
Information Sheet D: Avoiding Plagiarism and Collusion in Coding Units

This guidance applies to the assessment of NCC Education computer programming units in which candidates are required to generate code.

Please also refer to NCC Education's Avoiding Plagiarism and Collusion: Guidance for Candidates for more information on Academic Misconduct in general, including the sanctions that may be applied to any piece of work where misconduct is detected.

Avoiding Plagiarism when writing Code

- Plagiarism in code occurs when significant amounts of code are taken from external (usually online) sources.
- NCC Education recognises that re-using existing code is common practice in the software industry, and as such small amounts of code may be re-purposed from external sources, so long as this code is significantly modified and edited to fit the purpose of the assessment, and fully referenced in comments within the code (including the source URL where appropriate).
- Candidates should always avoid taking entire structures from external sources. Simply changing variables and functions names is not considered by NCC Education to be a significant modification, and is deemed to be academic misconduct.
- No marks will be awarded where Learning Outcomes and Assessment Criteria are met through borrowed external code only, even where it is referenced. **Code taken from external sources must always be modified significantly and never used unchanged and must always be used alongside the candidate's own original work.**

Avoiding Collusion when writing code

- Collusion in the use of code occurs where candidates work together, resulting in inappropriate similarities in their code, such as the same data structure/flow of logic, order of classes and objects.
- NCC Education accepts that some similarities in software code are inevitable, especially where the same programming language and development tools are employed. However, candidates' work must always be substantially different from each other's so that the examiner can be confident that the individual candidate has demonstrated mastery of the learning outcomes.

- Examples of acceptable and unacceptable levels of similarity:

Acceptable	Unacceptable
Minor similarities may exist, but candidates' work show differences in implementation algorithms and data structures.	Candidates' work show similarities in data structure and implementation algorithms. The only differences are in variables/function names. The user interface generated by the code is the same.

Please note that **group work is not permitted** when completing any NCC Education assessments **unless explicitly stated in the rubrics of that assessment.**