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BTEC Centre Guide to Plagiarism

2023 - 2024

Contents

Introduction

Plagiarism is attempting to pass off other people's work and ideas as your own.

Plagiarism can include:

- *copying from another learner, copying from books or the internet*
- *paraphrasing*
- *subcontracting the work to someone else*
- *submitting the same piece of work for two different purposes*

Why is plagiarism wrong?
- It is fundamentally dishonest.
- Learners who commit plagiarism are seeking an unfair advantage over other learners.
- Learners who commit plagiarism are devaluing the value of the qualification they seek.
- It is disrespectful to their Assessors, and a betrayal of their trust.

What are the consequences of plagiarism?
- Learners who commit plagiarism learn far less than those who do not.
- Assessment procedures are compromised if the work submitted is not the learner's own.
- Assessors are unable to form correct decisions on the progress of individual learners.
- It may result in legal action due to infringement of copyright laws.
- It may be penalised by failure in one or more components of a course.
- It could be unfairly interpreted as professional incompetence on the part of the Assessor.

Why does plagiarism happen?

There are many reasons. Learners may:

- not understand what is meant by plagiarism, because it has never been explained to them.
- not believe plagiarism to be wrong; they download music, video clips and games all the time.
- not understand the concept of individual ownership of ideas and words have misconceptions about the ownership of electronic material.
- struggle to differentiate between intellectual property rights and common knowledge.
- regard the conventions of academic documentation as unimportant or irrelevant to them.
- lack referencing skills, and therefore be unable to record and cite sources correctly.
- lack the study skills, research skills and writing skills needed to produce the work required.
- not know how to adapt published literature sources so that they do not require citation.
- regard plagiarism as a short cut to success.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Use in Assessments

While the potential for student artificial intelligence (AI) misuse is new, most of the ways to prevent its misuse and mitigate the associated risks are not; centres will already have established measures in place to ensure that students are aware of the importance of submitting their own independent work for assessment and for identifying potential malpractice. The JCQ guidance reminds teachers and assessors of best practice in this area, applying it in the context of AI use.

The guidance emphasises the following requirements:

- As has always been the case, and in accordance with section 5.3(j) of the JCQ General Regulations for Approved Centres, *all work submitted for qualification assessments must be the students' own;*
- Students who misuse Artificial Intelligence (AI) such that the work they submit for assessment is not their own will have committed malpractice, in accordance with JCQ regulations, and may attract severe sanctions:
- Students and centre staff must be aware of the risks of using AI and must be clear on what constitutes malpractice:
- Students must make sure that work submitted for assessment is demonstrably their own. If any sections of their work are reproduced directly from AI generated responses, those elements must be identified by the student and they must understand that this will not allow them to demonstrate that they have independently met the marking criteria and therefore will not be rewarded (please see the Acknowledging AI Use section contained in the guidance here);
- Teachers and assessors must only accept work for assessment which they consider to be the students' own (in accordance with section 5.3(j) of the JCQ General Regulations for Approved Centres); and
- Where teachers have doubts about the authenticity of student work submitted for assessment (for example, they suspect that parts of it have been generated by AI, but this has not been acknowledged), they must investigate and take appropriate action.

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AI tools must only be used when the conditions of the assessment permit the use of the internet and where the learner is able to demonstrate that the work is their own. According to JCQ (2023) some examples of AI misuse include:

- copying or paraphrasing sections of AI-generated content so that the work is no longer the student's own.
- copying or paraphrasing whole responses of AI-generated content
- using AI to complete parts of the assessment so that the work does not reflect the student's own work, analysis, evaluation, or calculations.
- failing to acknowledge use of AI tools when they have been used as a source of information.
- incomplete or poor acknowledgement of AI tools.
- submitting work with intentionally incomplete or misleading references or bibliographies.

How can we support learners to use AI effectively and appropriately?

- Effective Referencing – Acknowledging the use of AI is crucially important in upholding the integrity of the qualification and assessment. For guidance to share with learners please see page 5 of the JCQ Guidance for Teachers and Assessors found here. This would be a useful addition to explore during the learner induction and throughout the learner's study programme.
- AI could be selectively integrated so that students are able to reflect on appropriate uses and connect their reflections to learning competencies.
- Ensure student understanding in how they will be graded – Inviting students to collaboratively establish learning goals and criteria for the task, whilst considering the role of AI, will help students to evaluate the appropriate contexts with which AI could be used as a learning tool. Some examples of this can be found below:
  - *Assessing Student Proficiency* – AI can provide diagnostic assessments to help determine strengths and developments in a learner's knowledge base. As a result, AI can then prompt learners to focus on specific learning materials best suited for their skills level and gaps in knowledge.
  - *Adaptive Learning Pathways* – AI algorithms can help to create personalised learning pathways i.e., to develop a well-rounded learning pathway, and AI system could recommend learning tools that are visual in nature (infographics, videos) as well as text-based learning tools (article reviews).

