

POLICY FOR DEALING WITH PLAGIARISM, COLLUSION AND THE FABRICATION OF DATA: FOR UNDERGRADUATE AND POSTGRADUATE (MASTER) PROGRAMMES

The university treats the decision as to whether plagiarism, collusion or the fabrication of data has taken place as a matter for academic judgement and the penalties applied will vary according to the individual case and the seriousness of the offence. This policy is the university guideline for dealing with plagiarism, collusion and the fabrication of data for undergraduate and postgraduate (Master) programmes only. The policy for dealing with plagiarism, collusion and the fabrication of data for PhD students is a separate document which can be found from University of Liverpool.

1. Definitions

The definitions below apply to all types of work submitted by students, including, for example, written work, diagrams, designs, charts, musical compositions and pictures:

1.1 Plagiarism

Plagiarism occurs when a student misrepresents, as his/her own work, the work, written or otherwise, of any other person (including another student or one's own previous published or submitted independent work) or of any institution. Examples of forms of plagiarism include:

- the verbatim (word for word) copying of another's work without appropriate and correctly presented acknowledgement;
- the close paraphrasing of another's work by simply changing a few words or altering the order of presentation, without appropriate and correctly presented acknowledgement;
- unacknowledged quotation of phrases from another's work;
- the deliberate and detailed presentation of another's concept as one's own.

When plagiarism is suspected it should fall into one of two categories:

Minor Plagiarism – this is defined as a small amount of paraphrasing, quotation or use of diagrams, charts etc. without adequate citation. Minor plagiarism may result from poor scholarship (i.e. when a student, through inexperience or carelessness, fails to reference appropriately or adequately identify the source of the material which they use).

Major Plagiarism – this is defined as:

- extensive paraphrasing or quoting without proper citation of the source;
 - lifting directly from a text or other academic source without reference;
- (Where material is taken directly from a text or other source the cited material should be demarcated with quotation marks or in some other accepted way **and** the source should be cited.)
- the use of essays (or parts thereof) from essay banks, either downloaded from the internet or obtained from other sources;
 - presenting another's designs or concepts as one's own;
 - continued instances of what was initially regarded as minor plagiarism despite warnings having been given to the student concerned.

1.2 Collusion

Collusion occurs when, unless with official approval (e.g. in the case of group projects), two or more students consciously collaborate in the preparation and production of work which is ultimately submitted by each in an **identical, or substantially similar**, form and/or is represented by each to be the product of his or her individual efforts. Collusion also occurs where there is unauthorised co-operation between a student and another person in the preparation and production of work which is presented as the student's own.

1.3 Fabrication of Data

Fabrication of Data

Embellishment of data – this occurs when a small amount of data is enhanced or exaggerated in order to emphasise data which has been obtained by legitimate means.

Fabrication of data – this occurs when a student creates and presents an extensive amount or significant piece of data in order to conceal a paucity of legitimate data; or wholly fabricates a set of data in the absence of legitimate data.

2. Dealing with **Plagiarism, Collusion or Fabrication** of Data

- 2.1 The university aims to provide an environment which supports academic integrity and avoids plagiarism, collusion and fabrication of data.
- 2.2 If plagiarism, collusion or fabrication of data is suspected in relation to work submitted by a student, in the interest of helping students to avoid continued acts of plagiarism, collusion and fabrication of data, cases should be investigated as promptly as possible.
- 2.3 Cases of suspected plagiarism, collusion or fabrication of data should be evidenced and documented before the appropriate procedure is investigated.
- 2.4 The candidate of the matter under investigation shall be informed and invited to provide an explanation of the circumstances. The candidate shall be afforded an opportunity to make any representations he or she may wish to make to the investigation team.
- 2.5 Any identified cases of plagiarism, collusion or fabrication of data has been identified and confirmed, the student's records should be checked for any previous offenses of plagiarism (minor or major), collusion, or embellishment or fabrication of data.
- 2.6 The Registry should be notified of the outcomes of any identified cases of plagiarism (minor or major), collusion or fabrication of data.
- 2.7 Only the Board of Examiners shall have the discretion to award the marks (if any) which it thinks appropriate in the light of the gravity and extent of the offence.
- 2.8 The marks (if any) thus awarded by the Board of Examiners shall be treated in the same way and have the same consequences as regards the assessment of the candidate's overall performance as a similar mark awarded to other candidates.

