can convincingly argue that help was not available and given in the key stages of their submission of work, or staff response to it.

4.4 Educational resources

In addition to any local resources, a central suite of educational resources will be available to students and tutors via a web interface. Items from the suite may be downloaded by tutors and embedded within modules. These will show an increasing level of sophistication to support student progression and staff expectations.

4.5 Referencing/citing correctly

The Academy has agreed that the common standards for citation and referencing will be the Harvard system.

5. Detection of plagiarism and follow-up investigation

5.1 The Academy has invested in comprehensive *Turnitin* plagiarism detection software and will use this to manage all detected instances of plagiarism. *Turnitin* reports can be accessed by academic staff when they are assessing student work.

5.2 Actions taken in the event of a case of suspected plagiarism

5.2.1 Students who are suspected of plagiarism will have the relevant work and personal circumstances investigated according to the procedures which set out several possible courses of action and are designed to ensure that all students in the Academy are treated consistently. The procedures are also designed to ensure that all investigations into suspected plagiarism are carried out fairly, thoroughly and impartially. This is achieved by the convening of individual meetings and/or independent panels of academic staff (***Plagiarism Filtering Panel*** and/or ***Academic Misconduct Panel***) to investigate the alleged plagiarism and, where appropriate, award a suitable penalty. It is fundamental, as part of natural justice, that students facing charges of plagiarism must (i) understand properly and fully the case being brought against them, and (ii) be allowed to meet the related panel in order to put their case.

5.2.2 The Academy recognises that plagiarism offences are not all equally serious; they vary from quite minor cases to those that are extremely serious. If a student offends a second time, this is more serious by virtue of it being a subsequent offence. Initially, offences are divided into two broad categories, minor and serious. The procedures allow for investigation by a ***Plagiarism Filtering Panel*** and/or ***a relevant academic staff*** for minor offences or by an ***Academic Misconduct Panel*** for repeated ones. The Academy



permits students to contest the decision of a panel if they feel it was unjust and have their case reconsidered by a higher level by the **Academic and Advisory Committee**.

5.3 Investigations

5.3.1 After the students submit their assignments, first, **Plagiarism Filtering Panel**, consisting of Academic Head, Head of Academic Administration and the Academic Quality Coordinator, makes an initial review of the assignments submitted in terms of Similarity Rate Index via *Turnitin* software. Following this, the assignments which pass muster the first investigation are sent to the markers to be evaluated. In the case of a plagiarism detection by the Panel at this stage or after the assignments allocated to the markers by a marker, the following stages are put into action respectively.

5.3.2 For the Stages 1-2-3, before reaching a decision about whether there is plagiarism or not and declaring this to the student, the case is thoroughly investigated by the member(s) of academic staff involved under the supervision of the Academic Head. For the Stages 4 and 5, Academic Misconduct Panel is held in order to come to a decision. Finally, all of the plagiarism cases, the related actions taken and especially the decision reports of the Academic Misconduct Panel are reviewed and approved or vice versa by the Exam Board. If the Exam Board disapproves a decision, the student is provided relevant compensation.

5.3.3 Stage 1

5.3.3.1 In the **first** event of suspected plagiarism:

- If it is a minor plagiarism attempt, the student is given the right to update the related section of their assignment and submit again, (such as short patches of similarity scattered through the work)
- If it is a major plagiarism attempt, the student is Referred but awarded with resubmission right with a cap, where they can receive PASS grade utmost. (such as long bulks of similarity throughout the work)

5.3.3.2 Also, in either case:

- the member of academic staff (preferably their lecturer) concerned:
 - informs the Academic Head about the case,
 - discusses the matter with the student,
 - fills an **Academic Misconduct Report Form** of the academic irregularity accompanied with supporting evidence, (*Appendix 1 DAL Procedure 2.1 Academic Misconduct*)
 - asks the student to sign the form,
 - warns the student with the **1st Letter of Reprimand**, in which the student is also explicitly informed about what the next penalty will be if they attempt plagiarism again,
 - produces two copies of the letter; one to be presented to the student within 10 working days and the other to be filed in the student's file to be accessed if any other cases occur.
- the student is provided relevant refreshment training and assistance to avoid future plagiarism issues.

5.3.4 Stage 2

In the **second** event of suspected plagiarism, regardless of being minor or major attempt:

- the student:
 - is directly Referred but awarded with resubmission right with a cap, where they can receive PASS grade utmost.



- the member of academic staff concerned informs the Academic Head about the case, who:
 - interviews the student,
 - fills an **Academic Misconduct Report Form** of the academic irregularity accompanied with supporting evidence,
 - asks the student to sign the form,
 - warns the student with the **2nd Letter of Reprimand**, in which the student is also explicitly informed about the penalty and what the next step will be if they attempt plagiarism again,
 - produces two copies of the letter; one to be presented to the student within 10 working days and the other to be filed in the student's file to be accessed if any other cases occur.

