CCS TRAINING

PLAGIARISM

IN EXAMINATIONS

POLICY

PLAGIARISM IN EXAMINATIONS

Introduction

1. This guidance if for the staff o centres who have the responsibility for supervising and/or marking student's coursework/projects.

2. When an analysis of the statistics for malpractice in examinations was conducted it showed that the incidence of plagiarism is rising.

3. The effects of the rise in plagiarism is to call into question the integrity of examinations generally and the assessment components such as coursework/projects where plagiarism can be undertaken more easily. If these methods are to remain as a viable assessment method it is the duty of all who are preparing students for examinations as well as any others who have an interest in the setting, marking and administration of examinations to do whatever is required to address and reverse the rise of plagiarism.

Defining plagiarism

1. In order to define the steps that can be taken to counter this practice there is a need to be clear on what plagiarism is

2. Although there are many definitions of plagiarism what they all have in common is the idea that it is "*taking someone else's intellectual effort and presenting it as one's own".* Another definition is "*The failure to acknowledge sources properly and/or the submission of another person's work as if it were the students own".*

Why is plagiarism on the increase

1. Some of the reasons why student plagiarise
   a) Lack of awareness of the regulations
   b) Failure to allow sufficient time to produce the work
   c) Pressures on students to succeed
   d) Student's lack of skills in utilising source material and/or acknowledgement of the use of material
   e) The availability of information provided on the internet and how easy this can be copied
   f) Students are encouraged to use the internet freely as a source of information along with the students failure to keep their own records of web pages accessed
   g) Increase in the number of websites which provide coursework – these either facilitate the swapping of students work or for a fee provide finished pieces of coursework
   h) The appeal of either a quick solution or short cut to some students especially when the task has no appeal
   i) Students plagiarise the work of others when they assume that their production of coursework during a course will not be monitored by the centre

How can plagiarism be prevented?

Whether you are a tutor/trainer or an assessor entering students with a coursework/project unit for a qualification you accept the obligation to authenticate the work that has been submitted for assessment. You have to confirm that the work that has been produced is that of the student concerned. You should not accept work that has not been produced by the student. If prior to the signing of a declaration of authentication plagiarism is discovered the incident does not have to be report to CCS TRAINING but should be dealt with in accordance with the centre's own procedures and policies.

To prevent plagiarism you should

A. Ensure that the induction process for new students includes an awareness of plagiarism
B. Every new student understands CCS TRAINING's policy on plagiarism and the content of these, the meaning of plagiarism and what penalties could be applied
C. Ensure all students understand the significance of their signature on the declaration of authentication form and that they understand this declaration and followed the requirements of the coursework/project for the qualification
D. You may ask students to sign a form that they have understood the meaning of plagiarism, it is forbidden in your learning contract
E. That it is made clear to students what is and what is not acceptable in respect of plagiarism and the sources utilised which should include the use of websites. To state internet is not acceptable or to state Library instead of the title of the book, authors name, chapter and page reference. To list search engines such as google, Ask Jeeves or similar is also unacceptable, students should provide details of the web pages from which they have quoted or paraphrased.
F. Should ensure that students understand the use of footnotes and bibliographies to acknowledge the sources used. The use of inverted commas, indented quotations, acknowledgement of the author, line/page number, title of source would indicate that the student is using a source. Centre staff and students should be aware when sources are acknowledged it ensures that there is not a suspicion of plagiarism.
G. Encourage the use of quotation marks when any source is quoted directly - guideline for the need for items in quotation marks would be when 6 or more works are used in unchanged form
H. Deadlines should be set for submission of students work
I. Ensure that students understand the importance of producing work which is their own and the importance of any penalties concerning malpractice
J. Under any circumstances accept any work without investigating which is suspicious of being plagiarised – to accept this work would encourage the spread of this practice

How to deal with plagiarism

➢ **Keeping watch**
➢ **Confirmation**
➢ **Reporting**

Content – keeping watch

1. Student's work must be checked for any acknowledgement of sources. When there is a variation in the content this could be an indicator of plagiarism. Students who present documents that contain well written passages which contain detailed analysis of relevant facts and alternate these with poorly constructed and irrelevant linking passages should arouse suspicion.

