

PLAGIARISM/ACADEMIC MIS-CONDUCT POLICY

Policy Statement

Academic Misconduct

Any student found guilty of an academic offence as defined in WE's Academic Policies, Regulations and Procedures may ultimately be excluded from WE. Please note that any student who is excluded from WE because of an academic offence / plagiarism will not be entitled to a refund of any fees paid for the current, or previous, year(s) of study. In these circumstances the student will continue to be liable for any monies owed to WE.

Plagiarism Policy

Introduction

As an organisation that carries out assessment Winsor Education has an obligation to assessment bodies, its employers and society in general to ensure that the qualifications its learners receive are a fair and accurate representation of their work, and of the knowledge and skills attained. Plagiarism, and other forms of cheating, undermine the value of qualifications for all concerned because they undermine their credibility. If a learner passes an assessment, or gets a qualification, by unfair means then this is unfair to those who have achieved the same qualification fairly. For these reasons the College will take all appropriate measures to ensure that learners work is in fact their own, and that plagiarism and other forms of cheating have not taken place. The College will also take appropriate action where plagiarism is detected.

What is plagiarism?

Plagiarism is a form of cheating. More fully, Neville (2007) describes plagiarism as "a practice that involves knowingly taking and using another person's work and claiming it, directly or indirectly, as your own".

However, this definition covers a range of degrees of seriousness and intent. Learners may be motivated, for example, by laziness as well as by a direct intent to obtain a qualification unfairly. In practice it can also be difficult to distinguish between deliberate plagiarism and failure to acknowledge sources appropriately.

There is a clear difference of degree between poor referencing of a quotation and the deliberate passing off of an entire piece of work with the intention of obtaining a qualification unfairly. It should be noted, however, that whether it is intentional or not, plagiarism presents a problem when it interferes with the accurate assessment of a learner's ability – it subverts the purpose of assessment.

Plagiarism can also be seen as a breach of trust between lecturers and their learners and between society and its members, and as such issues relating to plagiarism are matters of citizenship, honesty and fairness.

College Policy

Winsor Education is committed to the detection of plagiarism, to taking appropriate measures when it is detected and to the implementation of preventative measures including:

- Informing its learners of the College position on plagiarism
- Engendering in its learners an ethos of fairness and appropriate reward for effort expended (as part of the College's commitment to Citizenship)
- The promotion of effective assessment design and assessment practice
- Ensuring that learners are properly instructed in what constitutes fair practice and appropriate referencing
- Taking disciplinary action as appropriate

By enrolling at the College, learners agree to the following:

- The transfer of their College course work and data relating to this work outside the EU for purposes of plagiarism detection.
- The transfer of work submitted for assessment to third parties for the purpose of present and future plagiarism detection.
- The processing of such work and related data for the purposes of plagiarism detection and the provision of information to the College relating to this work.

The above will be carried out only for the purposes of plagiarism detection, and will involve:

1. Comparison with other works, published or unpublished, either on the internet or in some other electronic form
2. Comparison with works previously submitted by learners for purposes of assessment and maintained on the databases of the third party supplier of plagiarism detection services
3. Addition of the work submitted to the above databases for purposes of future plagiarism detection (see Appendix 2)

Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of all learners and staff to ensure that learner work submitted for purposes of assessment, especially purposes of summative assessment, is in fact their own work. The following details the specific responsibilities of learners and various members of staff.

Learners

It is the responsibility of learners:

- To ensure that work submitted for purposes of assessment is their own
- To ensure that the words and arguments of others are appropriately cited and referenced using an accepted referencing system such as the Harvard referencing system.

Learners must not simply copy materials from other learners, past or present, from written sources, from the Internet, or from any other source whether this is through cutting and pasting, rewriting or by any other means. Changing a few words within a copied piece of text does not render this original and still counts as plagiarism. In short, work submitted by learners must be their own unless it is specifically indicated within the text through appropriate referencing that this is not the case – or where originality was clearly not a requirement of the assessment being undertaken.

Teaching Staff

It is the responsibility of teaching staff:

To stress to their learners the unethical nature of plagiarism

To make clear to learners the College's policy on plagiarism and the consequences if they fail to comply

To ensure that learners have the knowledge and skills required to enable them to cite and reference appropriately

Guidelines for staff

The following document expands on the information in the College Plagiarism Policy, and is intended to guide practice. While it is intended principally for the guidance of teaching staff, it will be of relevance to others, such as College Guidance staff. The document should be read in conjunction with the policy.

Responsibilities of teaching staff

It is the responsibility of teaching staff to stress to their learners the unethical nature of plagiarism, to make clear the College's policy on it and to inform learners of the consequences to themselves if they fail to comply. It is also their responsibility to ensure that learners have the knowledge and skills required to enable them to cite and reference material appropriately. In general this requirement can be met by introducing them to the use of an accepted referencing system such as the Harvard system. It may also be fruitful to introduce plagiarism as a part of Citizenship and to stress the values of fairness and just desert within society.

It is also the responsibility of teaching staff to take all possible measures to ensure that when plagiarism occurs it is detected and appropriate action taken. Evidence of plagiarism should be carefully gathered and retained. Issues relating to plagiarism by an individual learner or learners are confidential matters and should be treated as such. All records should be kept with due concern for confidentiality and the need for evidence.

Standards should be applied fairly by staff so that accusations cannot be made of unequal treatment.

Teaching staff can also take preventative action through appropriate design of assessment. This might include, for example:

- More individualised assessments
- The use of question banks rather than static, identical assessment for all learners
- Frequent changing of assessment instruments
- Appropriate supervision

- Teaching staff should ensure that they set a good example to learners through the adoption of good referencing practice themselves.