3. Procedure

Minor Plagiarism or **Embellishment** of Data

- 3.1 If the examiner identifies minor plagiarism or embellishment of data (as defined in section 1), then the student's records should be checked with Registry for any previous cases of plagiarism (minor or major), collusion, or embellishment or fabrication of data.
- 3.2 If no previous case or only one previous case of minor plagiarism or embellishment of data has been recorded then the normal course of action is for the examiner to issue a written warning to the student, and copied to the Registry.
- 3.3 If the student's record shows that two previous warnings for the same type or any combination of minor plagiarism/embellishment of data have been issued, the examiner should initiate the procedure for dealing with **major** plagiarism, collusion and fabrication of data (as set in 3.5 below).
- 3.4 If the student's record shows that the student has previously been found to have committed major plagiarism, fabrication of data or to have colluded in the production of assessed work, then, notwithstanding that previous warnings for minor offences may not have been issued, the examiner should initiate the procedure for dealing with alleged acts of major plagiarism, collusion and fabrication of data.
- 3.5 A second warning for minor plagiarism/embellishment of data cannot be counted as such and should be disregarded if a student has not yet received the first warning, as the student will not have had an opportunity to take heed of the warning and improve their work. Similarly, a third warning (which would lead to the procedures used for major plagiarism, collusion and fabrication of data) would not count as a third warning and should be disregarded if the student had not received the second warning. This is intended to cover situations where assessments are completed and marked within a short period of time, and students may have been found to have minor plagiarism/embellishment of data on more than one occasion at the same time. For this section to apply it needs to be clear that the student has not received the earlier warning, and has not had the opportunity to improve their work.

Major Plagiarism, **Collusion** or **Fabrication** of Data

- 3.6 When major plagiarism, collusion or fabrication of data is identified, the matter must be reported to the Examination Officer in the department which 'owns' the module concerned.
- 3.7 The Examination Officer will investigate the allegation on behalf of the Chair of the Board of Examiners by inviting the examiner to provide evidence and reasons for his/her allegation and the student(s) to provide an explanation of the circumstances for the plagiarism, collusion or fabrication of data.
- 3.8 The student(s) must be afforded the opportunity to make any representations that s/he or they may wish to make. If the investigation involves a face-to-face meeting (which the student(s) may request, each student suspected of major plagiarism, collusion or fabrication

of data will be entitled to be accompanied by another member of the University, e.g. a fellow student, or a tutor, or teacher.

- 3.9 If, following the investigation, the Examination Officer concludes that major plagiarism, collusion or fabrication of data has taken place, the Examination Officer will provide a report to the Chair of the Board of Examiners detailing the findings, the circumstances of the alleged major plagiarism, collusion or fabrication of data, the investigation undertaken and the representations made by the student. A copy of this report will also be made available to the student(s) and Registry.
- 3.10 The Chair of the Board of Examiners will consult with the Board of Examiners and decide whether it deems the findings of the Examination Officer appropriate and acceptable and apply the appropriate penalty.
- 3.11 If a student is found to have committed major plagiarism, collusion or fabrication of data, the Board of Examiners should arrange for other work submitted by the student for assessment to be scrutinised to determine whether such work contains previously undetected instances of plagiarism, collusion or fabrication of data.
- 3.11.1 This further scrutiny of work is not necessary in cases of major plagiarism, collusion or fabrication of data that have arisen as a result of an accumulation of acts of minor plagiarism or embellishment of data.
- 3.11.2 The Board of Examiners can only scrutinise other work by the student that is from the year of study in which the major plagiarism, collusion or fabrication of data occurred; The Board of Examiners cannot review work from a previous year (or years) of study which the student has already passed.
- 3.12 The Board of Examiners is responsible for ensuring that any decision made with regard to the major plagiarism, collusion or fabrication of data is noted in the student's records, and that the decision making process should be accurately recorded in the minutes.