5.3.5 Stage 3

In the **third** event of suspected plagiarism, regardless of being minor or major attempt:

- the student directly *fails for the related unit* and *is not* awarded with resubmission right.
- the member of academic staff concerned informs the Academic Head about the case, who:
 - interviews the student,
 - fills the **Academic Misconduct Report Form** of the academic irregularity accompanied with supporting evidence,
 - asks the student to sign the form,
 - warns the student with the **Final Letter of Reprimand**, in which the student is explicitly informed about the penalty and what the next step will be if they attempt plagiarism again,
 - produces two copies of the letter; one to be presented to the student within 10 working days and the other to be filed in the student's file to be accessed if any other cases occur.

5.3.6 Stage 4 (Decision to be presented to the Assessment Board)

In the **fourth** event of suspected plagiarism, regardless of being minor or major attempt, the academic misconduct procedure for repeated and/or serious cases is activated.

- The academic staff having realized the repetition of plagiarism fills in the **Academic Misconduct Report Form**,
- informs the Academic Head, who calls for **Academic Misconduct Panel**, consisting of Academic Head, Head of Academic Administration, Academic Quality Coordinator, and a Senior Lecturer nominated by the Academic Head.
- copies of the **Academic Misconduct Panel Outcome Report** are issued: one to be presented to the student and one to be kept in the student's file for further investigations.

6. Standardized guidance for handbooks

- 6.1 The Academy is committed to fair assessment procedures for all students. These procedures are designed to help in understanding what plagiarism is and how to avoid it. To this end, students are advised to read their handbook carefully.
- 6.2 Academic misconduct threatens fair assessment, which in itself can disadvantage all students and challenge the quality of awards made by the Academy. The Academy is committed to enabling students to avoid plagiarism through a programme of support and education at programme level. In addition to educating for the avoidance of plagiarism, the Academy is committed to detecting and acting when a case of plagiarism is suspected.



6.3 The avoidance of plagiarism is part of education for effective academic writing and necessarily continues at all levels. Learning to write in a formal register, whilst ensuring that the work of others is acknowledged, takes time to learn and should be seen as a progression which may take considerable time to refine.

7. Obligations upon students to prevent plagiarism

7.1 In order to distinguish between their own work and that of others, students should ensure that:

- phrases, sentences and passages taken verbatim from a published work are placed in quotation marks/grades, or indented, and the source is acknowledged,
- paraphrasing, ideas and arguments taken from a published work are clearly referenced,
- the inclusion of any other intellectual property, for example, illustrations, diagrams, proofs, designs, computer software, in written text or project work is clearly identified and acknowledged,
- the inclusion of material from electronic sources is carefully referenced and only web- sites freely accessible to the marker should be used,
- the use of the work of others is not of such volume or importance to the submitted work as to compromise ownership of the work,
- no significant collaboration has occurred where there is a requirement to submit the work as an individual piece. Where work is done collaboratively and a single piece of work is submitted, the collaboration must be permitted by the programme director and it must be declared on the work,
- they have not presented previously or simultaneously for assessment in the Academy or elsewhere, any work, or any substantial amount of such work, that is submitted.

7.2 Citations, references, and bibliographies

7.2.1 When writing a report or an essay, it is important that each time someone else's ideas from a book, article, TV programme, newspaper report or conference proceeding are used, readers are informed immediately in the text. This is called a 'citation'. The citation links to a reference usually provided as a bibliography at the end of the work (failure to provide a reference may expose a student to charges of plagiarism).

7.2.2 Citations are normally used to:

- give support for arguments used in essays or dossiers, and/or
- acknowledge a writer who has influenced the writer's thinking.

7.2.3 References provide details for the reader of:

- the source of particular ideas and models
- the source of quotations
- the source of statistics or other data
- the sources of diagrams, pictures or charts

7.2.4 Expectations of standards of citation and referencing should conform to those agreed institutionally. The Academy has adopted the Harvard style of bibliographical citation and referencing.

7.2.5 The Academy recognises that some disciplines require alternative systems, e.g. to meet professional standards at a national level. Where this is the case, guidance will be given on using the alternative system equivalent to that provided for the Academy standard.



8. Obligations upon staff to minimise plagiarism

8.1 Designing out plagiarism in assessment

It is important that assessment practices allow for the designing out of plagiarism, that is, to create and to implement specific programme and course assessment initiatives which are known to reduce the incidence of inadvertent and/or deliberate plagiaristic activity. Some of these strategies involve placing emphasis on certain kinds of well-known summative assessment techniques, for example terminal examinations, but there is a range of possibilities in designing assessment tools which are both formative and plagiarism resistant. In addition to specific assessment tools, courses and programmes can also factor in specific anti-plagiarism procedures. A combination of tools and procedures might include the following):

8.2 Reworking assessments on a continuing and randomised basis

This ensures that questions are not recycled. The editing out of 'essay banks' is also useful in this area. Cosmetic changes to assignment drafts should be avoided, as they are easily spotted by students. This technique should apply not only to essays and analogous coursework examples, but also to practical assignments, reports, reviews and case-studies.

8.3 Avoiding obvious links between learning outcomes and essay setting

Assessors should make analytic tasks more three-dimensional and use information-gathering more widely in assessments.