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- *Real Time Feedback* – AI can provide real time feedback on student performance. Thus, allowing learners to understand where they are making mistakes and provide support in how to correct them.
- *Collaborative Learning Environments* – AI can be used to create collaborative digital environments, meaning students can work together. AI can then act as a moderator, suggesting resources that are required, assisting with project management, and evaluating performance. Students can then understand how AI can facilitate developments in their own collaborative learning environments.

- Reconsider the contexts of assessment – Good assessment practice will invite students to present their work in different formats (discussion, presentations, video articulation etc). A question to consider here: Are there other authentic ways of assessing student learning?

Minimising the Risk of Plagiarism

The most important thing you can do is contribute to a culture in which learners do not consider plagiarism an option.

You should:
- develop clear policies and procedures re plagiarism and other forms of academic misconduct.
- explain at induction what is meant by 'plagiarism' and how it will be monitored and policed.
- explain, at an early stage of the course, the concepts of individual ownership of ideas and words, the ownership of electronic material and the difference between 'intellectual property' and 'common knowledge'.
- provide instruction in study skills, research skills, writing skills, time management skills and the use of a suitable referencing system to record and cite sources correctly.
- insist upon the use of referencing bibliographies from day one.
- act as a team, with every Assessor rigorously applying centre policies on referencing and bibliographies.
- avoid the use of highly generic assignments and, instead, produce contextualised tasks that require the learner to research in depth and individually analyse and evaluate their findings.
- include an authenticity statement with every assignment: learners must sign and date the authenticity statement to acknowledge that the work produced

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is their own and that they understand the penalties that will be imposed on learners who do submit plagiarised work.
- provide learners with opportunities to discuss any problems they may encounter, support them at each step and provide them with the resources they need to do the work properly.
- ensure that learners are not overloaded by providing them with an assessment schedule, agreed by all the course team, and then ensure that the team adheres to the schedule.

How to Identify Plagiarism

The expertise of individual Assessors is the best safeguard against plagiarism, supported by appropriate technology where available.

Check learner work for:
- the use of unfamiliar words
- grammar and syntax of a standard far higher than that demonstrated previously.
- a discontinuous rise in the quality and accuracy of the learner's work
- the use of texts familiar to the Assessor, but without appropriate referencing
- the use of American spellings and unfamiliar product names.

You might also:
- build a spoken element into the assessment process, wherever appropriate, to check on understanding (e.g., viva voce, presentation with questions)
- ask learners to elaborate on suspect passages within their work.
- type a few selected phrases into a search engine such as Google: simple but effective.
- employ a sophisticated electronic plagiarism detection device such as 'Turnitin' or through 'Google Classroom Originality Reports' or other platforms you may use.
- familiarise yourself with the more widely used 'essay banks/ghost writing services' to be found on the internet.
- pay particular attention to those learners who perform well in coursework but much less well in examinations and tests.
- share concerns with colleagues. If everyone has the same suspicions about a particular learner, it will seem appropriate to apply rigorous checks to all their work.

Whilst we do not recommend any specific AI plagiarism detection applications, there are some available that can be used to help detect the use of open AI sources for assessment. However, this should always be in line with your centres GDPR policies and procedures to prevent the sharing of learner's personal information.

Policies and Procedures Needed to Address Plagiarism

You will need to have policies and procedures in place to address this issue. These policies and procedures should include:

- a precise definition of plagiarism and other forms of academic misconduct
- a statement of why plagiarism, and all other forms of academic misconduct, are wrong.
- the actions that will be taken by the centre to address the culture of plagiarism.
- the techniques that will be used to monitor learners' assessed work and detect plagiarism.
- the procedures that will be employed to investigate allegations of plagiarism and the actions taken if plagiarism is found.
- details of the appeals system for learners to use when appealing against decisions made.

If you have a question, please contact BTEC Assessment or your Vocational Quality Assurance Manager via [The Pearson Contact Portal](#).

In addition, you will find further information on our [Quality Assurance webpages](#).

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