2. Students will write an introduction and a conclusion for coursework/project and then complete the middle part with work copied from elsewhere.

3. Check to ascertain if the work is not topic focused but does overall present a well-argued reflection of the related matter and this could be a sign that it has been used somewhere else. You can also apply the same principle if parts of the document do not work well together in the development of responses to the assignment.

4. Where there are possible dated expressions and references made to past events passed off as being current these could also be indications of work which has been copied from out of date sources.

Checking on the presentation of the document

1. When checking on the overall presentation of the document you will be looking at the size and style of font – is this uniform? The use of headers and sub-headers, is there consistency in the margins throughout the document? Has the text used references, if so are these consistent? Have any references been made to figures, tables or are there footnotes which don't always make sense? Which could indicate that these have not been copied.

2. Within a well-written section is there a lack of references? Which could indicate that these have been copied from an encyclopaedia or similar knowledge source. Are there quotations that carry on beyond the section which has been acknowledged?

Confirmation

1. If there are any suspicions that the document has been plagiarised your next course of action would be to locate the source. There is an easy method of undertaking this and that is to type a 4 to 6 word phrase from the document in question – try to locate a paragraph with an unusual phrase contained within it – directly into a relevant search engine such as Google and perform an "***exact phrase search***". Once the search has been undertaken there is a good possibility that if the article was copied from a source on the web this will be found.

2. You can also check the web-sites that student's use which can be common sources for assignments. You should be familiar with the websites that offer either writing services or essay distribution. If this does not show any relevant searches then the text could have been gained from the "invisible web" – articles which are not shown to be separately indexed to a search engine although the site could well be. These sites could include newspapers, magazines, on-line encyclopaedias or subject specific sites and these sites that could be providing help with essays can fall into this category. An individual search would have to be undertaken but the use of a few chosen words in the search tool may produce the results required.

3. Another method to detect plagiarism is the use of computer programmes. There are 2 types. One requires the relevant software to be installed on the user's machine – this would compare a student's essay to a bank of essays such as an institutions own record of previous students work. The other type which is a more sophisticated approach compares a submitted assignment to the whole of the web and beyond. One of the most successful of these tools if "Turnitin" – a web based site and requires no installation of software. This would generate a report which will identify any text which is found to be unoriginal and will link it to the original source.

4. As well as the ability to locate original sources using computer-based detection systems is a strong deterrent to those students tempted to commit plagiarism.

5. When plagiarism has been suspected undertaking an oral examination with the student may help to ascertain whether the work if that of the student.

6. Where the investigation is deemed inconclusive then the assignment in question could be removed and replaced by an alternative assignment where authenticity is not in doubt. You could also ask the student to complete another piece of work under controlled conditions in the centre – supervised – and this would provide a standard by which you can judge the other piece of work.

Reporting

If all the suspicions of plagiarism has been confirmed and the declaration of authentication has not been signed by the student the centre does not need to report the malpractice to CCS TRAINING. Centres should be able to resolve this matter prior to the signing of the declaration. Work that is not the students own must not be accepted. It is the responsibility of the head of centre to ensure that students do not submit plagiarised work.

If plagiarism has been found and the declaration of authentication has been signed by the student then this must be report to CCS TRAINING – please see the Policy on Malpractice.

Any suspected plagiarism that has been report to CCS TRAINING by another student or member of the public a report detailing these will be sent to the centre. The head of centre will be asked to conduct a full enquiry into this and to submit a written report to CCS TRAINING.

CCS TRAINING will consider all the facts in the case and if necessary impose a sanction in line with the penalties/sanctions listed in the Malpractice Policy.