8.4 Individualising tasks whenever consistent with good pedagogy.

The use of poster work is particularly helpful in this area, as is tutorial-based essay-title planning. Some tutors may find that abandoning 'set' essay titles on the one hand and disallowing wholly student-created titles on the other, helps in resisting the temptation to plagiarise, as well as providing other assessment benefits, e.g., tailoring tasks to specific skills and interests of students.

8.5 Building in specific plagiarism-moderation procedures

The principle of checking assignments should be embedded within programme or course documentation and made clear in handbooks and other information material.

8.6 Using specific assessment tools

Assessors should use methods which are known to reduce the incidence of plagiarism, for example academic reviews and information searches, posters and annotated bibliographies. Variety in assessments tends to reduce plagiarism.

8.7 Creating a collaborative research environment

This will tend to reduce plagiarism through peer pressure, for example, group written projects moderated by peers and/or tutors. The challenge of peer evaluation tends to reduce plagiaristic activity, as does group assessment.

9. Related Documents

9.1 Policies

- 2 Academic Management
- 5 Student Support, Engagement and Learning Resources
- 7 Information

9.2 Procedures

- 1.5 Equal Opportunities
- 1.7 Data Protection
- 1.9 Review and Revision of Policies and Procedures
- 2.1 Academic Misconduct
- 2.2 Academic Regulations
- 2.4 Appeals
- 2.5 Complaints
- 2.6 Self-Assessment and Annual Programme Monitoring



- 2.7 Program Design and Approval
- 2.9 Academic References for Students
- 2.10 Special Circumstances Affecting Study
- 2.11 Pearson Registration
- 2.12 Contingency and Adverse Effects
- 2.13 Access and Participation Statement
- 3.6 Internal Verification
- 4.4 Attendance Monitoring
- 4.6 Student Induction
- 4.7 Student Disciplinary
- 5.1 Student Code of Conduct
- 5.3 Equality, Diversity and Special Needs
- 7.1 Review and Sign off PI
- 7.4 HE Public Information

9.3 Student Terms and Conditions

9.4 External Reference Points

- **UK Quality Code Advice & Guidance – Concerns, Complaints and Appeals** at <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/quality-code/advice-and-guidance/concerns-complaints-and-appeals>
- **UK Quality Code Advice & Guidance – Assessment** at <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/quality-code/advice-and-guidance/assessment>
- **Higher Education Code of Governance** (Committee of University Chairs, December 2014) at <https://www.universitychairs.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/CUC-HE-Code-of-Governance-publication-final.pdf>
- **Association of Employment and Learning Providers (AELP) principles of Good Governance for Independent Training Providers** at <https://www.aelp.org.uk/media/2595/code-of-governance-final-sept-2018.pdf>
- **OIA The Good Practice Framework: Handling Students Complaints and Academic Appeals** at <https://www.oiahe.org.uk/media/1859/oia-good-practice-framework.pdf>
- **OIA Disciplinary Procedures** at <https://www.oiahe.org.uk/media/2045/good-practice-framework-disciplinary-procedures-section.pdf>
- **UKCISA Code of Ethics** at <https://www.ukcisa.org.uk/Membership/Codes-of-practice/Code-of-ethics>
- **Equality Act – 2010** at <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents>



Appendix 1

Reprimand Letter Template

Student Name :
Programme :
Student ID :
Subject : (1st) Letter of Reprimand for plagiarism
Date :

Dear _____,

DAL Plagiarism Filtering Panel made a thorough review of your assignment of Unit _____ (number & title) submitted on _____ (date) in terms of Similarity Rate Index via Turnitin software and came to an agreement that your assignment has a Similarity Index of _____% overall, of which _____% is similarity with the work of another student.

Even if this is inadvertent, as well as relatively innocuous in terms of the originality or unexceptional nature of the content, this cannot be marked as a submission. As this is your first attempt for plagiarism, you will be Referred, but I take the view, subject to further opinion, that you should:

- read our DAL Procedure 2.8 Plagiarism carefully again,
- attend a tutorial session with your lecturer Nicola Molony to be provided relevant refreshment training and assistance to avoid future plagiarism issues, and
- remove plagiarism and rewrite your assignment again, making sure to paraphrase thoroughly, or preferably use all your own words until _____ (date).

This letter serves as an official Reprimand regarding your unacceptable action and to inform you that academic dishonesty is not acceptable behaviour at Docklands Academy London. In the second event of suspected plagiarism, regardless of being minor or major attempt:

- it may be treated as a matter of Academic Misconduct, and
- you will be _____ (type of action taken against).

A copy of this letter will be retained/filed in your student file while you are still enrolled or intermitted in any course and may be accessed if any other cases occur. Should you be charged in the future with academic misconduct under the Academy's Plagiarism Procedure (2.8), a copy of this letter would be produced in evidence.

You have the right to contest the decision of the panel if you feel it is unjust and have your case reconsidered by the Academic and Advisory Committee.

I hope that you would become more creative and avoid plagiarism in your future academic works.

Ercan ERKUS
Academic Head