

LEARNER PLAGIARISM GUIDELINES

What is plagiarism?

“If you submit an assignment that contains work that is not your own, without indicating this to the marker (acknowledging your sources), you are committing ‘plagiarism’ and this is an offence. This might occur in an assignment when:

- using a choice phrase or sentence that you have come across*
- copying word-for-word directly from a text*
- paraphrasing the words from a text very closely*
- using text downloaded from the internet*
- borrowing statistics or assembled facts from another person or source*
- copying or downloading figures, photographs, pictures or diagrams without acknowledging your sources*
- copying from the notes or essays of a fellow student*
- copying from your own notes, on a text, tutorial, video or lecture, that contain direct quotations.”*

Unknown. (2013). Plagiarism Policy. Available:

<http://www.open.ac.uk/students/charter/sites/www.open.ac.uk.students.charter/files/files/ecms/web-content/plagiarism.pdf>. Last accessed 11/09/17

Plagiarism is deemed as unacceptable when completing writing for the purposes of academic achievement. Plagiarism is cheating. All learners will be expected to complete research as a part of their study. Looking at information related to topics of study is promoted, and can be extremely useful to aid in understanding, however, it is important that learners understand the difference between research and plagiarism. If you research a topic on the internet, for example, you may find some text which holds the exact information needed. If you carry on to look at several other sources of information and then write your own understanding of that information, in your own words, then you have worked appropriately. If you copy and paste the text in to your work without identifying exactly where it came from, who wrote it etc., then you have ‘plagiarised’ that content.

It is very important to recognise the difference between referencing text and ideas, and plagiarising from them. It is important to understand that if a piece of written work is submitted, which is wholly, or largely full of ‘copied & pasted’ content, then it shows the assessor that you can research relevant information and copy it, but it does not show your own understanding of the topic. It is your own understanding which is needed.

If you wish to use a reference from an article you have found, then you may use small pieces of referenced information, however, please refrain from directly referencing too much material, as then it causes the same issue of the learner not showing enough of their own understanding.

If you wish to directly use some text, which is word for word the same as its source, it must be displayed in quotation marks and in an italic font. There must also be a proper reference immediately after/beneath the quoted material.

If you wish to paraphrase an idea/information you have read elsewhere, this means that you are writing something very similar to the original text. You may not be quoting word for word, but you are using all the same information, facts and possibly statistics. When paraphrasing, because the content is not word for word the same, you do not need to use quotation marks, but you still need to put a reference after the paragraph, or section of content where you have used ideas from other sources.

Often a learner may plagiarise due to not fully understanding the topic which they are writing about. In these cases, whilst it may be tempting to copy work from other sources, it will obviously not improve understanding of the subject. In these cases learners are advised to seek additional support for their tutor/assessor. It is extremely important that learners understand programme content as thoroughly as possible, as course topics will be tested and discussed in the End Point Assessment of each learner's programme.

What happens if a learner is caught plagiarising?

If a learner's work is identified as containing plagiarism, this will automatically trigger a cause for concern. This will mean that a meeting will be set up between the learner, assessor and manager. An action plan will be created to address the plagiarism. As long as this plan is followed, and at review, the learner can show that they have met the identified targets, they will be allowed to continue on with their learning programme, with regular monitoring. If however, at review it is discovered that the learner has not met the set targets, they will be at risk of being withdrawn from their learning programme. This may have further implications for learners on apprenticeships whose learning programmes are tied to their contract of employment.