
Information Sheet C: Avoiding Plagiarism and Collusion: Guidance for Candidates

What is plagiarism?

Plagiarism is a serious academic offence and NCC Education will take action against candidates who commit it. Your work is checked for plagiarism by your Centre and by NCC Education markers and moderators. If you are found to have plagiarised, or to have helped someone else to do so, you will be penalised.

Plagiarism occurs when you copy from one or more sources without correctly referencing these sources. The main types of plagiarism are:

1. Quotes are taken from a source (website, book, article) and not correctly referenced. All direct quotes should be contained within quotation marks or by indenting the text – it is not sufficient to just cite the author.
2. Text taken from a source (website, book, article) is paraphrased, but no citation/reference is included.

You can commit plagiarism by directly copying, rephrasing or summarising someone else's work without acknowledging that you have done so.

Cutting and pasting pieces of work from websites is the same as handing in work downloaded from the Internet, and both amount to plagiarism.

You should always acknowledge any direct quotations from another person's work using quotation marks or indenting.

When handing in completed assignments all sources you have used should be itemised in a reference list at the end of the piece of work.

What is the difference between plagiarism and poor academic practice?

Poor Academic Practice is the term used by NCC Education to describe circumstances in which a candidate is judged to have committed Academic Misconduct, but either through extenuating circumstances or a lack of severity it is not easily classifiable under any of the types of misconduct listed above.

In order to differentiate between Poor Academic Practice and more severe Academic Misconduct, any person(s) investigating must be satisfied that there was no intention to deliberately mislead the markers and moderators, or to knowingly present someone else's intellectual property as the candidate's own work. In cases of suspected plagiarism, there must also be some attempt to reference correctly and the vast majority of the candidate's work must be their own work. Where a candidate fails to reference throughout an entire assignment, this is always deemed to be Plagiarism, even where unintentional and/or due to lack of understanding of referencing requirements.

What is Collusion?

Collusion is the preparation or production of work for assessment jointly with someone else, usually a friend or classmate.

Under no circumstances should you make your assignment available to another candidate. If you share your assignment with another candidate and he or she plagiarises it, **both of you** will have committed academic misconduct, since you enabled this to take place.

Closely related to Collusion is **Impersonation**, or passing off someone else's work as your own. This includes the use of "essay mills" – websites where you can purchase pre-written assignment text – and "commissioning sites", where you pay someone to do the work for you. Another form of impersonation is attempting to sit an exam on behalf of someone else. All of these types of misconduct are extremely serious, and may result in you being expelled from your programme of study.

What does a good assignment look like?

A good assignment should contain original work in your own words.

It should include appropriate references to sources such as books and articles, but these will be used to support and justify your own ideas.

All references will be clearly labelled using the Harvard System and included in a reference list at the end of the assignment. Even when using text from NCC Education learning materials, you still need to include appropriate references.

Paraphrasing and Summarising

It is particularly important to identify the difference between acceptable and unacceptable forms of paraphrasing.

In order to paraphrase a passage from source material you need to understand it thoroughly and be able to express it in your own words. Even if the concept has been re-worded, the original source must still be acknowledged in a citation. It is not acceptable to simply reproduce large chunks of someone else's work, whether or not these have been acknowledged. Similarly, it is unacceptable to use electronically translated material from foreign language sources without acknowledgement.

Summarising also involves putting ideas into your own words. This must be done so that only the main points are mentioned. Summaries are there to provide an overview and are therefore much shorter than the original material. Again, original material that has been summarised must be acknowledged in your work to avoid committing plagiarism.

What happens if I commit Plagiarism or Collusion?

Plagiarism and Collusion are serious issues which affect the integrity of assessments and qualifications. Because of this, NCC Education may take any of the following actions where misconduct is identified:

- You may be given a mark of zero for a specific Task or Section of an assessment, or for the whole assessment.
- You may be given a mark of zero for the whole Unit
- You may be disqualified from a Qualification