

Plagiarism and Collusion Policy

Definitions

Plagiarism

Plagiarism can be defined as the unacknowledged incorporation into a learners' work of materials derived from published or unpublished work by another person and presented as if it were the learners' own work.

Published work include books, articles and materials found on the internet. Examples of unpublished work could be course notes, a piece of work previously submitted by another learner, or work to be submitted by another learner, or perhaps copied from a work colleague or family member.

Some assignments may require participants to work together at the planning stage. However, group assessment is not allowed so the resulting assignments must be submitted individually and it is essential that each is then ratified as being the participant's own work.

Examples of plagiarism include:

- Copying extracts from another person's work, published or unpublished, without using quotation marks and/or an acknowledgement of the source
- Use of diagrams, images, course notes without acknowledgement of the source
- Summarising the work of another or using their ideas without an acknowledgement of the source
- Copying or using the work of another participant (past or present) without that person's knowledge or agreement
- Purchasing essays or downloading them from the internet to submit them as your own work.
- Downloading content including text, images, diagrams etc from the internet without acknowledgement of the source

Plagiarism is regarded as a serious academic offence and ILM has provided the following advice to clarify any uncertainties you might have.

- The large majority of every assessment must be your original work. Substantial copying of course notes or other published or unpublished work is unacceptable as this does not demonstrate your knowledge, let alone your application. Even if acknowledged and properly referenced, excessive use of other people's work is unacceptable
- If you use someone else's exact words in your work, they must be in quotation marks. Use quotations sparingly and only when you feel the author has expressed something so well and so concisely that the words cannot be improved
- Even if you give your own explanation of someone else's work without quoting word-for-word, you must reference your source.
- When referencing a source, you must provide the name of the author, the date of their work that you have referred to and the page number where you got the quotation from immediately after the quotation, e.g. (Hill, 2004, p. 42) and also provide full details of the reference in the bibliography

- You must provide a bibliography – a list of books and articles and any other sources you have quoted – at the end of your assignment
- When referencing a source you must make use of the Harvard referencing system in all work submitted (see Appendix 2).

You must submit your own, original work and you are required to sign the statement of authenticity provided on each assignment submission template. Please note that action may be taken against you if you are found to have plagiarised, colluded or cheated in any way to gain an unfair advantage.

Collusion

Collusion is a form of plagiarism that involves unauthorised co-operation between at least two people with the intent to deliberately mislead or deceive.

ILM suggest that collusion can take the following forms:

- Two or more learners conspiring to produce a piece of work together with the intention that it is submitted as his/her own individual work. Or with the intention of at least one participant submitting it as his/her own individual work.
- A participant submitting the work of another participant (with their consent) as his/her own individual work. In such cases, both participant would be deemed to be guilty of collusion
- Although also an example of plagiarism, the submission of a piece of work that is not the learners own individual work that has been purchased from a third party. For example, from an essay or assignment writing service or by soliciting another individual to produce a piece of work on their behalf
- Unauthorised co-operation between a participant and a third party in the production of a piece of work that will be submitted by the participant as their own

It is acceptable to discuss ideas, talk about books, articles, online material and strategies for example with other participants. It is not acceptable to help a fellow participant to produce work that will be submitted as their own and an individual piece of work. Participants should never lend their work to another participant under any circumstances as it may be copied or reproduced. This example would leave both participants vulnerable to an accusation of collusion.

Participants should leave themselves enough time to check their work thoroughly before submitting it for marking or evaluation. Keeping to strict deadlines will limit the temptation of collusion with another participant or third party or purchasing work with the intention of submitting it as their own.

You must submit your own, original work and you are required to sign a statement of authenticity and attach this to each assignment that you submit. Please note that action may be taken against you if you are found to have plagiarised, colluded or cheated in any way to gain an unfair advantage.

How we investigate plagiarism and collusion

There are three steps in the process for dealing with plagiarism:

1. Keeping watch
2. Confirmation
3. Reporting

Keeping watch on content

On submission of each final assignment, Serco Education will check candidates' work for acknowledgement of sources as the work is being completed. The following can be pointers that plagiarism may have taken place:

- Varying quality of content, i.e. well-written passages containing detailed analyses of relevant facts alternating with poorly constructed and irrelevant linking passages
- Parts of the work doesn't fit well together in developing the response to the assignment
- Missing content and/or sentences
- Dated expressions and references to past events as being current
- Mixture of English and American vocabulary or spelling
- Use of specialised terminology, jargon, obscure or advanced words, if this is not typical of this level of learner
- Inconsistent style of punctuation
- Differences of style or tone of writing
- Lack of referencing

Confirmation

If plagiarism is suspected, the next step is to try to locate the source. This can be done in a variety of ways:

- By typing a four to six word phrase from the text directly into a search engine or into sites run by newspapers, magazines, online encyclopaedias, subject specific sites, and those sites providing help with essays
- By using computer programmes aimed at detecting plagiarism
- By conducting an oral assessment of the learner

Reporting

If plagiarism is suspected, the matter will be reported immediately to ILM, together with supporting evidence, i.e:

- Identification of any irregularities that have taken place and by whom
- Cause and scale of the irregularities
- Suggestion on how to mitigate against the risk of the same incident occurring in future

Any individual alleged to be involved in Plagiarism will be informed of the allegation that has been made and the evidence that supports that allegation, and the individual will be given the opportunity to submit a written statement to the investigating team.

Investigation outcomes

If the investigation confirms that plagiarism has taken place, dependent on the gravity and scope, one or more of the following actions will be taken:

- Disallowing all or part of a learner's assessment, examination, evidence or arks
- The learner's certificates will not be issued, or previously issued invalid certificates for the learners will be withdrawn
- No further registrations will be accepted by the learners