

# Plagiarism

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What is it?

How do we prevent it?

What do we do about it?

# What is Plagiarism?

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- In a University Degree we aim to
  - Give you knowledge
  - Give you the ability to apply that knowledge
  - Assess your Understanding and Ability
- In order to assess this the work you do must be your own
  - Plagiarism is where you submit work as your own when it is not.
  - It is regarded as a form of Cheating.

# Examples of Cheating

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- Borrowing your friends report, copying it and submitting it as yours.
  - Even copying a part of it still is plagiarism.
- Cutting text material from an internet web page and including it verbatim in your report
- Copying text straight off a laboratory sheet, or from a textbook into your report
- Making up fictitious experimental data rather than using that you measured.

# Examples of Good Practice

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- When you read something, in for example a book, that you wish to put in your report, comment on what you have read in your own words and include a reference to the book at the end of your report.
- If you think it is important to quote a phrase exactly from a source then place the phrase in “inverted commas” and place a reference at the end.
  - In this case you should be looking to comment on the phrase so that the reader knows why you needed to quote it and you should not use more than a phrase.

# How to work together

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- It is acceptable and we encourage you to discuss what you have learnt together.
- You should discuss things you don't understand with your classmates and try to work them out between you.
- **BUT, afterwards, when you write your report you should do this separately.**
  - The exception to this is in group activities when we expect you to produce a common report. In this case we encourage you to proof read and help each other to make the best group effort.
    - Group activities include the MEng 4<sup>th</sup> year project and SHIPS in the second year.

# How do we Prevent Plagiarism?

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- Education about the issue.
- Let students know that we monitor it .
  - Staff look for
    - style changes in reports.
    - similarities between reports.
    - material that looks like it is from a textbook or other source.
  - Computer Aided Detection
    - C programming exercises are checked against each other.
    - Plagiarism Detection Software.

# Computer Aided Detection

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- This year we will ask that certain reports be electronically submitted to the a software package sponsored by a consortium of Higher Education Institutions including Sheffield University.
- These reports will be checked automatically against each other and other documents in its database, including information on the WWW.

# How do I submit my Report?

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- A “class” will be set up for your cohort on the computer system.
- Each of you will register with your email address as your user name and an individual password.
  - This allows you to log into the system
- There will be class ID and a class password emailed to you.
  - This allows you to log into your class
- You can then upload your report, ideally as a Word document, into the system.



# Anything Else

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- In order for us to use the software we need you to sign to Data Protection Agreement.
  - This basically allows the software package to retain your report in its Database.
  - It does not affect your, or the University's rights in the document.

# What Happens if Plagiarism is Detected Electronically

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- The Department will never take action against you exclusively based on the software report.
  - Computers are not intelligent in that they only detect similarities.
  - In the case where reports are flagged as having an issue a staff member will look at the report(s) in detail and determine whether there is a problem.
    - Trivial examples of similarities that would be ignored are
      - in a list of references, where the lists of authors, title of a book, will be the same in many documents.
      - an address.

# What do we do about it?

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- If a Staff member finds evidence of plagiarism by any method
  - He/she will report his suspicions, confidentially, to the Head of Department.
  - The student(s) concerned will be interviewed by senior staff
  - A panel will meet prior to the Examination Board to consider the evidence and make a recommendation

# What do we do about it (2)?

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- Depending on the circumstance, the recommendation might be that
  - there is no case - no action is taken
  - it is minor, due to inexperience or misunderstanding - informal action is taken
  - it is a deliberate attempt to deceive - the case is handled formally

# What Sanctions are applied?

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- Minor cases:
  - you will be informally warned about good practice and given guidance.
  - The plagiarised section will be discounted and the remainder marked as normal.
  - It is normal practice to send a formal warning letter which also is placed in your student file.
- More serious cases, or when it is not a first offence:
  - the result for the whole module that the work forms part of will be deferred
  - students are reported to the University Discipline Committee who have wide ranging powers **including being able to fine you or remove you from the University.**

# What if I disagree?

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- You can appeal against any decision if you think that you have been accused unjustly
- If you have been referred to the Discipline Committee then you will automatically get a hearing, before an independent panel of members of the University, chaired by a lawyer, to which you can bring representation
- Help on this can be found from the
  - Student Services Information Desk
  - Student Union

# Electronic Submission (UG)

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- Limited Pilot this year – which may be expanded in the future.
- 1<sup>st</sup> year
  - C programming exercises (special case)
  - First Year Project Report
- 2nd year
  - SHIPS Individual Visit Report
  - SHIPS Final Group Report
- 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> Year
  - May request Project Report submission, but if not staff may scan and enter reports, or report parts, on a random basis and/or where there are specific concerns.
- All reports must also be submitted in Hard Copy to the EEE Student Office

# Electronic Submission (PG)

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- Limited Pilot this year – which may be expanded in the future.
- MSc Data Communications
  - MSc Project Interim Report (EEE6480)
  - MSc Project Final Dissertation (EEE6600)
- Research Students
  - Y1: Transfer Report and EEE6500 Exercise
  - Y2: Thesis Structure and Poster (EEE6510)
- All reports must also be submitted in Hard Copy to the EEE Student Office