



Plagiarism Policy

FOR CENTRES AND LEARNERS

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1 Introduction

EduQual performs and maintains comprehensive quality assurance processes and procedures. These procedures are designed to safeguard EduQual's integrity as a business and as an Awarding Body, and are also designed to ensure the validity of EduQual-accredited qualifications and EduQual-accredited assessment methodology. In particular, EduQual maintains up-to-date policies for staff and Centres in order to meet any requirements stipulated by the regulatory authorities.

This Plagiarism Policy for Centres and Learners is designed to provide definitions of what constitutes plagiarism, guidelines for avoiding plagiarism and the actions taken should instances of suspected plagiarism arise.

Please note that it is the responsibility of the Centre to ensure that:

1. All members of Centre staff who are involved in the management, delivery, assessment, and quality assurance of EduQual qualifications are aware of and comply with this policy¹
2. Learners are aware of the requirements and/or constraints detailed by this policy, and that these requirements and/or constraints are communicated to Learners by the Centre's tutors as part of their programme of learning.

2 Definition

Plagiarism is the term used to describe a situation where the work of a third party (whether published or not) is presented as one's own work, and where there is neither indication nor acknowledgement of the originating third party's ownership and/or contribution to the work.

The two main types of plagiarism could be described as:

Intentional Plagiarism

- Buying essays from 'essay banks' or 'paper mills'
- Impersonation whereby someone else does the work that should be done by the Learner
- Falsifying or misrepresenting information sources used in producing the work
- Directly copying the work of another Learner including within an exam or test setting

(Possibly) Unintentional Plagiarism

- Use of copied (and pasted) work without quoting/referencing the source
- Not using quotation marks from quotations
- Paraphrasing the work of others and without referencing the source
- Copying work previously completed by others, perhaps from previous years, and submitting that work as one's own

¹ Centres may of course create their own plagiarism policies, but must comply with any requirements and/or constraints detailed herein.

2.1 Why do Learners Plagiarise?

Reasons why learners might plagiarise include:

- Not really knowing what plagiarism is
- Feeling pressured by timescale or through leaving things to the 'last minute'
- Not appreciating how much research can be involved in responding to an assessment and especially at higher levels
- To avoid failure or to achieve higher grades
- To avoid working too hard and leave time for other things
- Poor learning experiences, or deliberate encouragement, from Centres and their teachers
- Cultural differences which appear to indicate the knowledge (or words expressing that knowledge) of others must be copied verbatim

2.2 Applications of this Policy

This policy applies to any material borrowed from texts (whether published or unpublished) as well as to any information that has been sourced from the internet. **This policy applies equally to collusion (unauthorised collaboration between Learners), and plagiarised material presented as a Learner's own original work is considered to be a form of cheating and will be dealt with appropriately by EduQual as required and expected by the regulatory authorities.**

2.3 Punitive Measures

EduQual takes accusations of plagiarism against the Learners of its accredited Centres very seriously. It is the duty of EduQual to comply fully with guidelines on plagiarism as stipulated by the regulatory authorities, and any breach of these guidelines will be investigated with appropriate and professional rigour.

Where an accusation of plagiarism is proven, EduQual or an EduQual-accredited Centre may:

- 1) **Dismiss/discount/discredit** a Learner's work
- 2) **Suspend** and/or **disqualify** a Learner.

Either measure may result in a Learner's failure/non-achievement. Please see also the EduQual 'Malpractice and Maladministration Policy'.

Note:

1. A Learner may be suspended from their EduQual programme while an investigation into an accusation of plagiarism is underway, pending the outcome of the result into that investigation.
2. Where Centres are found to be culpable/involved in the plagiarism of one or more Learners plagiarism, EduQual may:
 - Investigate Centre practice for malpractice

- Apply sanctions to a Centre e.g. block certification
- Ultimately, withdraw approval of a Centre (e.g. where there is no Centre response to actions set out by EduQual)

3 Avoiding Plagiarism - Guidance

As stipulated above and in broad terms, a Learner should always avoid presenting the work of a third party/collaborator as his or her own, authentic and original, work. Learners **must** acknowledge the use of someone else's work through adequate referencing in the body of their work (in-text referencing or citation) **and** by linking their citations to a list of works cited (also reference list or bibliography). Accurate referencing will not only help to avoid accusations of plagiarism, but will also direct the reader to the sources efficiently and help Learners to show:

- that their arguments are clearly supported by evidence
- that they have read widely and consulted a number of sources to help form their arguments
- that they can produce work that reflects expected academic values and practice

EduQual recommends that its Centres adopt the Harvard Style Referencing system. However, any system of referencing is acceptable so long as the referencing is accurate, consistent and does not 'switch' between systems/styles within the body of a Learner's work. Centres are expected to sufficiently prepare their Learners to utilise the adopted system of referencing in their works. Likewise, each Centre must ensure that its assessors are adept at marking the Learners' use of that particular system.

3.1 Referencing

A more comprehensive guide to Harvard Referencing appears as part of EduQual's CAAP Guidance document, which also contains useful information on using critical thinking. In the event that you have not yet received a CAAP Guidance document, please contact EduQual to receive a copy.²

When citing work from a third party, whether published or unpublished, a reference should be inserted in the Learner's work at the appropriate place, indicating and acknowledging the origin of that material. Further, the Learner's work should be presented in a clear way that makes it easy for an examiner/assessor to distinguish third-party material from the Learner's own work.

Learners should go on to prepare a list of 'works cited' (also a known as a reference list or bibliography) at the end of their written work, allowing readers/examiners/assessors to consult those works for further details as and when desired/needed and thus completing the reference.

Note that sources do not necessarily have to be copied verbatim for accusations of plagiarism to be levelled against Learners. Ideas derived from third-party works and then presented without proper acknowledgement also count as examples of plagiarism.

² Via the email address info@eduqual.org.uk

3.1.1 Example of Good Practice in Referencing

The following two examples of good referencing using the Harvard-style use *How to Choose Stockmarket Winners* by Raymond Caley. The first example shows an in-text reference; the second shows how the book will be listed within the bibliography to a piece of work. The bibliography is sometimes known by the term 'works cited'; either term is fine so long as all published material drawn on in a piece of work is listed.

A bibliography/works cited section should appear at the end of a submitted assignment.

Example of an in-text Harvard-style reference:

It is worth remembering, as Raymond Caley points out, that: 'the City expects stockbroker analysts to be accurate with their forecasts extending well ahead' (Caley, 1993, p.79).

Example of a bibliography/works cited entry:

This example shows the correct format of the author's name (Raymond Caley), the year in which the book was published (1993), the place where it was published (Kent) and the name of the publisher (Piatkus):

Caley, R., 1993. *How To Choose Stockmarket Winners*. Kent: Piatkus.

3.1.2 Example of Bad Practice in Referencing

In the following example, there is no cited material and the work is (at least in this case) clearly plagiarised from the above source, making it seem as though the Learner has originated the text.

Example of bad practice – lack of source citation:

It is worth noting that the City expects stockbroker analysts to be accurate with their forecasts.

3.2 Centres and Avoiding Plagiarism

EduQual requires that Centres use reputable and authentic plagiarism checker technology (such as anti-plagiarism software that checks electronically-submitted documents against online sources). EduQual does not consider plagiarism software alone to be a replacement for the professional judgement of a Centre's assessors. Assessors must continue to scrutinise Learner work and are expected to be able to identify examples of plagiarism where it exists.

Amongst their other duties, EduQual's contracted External Examiners/Verifiers will confirm the proper use of plagiarism software during their Centre visits, as well as through the sampling of Learner works as part of Remote Quality Sampling or the Centre Assessment Awards Panel procedures.