4. Penalties

Minor Plagiarism or Embellishment of Data

- 4.1 If a student is found to have committed a minor plagiarism or embellishment of data, and has no record of a previous case, the student will be issued with a **written warning by the examiner copied to the Registry, but no penalty will be applied.**
- 4.2 If a student is found to have committed (for the same type or any combination of) minor plagiarism or embellishment of data for the second time, the student will be issued with **another written warning** copied to the Registry by the examiner.

Major Plagiarism, Collusion or Fabrication of Data

- 4.3 If a student is found to have committed major plagiarism, collusion or fabrication of data, they will be awarded **a mark of zero** for the assessment by the Board of Examiners, and with a warning letter to be issued by the examiner, and copied to the Registry.

- 4.4 If, as a result, the student fails the module as a whole, they **will not be eligible for resit of the assessment**, but will be required to re-take the module to which the major plagiarism, collusion or fabrication of data related. If they are in the final year of an undergraduate degree programme, **they will only be permitted to re-take the module if failing the module would result in them being awarded with no degree**.
- 4.5 If major plagiarism, collusion or fabrication of data is found in the undergraduate final year project or master student dissertation, it will be deemed as “**Academic Misconduct**” which will be referred to the Student Board of Discipline.
- 4.6 If two or more students are found to have colluded in producing a piece of assessed work (**this includes one student allowing another to copy his/her work and submit it as his/her own**), then each should be given a mark of zero for the assessment by the Board of examiners.
- 4.7 If a student is found to have committed (for the same type or any combination of) major plagiarism, collusion or fabrication of data for **the second time**, in addition to the penalty described in 4.3, the Board of Examiners may determine that the student will have **no opportunities to resit or re-take the module**, even if as a result the student fails the module as a whole, or may not be able to progress to the next year study, or may not be able to get the degree for the final year students.
- 4.8 If a student is found to have committed (for the same type or any combination of) major plagiarism, collusion or fabrication of data on **a third occasion**, namely three offences of the same type or any combination of major plagiarism, collusion or fabrication of data, the Board of Examiners shall determine that the student has failed to satisfy the requirements of the programme. It shall also determine in those circumstances **whether or not any award is to be made to the student**.

5. Responsibilities

The university aims to provide an environment which supports academic integrity and avoids plagiarism, collusion and fabrication of data.

5.1 The examiners:

- To brief students the university policy on academic misconduct and provide trainings and advises to help students avoid committing academic misconduct offence.
- To check submitted work from students.
- To report to Departmental Examination Officer with evidence and reasons for making the allegation of a suspected offence.
- To check students previous record with Registry and to inform Registry of any cases of minor or major plagiarism, collusion or fabrication of data.
- To participate in the investigation process.
- Together with the Departmental Examination officer, to produce the report of the outcomes of the investigations and report of the offence which will be submitted to Registry and Board of Examiners.
- To issue warning letters to the student who has been found to commit the minor or major plagiarism, collusion or fabrication of data, and to copy to the Registry.

5.2 The Departmental Exam Officers:

- To report to the Chair Board of Examiners, and to form an investigation team to investigate the suspected offence.
- To organize the investigation, and take minutes and record during the investigation.
- Together with the examiner, produce the report which will be submitted to the Registry and Board of Examiners.
- Together with the examiners, to check other work submitted by the students.
- To inform the personal tutor with any student who have found to commit a major plagiarism, collusion or fabrication of data.

5.3 The Board of Examiners:

- To review the investigation report and apply the penalty.
- To suggest the academic judgment and penalty recommendations of the suspected or deemed offence.
- If cases are found during the semester before the Module Board of Examiners meetings, those actions can be done by the Chair's action of the Board of Examiners.

