

Academic Integrity and Plagiarism

What is Academic Integrity?

Academic Integrity is where you agree to undertake assessments honestly, in a responsible manner and respect others' ideas. Failure to comply with the University's rules (whether that be intentional or not), and/or academic misconduct (**including collusion and plagiarism**), could result in sanctions that could affect the outcome of your degree.

Always make sure that you take the time to read and understand all assessment instructions. If there is anything you don't understand you should ask your School Administration Office, personal academic tutor or module lead rather than your friends or course mates on the programme.

What is Collusion?

Collusion is collaboration between two or more Students in preparing a piece of work that is then presented as their own individual work. This does not include permitted collaboration as part of group work.

What is Plagiarism?

Plagiarism is when work is submitted by a student that is not their own, but has been taken from another source. The original material is then hidden from the marker, either by not referencing it properly, by paraphrasing it incorrectly or by not mentioning it at all. The most common forms of plagiarism are:

- cutting/copying/pasting material from the internet;
- copying the work of another student (past or present), including essay material, laboratory data or computer source code;
- copying course material or lecture notes;
- Copying material out of a textbook or journal.
- Collusion

Please check the codes of practice on Plagiarism for the full list on this guidance. See 'Sources of Help' below.

How to Avoid Plagiarism?

By following a few easy guidelines when studying, you can be sure that your work will be precise and accurate.

- Use the referencing systems suggested to you by your department
- When researching or writing up notes, clearly distinguish references from your own words
- Clearly indicate references and provide the sources- do this as you write your work; do not rely on adding them in at the end
- If you fall behind on your work contact your tutor and try to get an extension (apply through the **extenuating circumstances** procedure as required)
- If you are working in a group, although you may be able to share certain tasks such as researching information, make sure that your work is your own
- Ask your tutor if you are unsure about anything
- Always check your work once completed

- Do not ask to see a course mate's written work or share your own

What Happens If I'm Accused of Plagiarism?

Detection of Plagiarism

Where your principal academic unit suspects that a piece of submitted work is plagiarised they must invite you, in writing and/or by email, to the Plagiarism Meeting with your School's Plagiarism Officer and another academic member of staff. This **Notification Letter**, and/or email, will include the following information:-

- that you are suspected of having committed plagiarism,
- a summary of the suspected plagiarism, to allow you to understand what the allegations relate to,
- that you have the right to be accompanied by a "friend" within the University definition – this is a member of University staff, a current registered student, or a Full time Officer from the Guild of Students, and;
- that you have the right to respond in writing to the allegation of plagiarism. This **must be made within 5 working days of receipt (pro rata/reasonable adjustment if student is abroad)** of the Notification Letter.

The letter may also include a date for the Plagiarism Meeting; this will be **within 5 to 10 working days from the date of the Notification Letter**.

The Plagiarism Meeting

Following the Notification Letter, you will be required to attend a meeting with your School's plagiarism officer.

At this meeting the plagiarism officer will explain the reasons for suspecting plagiarism has taken place, and you will be asked about your position and your understanding of plagiarism. If you have any circumstances which you feel are relevant to the allegations of plagiarism, you should try and raise them at this meeting.

The members of staff present will have to decide whether the allegations have been found to have taken place and therefore make a categorisation of the plagiarism – and subsequently whether to apply a penalty as per the Code of Practice on Plagiarism.

This will be based on a number of factors, more specifically:-

1. Your level of study
2. The proportion of the piece of work affected
3. Whether you have any previous recorded instances of plagiarism
4. Whether there is a reasonable expectation that you should have learnt the appropriate methods of referencing and had appropriate support in how to reference from your School.

Regardless of whether you are told your outcome during the meeting, you will receive an Outcome Letter within 5 working days confirming the outcome, reasons for the decision, and next steps.

3 Categories of Plagiarism

Poor Academic Practice – this involves **a lack of understanding** of academic practices particularly for those students who are not yet familiar with the requirements of university level assessments.

Moderate Plagiarism – this involves **a failure to follow** guidelines on what is regarded as your own work, and that you have ignored conventions or academic practices.

Serious Plagiarism – this involves **an attempt by you to deceive** the marker(s) by passing off other work as your own. This can include the fabrication of data, multiple instances of moderate plagiarism, extensive quantities of un-attributed or incorrectly attributed copying, buying essays from a website or another source, or the production of work by a third party.

Possible Outcomes

Poor Academic Practice – at this low level category the members of staff will ensure that you understand what you have done wrong, and that you are provided with appropriate instruction on how to avoid it in the future. You may be **required to resubmit the piece of work again** but no further measures will be taken.

Moderate Plagiarism –Penalties can include:-

- The assessment mark obtained to stand
- **Resubmission** of the assignment in question, with the mark capped at the pass mark
- The mark obtained in the assignment to be **downwardly adjusted** to reflect your actual contribution, including zero, with an opportunity to pass the module but capped at the pass mark, if this leads to a fail
- The mark obtained **downwardly adjusted** to reflect your actual contribution, including zero with no opportunity to re-sit
- The mark obtained in the module **downwardly adjusted** to reflect your actual contribution, including zero with no opportunity to re-sit the module
- If the penalty applied results in a student failing the programme of study, the case shall be **referred to the College Misconduct Committee** where the matter will be looked at afresh

Serious Plagiarism – Where your case is categorised under this section it will become a student conduct case, under the University's Regulation 8 and Code of Practice on Misconduct and Fitness to Practise Committees.

If you are not happy with the Outcome

Following the Plagiarism Meeting, you will receive an Outcome Letter within 5 working days.

If you are not happy with the outcome decided by your department, then you have the right to request that your case is re-heard afresh by the College Misconduct Committee.

They will re-hear the matter, and make a decision surrounding the allegations and any penalty they may wish to impose. However, all the penalties and sanctions in the Code of Practice on Misconduct and Fitness to Practice Committee will be available to the Committee. This means that they could increase a penalty in certain cases.

If you would like your case to be considered at the higher level, then you will have to inform your School Plagiarism Officer of this in writing within 10 working days of the date on the Outcome Letter.

Sources of Help
Guild Advice:

If you have been accused of plagiarism we can help you prepare your case and source Guild Officer Representation for University meetings.

www.guildofstudents.com/guildadvice

Student Conduct:

conduct@contacts.bham.ac.uk

<https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/as/studentservices/conduct/index.aspx>

Code of Practice on Academic Integrity:

<https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/as/registry/legislation/documents/public/cohort-legislation-2020-21/cop-academic-integrity-20-21.pdf>

Regulations:

<https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/as/registry/legislation/regulations/index.aspx>

Guidance on Plagiarism (Undergraduate/Postgraduate):

For general guidance on what plagiarism is and how to avoid it:

<https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/as/studentservices/conduct/plagiarism/guidance-students.aspx>

'i-cite' the Information Services Guide to citing references

<https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/as/libraryservices/icite/index.aspx>

University's Interactive Plagiarism Course

<https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/as/studentservices/conduct/plagiarism/interactive-course.aspx>