3.2.1 Examples of 'Spotting' Plagiarism – Guidance for Centres

Visual Checks should focus on the following which can be signs of plagiarised work:

- Changes in font/font size for different passages of work
- Varied indentation and line spacing
- Lack of relationship, and flow between, one paragraph and another
- No or little link between the task set and the work done in response to that task

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- Absence of meaningful referencing
- Random and unattributed hyperlinks/URLs
- Use of synonym tools and as often signposted by statements in the work which do not make sense
- Use of out of date or obscure sources of information
- Use of irrelevant information e.g. using US economic data unrelated to a question/task on the UK economy

3.2.2 Avoiding Plagiarism – Guidance for Centres

The following will help Centres avoid plagiarism in the work of Learners though it is not an all-inclusive list

- Training of staff for spotting signs of plagiarism
- Induction Guidance for Learners so that they know what it is and how they can avoid it
- Use of plagiarism detection software such as Turnitin or Plagscan
- Use of search engines for identifying sources of phrases
- Confirmation by Learner's that their work is authentic and as supported by dialogue with the appropriate Centre staff

3.2.3 Using Turnitin (or equivalent)

EduQual requires its Centres to use Turnitin or similar reliable applications to generate anti-plagiarism reports for written work.³

While EduQual prefers its Centres to use Turnitin, an acceptable alternative is PlagScan.⁴

Regardless of similarity score, such reports must be scrutinised in tandem and with a critical appraisal of Learner work by Centre assessors and IQAs.

'Acceptable' similarity scores: Most UK universities accept anything up to 15% as a similarity score on written work. However, the appearance of such a score is not a guarantee that work has not been plagiarised, and Centre staff must remain vigilant before submitting work to EduQual for external review. Note also that a '0%' similarity score is often itself suspicious.

³ Full URL for Turnitin: <https://www.turnitin.com/gateway/>

⁴ Full URL for PlagScan: <https://www.plagscan.com/en/>

4 Right of Appeal against Identified Plagiarism

Where a Learner wishes to dispute an accusation of plagiarism made against them which results in their suspension, discredit, or disqualification, the Learner may appeal through the Centre and if that fails to resolve the issue, directly to EduQual. **Where appeals are made, note that the Learner must have reasonable grounds for doing so; it is not an indiscriminate process.** For full details of EduQual's appeals processes and procedures, please see EduQual's Appeals Policy.⁵

⁵ Found on the EduQual policies page: [eduqual.org.uk/about/policies](https://www.eduqual.org.uk/about/policies)

Annex: ‘Artificial Intelligence’, ChatGPT, and other LLMs

EduQual will not certificate work that has been identified as having been artificially generated. It will be treated as a form of academic dishonesty in the same way as plagiarism. What follows in this annex is guidance, a selection of tools and strategies, and online reference materials to help Centre assessors and Internal Quality Assurers identify (and if necessary, challenge) Learner work where it is suspected to have been generated artificially.

Definitions

The term **Artificial Intelligence** (AI) is often imprecisely defined. A **Large Language Model (LLM)** is a form of **Artificial Narrow Intelligence** (ANI), or ‘weak AI’. ChatGPT is one such LLM.

ANI LLMs such as ChatGPT use learning algorithms that can create written work to a specified brief. In academic terms and from EduQual’s point of view of course, this only matters where a Learner uses such an application to cheat, which represents a form of academic dishonesty.

While any LLM can have legitimate uses as a tool, its potential misuse to facilitate academic cheating has already been identified. As a result, EduQual’s QA Team (as well as EduQual-appointed External Examiners and External Quality Assurers) are alert to its use within written work.

Identification

Identifying work generated by LLMs such as ChatGPT can be difficult. It requires Centre assessors and Internal Quality Assurers to be vigilant as they review Learner work.

1. Check Bibliography and in-text references

LLMs often mistakenly cite sources that have nothing to do with what the subject on which they are writing. For example, an assignment about Apple Inc. may include inapposite references to agriculture.

Look for:

- Sources in the bibliography that do not seem to ‘belong’ (i.e. are unrelated to the assignment).
- In-text references that are irrelevant and / or do not match the bibliography in a Learner’s work.

It is important to note that LLMs will sometimes plagiarise existing published work as a means of responding to a user’s brief. An LLM can sometimes extrapolate from data but will also copy it wholesale from a piece of published work, or from a news article to which it has access.

2. Check tone and language

In the same way that you would interrogate Learner work for plagiarism, assessors and IQAs can look for language / tone variations within a Learner's work. Where the language or tone is markedly different from other work they have already produced, this can be spotted more easily. Often, these changes in tone and language can appear in a single piece of written work, or even in a single paragraph.