5.4 The Registry:

- To keep good records of any deemed offence investigation and outcomes of investigation.
- To provide guidance on investigation.
- To timely communicate with the department about the students' records of offences.
- To report to the ULTC once a year with statistics of major plagiarism, collusion or fabrication of data.
- To keep record of judgments, decisions and recommendations from the Board of Examiners.

5.5 The Teaching and Learning Enhancement Office:

- In collaboration with the Registry, to provide training and consultation to staff on university penalty policy and how to deal with plagiarism, collusion or fabrication of data.

5.7 The Student:

- To familiarize oneself with the university policy on academic misconduct and the nature of it.
- To acquire knowledge on academic misconduct.
- To have opportunity to make representations and make explanations on accused offence.

19 September, 2012	University Learning and Teaching Committee	New Policy approved subject to minor wording corrections in: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 3.2, 3.12, 4.7, and 5• 6 deleted
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APPENDIX 1

Minor Plagiarism

When marking the following assessment

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I found plagiarised material within it. I have indicated on the returned assessment where the plagiarised material is. Plagiarism is committed when a student misrepresents, as his/her own work, the work, written or otherwise, of any other person (including another student) or of any institution. Plagiarism includes:

- the word for word copying of another's work without appropriate or correctly presented acknowledgement;
- the close paraphrasing of another's work by simply changing a few words or altering the order of presentation, without appropriate or correctly presented acknowledgement;
- unacknowledged quotation of phrases from another's work;
- the deliberate and detailed presentation of another's concept as one's own.

"Another's work" covers all material, including, for example, written work, diagrams, designs, charts, musical compositions and pictures, from all sources, including for example, the internet, journals, textbooks and essays.

The plagiarism which I found was on a limited scale and it is possible that you committed it unintentionally by forgetting to reference properly the material which you used. Nevertheless, the University views all plagiarism seriously. On this occasion I am issuing you with a warning only, copies of which will be placed on your file and sent to your departmental Examination Officer.

The University will allow you to receive two warnings for minor plagiarism and/or embellishment of data. After two such warnings, if you are suspected of having committed minor plagiarism and/or embellishment of data again you will be regarded as persisting in this practice and the matter will be referred to your departmental Examination Officer for investigation on behalf of the Board of Examiners. Any instance of alleged major plagiarism will also be immediately referred to the Examination Officer. The penalty for proven major plagiarism is that a mark of zero will be awarded for the assessment.

If you would like further guidance on referencing, citation etc. to help you avoid committing plagiarism, you should (*information about where to seek guidance*).

APPENDIX 2

EMBELLISHMENT OF DATA

When marking the following assessment:

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I found embellished data within it. I have indicated on the returned assessment where the embellished data is. Embellished data is defined by the University as a small amount of data which is fabricated in order to emphasise or embellish data which has been obtained by legitimate means.

The University views all embellishment of data seriously. On this occasion I am issuing you with a warning only, copies of which will be placed on your file and sent to your departmental Examination Officer.

The University will allow you to receive two warnings for embellishment of data and/or minor plagiarism. After two such warnings, if you are suspected of having committed embellishment and/or minor plagiarism again you will be regarded as persisting in this practice and the matter will be referred to your departmental Examination Officer for investigation on behalf of the Board of Examiners.

APPENDIX 3

Major Plagiarism/Collusion/Fabrication of Data

It has been reported to me, as Examination Officer, that you are suspected of having committed plagiarism/collusion/fabrication of data in the preparation of the following assessment:

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The attached document contains details of the alleged plagiarism/collusion/fabrication of data.

The University's procedures require me to investigate this matter and to make a report to the Board of Examiners. You now have an opportunity to provide an explanation of the alleged plagiarism/collusion/fabrication of data and to make any representations which you wish to. You may do this either in writing or at a face-to-face meeting with myself; *name of examiner* who reported the alleged plagiarism/collusion/fabrication of data to me will also be present at this meeting. Please either provide me with a written explanation of the alleged plagiarism/collusion/fabrication of data or make a request for a face-to-face meeting by (*date*). If you request a face-to-face meeting, you will be entitled to be accompanied by another member of the University, e.g. a fellow student.