

Buckinghamshire Adult Learning Guidelines for Suspected Plagiarism

Definition of plagiarism.

For the purpose of these guidelines the definition of plagiarism is “the reproduction or paraphrasing without acknowledgement, from public or private (i.e. unpublished) material (including material downloaded from the Internet) attributable to, or which is the intellectual property of another”.

Plagiarism occurs whenever you present as your own the results of another person, whatever the medium.

All assessed work including examinations and assignments must be your own work and must acknowledge any assistance given (including from fellow students or supervisors) and the detailed input into the work from the major sources involved.

The passing off of work of others as your own is plagiarism. Any quotations from published or unpublished works of other persons must be duly acknowledged. Learners must not submit work as their own that has been purchased from internet auction sites.

Procedures

Learners should always be reminded that appropriate referencing or acknowledgement should always be made, and what form of referencing or acknowledgement is acceptable. These matters should be included in handbooks provided by awarding bodies.

Learners are required to sign a declaration statement for all assessed items. This declaration indicates that the work submitted is their own. This declaration may have a pivotal role to play in determining intention to commit plagiarism.

Suspected plagiarism

If during the marking process, a marker/examiner suspects a case of plagiarism, or if there is suspicion that an act of cheating may have occurred, the marker/examiner shall cease the marking process for the assessed item.

In the case of suspected plagiarism, the marker/examiner shall check whether or not the assessment item carries a declaration statement signed by the learner concerned, and whether advice about appropriate referencing and avoiding plagiarism was given to the learner.

The marker/examiner shall prepare a brief report noting the extent of suspected plagiarism or cheating in the assessment item and any details arising from discussion with the relevant tutor.

The brief report on suspected plagiarism and the affected assessment item should be forwarded to the sub-group with responsibility for dealing with plagiarism.

If the sub-group decides not to pursue the matter further, then the affected assessment item must be marked in accordance with the awarding bodies marking scheme.

If the sub-group decides to pursue the matter further, then a meeting with the learner concerned must be held.

The learner must be advised, in writing, that a meeting is to be held to investigate the suspected case of plagiarism and that the learner will be asked to offer an explanation to the sub-group.

The marker/examiner will outline to the sub-group:

- The reasons for suspecting plagiarism
- The information given to learners about how to avoid plagiarism and reference appropriately.
- Whether a declaration statement has been signed.
- And, where appropriate the extent of the plagiarism in the assessed item.

The learner will be able to respond.

The sub-group will consider in private the facts of the case as presented. The learner will be informed in writing of the outcome of the sub-group decision, including the imposition of any marking penalties.

Penalties.

Where in the sub-groups view it is established plagiarism has been committed, the sub-group will prescribe a penalty. Penalties that may be applied where it is established plagiarism has been committed shall include:

- A requirement to make amendments to the submitted work within a given timescale.
- Failure of the work and permission to re-submit the work within a given timescale.
- Failure of the work and termination of the course for persistent offenders.

Appeals

Learners may appeal the decision of the sub-group by putting their concerns in writing to the executive manager for teaching & learning.

Monitoring.

Numbers of plagiarism sub-groups held and the outcomes should be monitored and reported by each curriculum group as part of the annual self-assessment report.

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