Look for:

- **Tone and language differences.**
 - LLM writing may jump from being formal to informal in tone, as it pulls information from (or attempts to replicate) online news articles, existing work that has been published online, blogs, or even social media posts. Tone will sometimes gain a 'chatty' style that is at odds with the rest of a Learner's work.
 - LLMs will present text in a different way than the Learner would. Assessors who are already familiar with a Learner's work will be able to spot this more easily. **Suggestion:** Setting periodic, small written exercises for Learners to complete throughout the delivery of an EduQual Qualification or EduQual-accredited customised course can help you to gain an understanding of a Learner's grasp of written language and the way in which they express their ideas and present information.
 - Sections of text that may appear in a different language to the rest of the work (e.g. English text suddenly but temporarily switching to French).
- **Coherency.**
 - Sometimes text will appear to be incoherent or meaningless. This can also indicate where a Learner has attempted to 'synonymise' words in order to bypass software anti-plagiarism checks.
- **Spelling differences and punctuation.**
 - For example, sections of work that use UK English spellings and US English spellings interchangeably.
 - Individual characters that should not be there. For example, in pulling or extrapolating from text from a variety of online sources, an LLM will sometimes produce inaccurate diacritical marks (or 'accents') and replace them with a string of code or unusual symbol (e.g. a dollar sign or asterisk).
 - Odd, unusual, or inappropriate punctuation may sometimes appear.
- **'Rude' or otherwise improper language.**
 - Bad language / profanity can sometimes appear within AI-generated text.

3. Using ChatGPT 'detector' applications: a caveat

Applications that purport to be able to detect artificially-generated text are sometimes unreliable.

You must interrogate Learner work and use your own critical judgement in the same way as you would if you suspect a Learner of producing plagiarised work.

You can sign up to (for instance) OpenAI's own detector at <https://platform.openai.com/ai-text-classifier>, but you should never rely on this alone.⁶

Challenging Learners where artificially-generated work is suspected

Mitigating the use of LLMs can be difficult, and tutors will need to deal in a direct but sensitive way with Learners where artificially-generated work is suspected.

1. Talk with your Learners

Be clear with Learners where you suspect that their work may be inauthentic.

- Explain to them why the originality of their work is important (i.e. to demonstrate their learning and for the Qualification which they are trying to achieve to have intrinsic value).
- Ask them directly if they have used ChatGPT (or other LLM).
 - Where Learners answer 'no', outline the elements in their work that drew your attention (e.g. you have compared it to some of their previous work, or the subject / context of their work is at times irrelevant or inappropriate). Ask the Learner if they received any additional help with their work. You may require the Learner to revise their work having pointed out any flaws (and having identified your own awareness of the capabilities and drawbacks of AI applications)
 - Where Learners answer 'yes', ask them why they used it. You can also ask them what prompts they used to generate the response. You will require the Learner to revise their work having pointed out any flaws (and having identified your own awareness of the capabilities and drawbacks of AI applications)

Similarly to instances where Learners resort to plagiarism, time pressures or 'blockages' in trains of thought can often lead a Learner to attempt academically dishonest practices. Create an 'action plan' for the Learner to help them. This might include offering them (where appropriate) additional time for them to complete their studies with you.

You should always:

- Make clear the reasons why the creation of original writing is important (as above).
- Ensure that Learners understand the use (and limits of) 'AI' applications like ChatGPT and similar LLMs.
- Communicate clearly and constructively with Learners, even where you suspect academic malpractice has taken place.

⁶ An updated version of ChatGPT is due to be released by the end of 2023. At that time, it is likely that detection tools will be unequal to the task of identifying artificially-generated text until they too are updated.

Online resources

A number of online resources exist that may prove useful to tutors, assessors, and IQAs.

Guidance from the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ)

<https://www.jcq.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/JCQ-AI-Use-in-Assessments-Protecting-the-Integrity-of-Qualifications.pdf>

Toolkit for Addressing AI Plagiarism in the Classroom

<https://s3.amazonaws.com/quill-image-uploads/uploads/files/A Toolkit for Addressing AI Plagiarism in the Classroom 2746.pdf>

AI writing 'detectors'

Please note that as stated above, these are not totally reliable.

<https://platform.openai.com/ai-text-classifier> (you will need to sign up for this)

<https://aiwritingcheck.org/>