

Appendix: Guidelines on Plagiarism

Definition of plagiarism

Plagiarism has been defined in many ways, however the definition that we find most useful is that of Carroll (2002), which states that

'Plagiarism is defined as passing off someone else's work, whether intentionally or unintentionally, as your own for your own benefits' (Carroll, 2002).

This means that plagiarism includes:

- using someone else's words and/or ideas as if they were your own,
- using someone else's results as if they were your own,
- copying chunks from textbooks without stating where the material came from and without any contribution of your own.

Sharing work with someone else and pooling ideas is **not** plagiarism as long as the work you produce acknowledges the contribution from each of you. In fact, on your course you will be encouraged to work in groups on numerous occasions to share ideas and information.

Why is plagiarism morally wrong?

Plagiarism is morally wrong because it is dishonest and steals other people's ideas. Apart from that if you plagiarise your assignments you will not be demonstrating to your tutors your own knowledge and you learn little by copying someone else's work.

What is collusion?

Collusion occurs when students work together on an assignment but each student submits the assignment as if it were all their own work. For example if two of you work together on a laboratory exercise and have one set of results, you must then write and submit the report individually. If students submit very similar reports and it is clear that they have worked together they will be found guilty of collusion and penalised accordingly.

Working collaboratively, when instructed to do so, is **not** collusion. An example might be when you are instructed to work in a group to produce a poster.

You should **never** lend or email an assignment to a fellow student because you will open yourself up to accusations of collusion and /or plagiarism if they copy any part of it, even though you have done all the work.

Scenario 1

Student A is **guilty of plagiarism** because they have directly copied a number of statements from the book without stating the source of the information. Even if they did state the source of the information they would still

be guilty of plagiarism because the text is copied word for word and is not within quotation marks.

Student B is also **guilty of plagiarism** even though s/he has cited the source. There is no indication of the extent of copying from the book and no attempt to discuss the information in his/her own words.

The example from Student C is **not plagiarism** because they have used quotation marks to show how much has been taken from the book. . Some students submit assignments which consist of a series of quotations where the source *has* been cited. Technically this is not plagiarism but is **poor practice** and will not get good marks.

Scenario 2

Student D has attempted to paraphrase the information from the textbook, however they should still cite the source of the information as it is sufficiently similar to the book. Without reference to the source of information the student is guilty of plagiarism.

Student E is **guilty of plagiarism** because s/he has copied word for word. To avoid charges of plagiarism both students should cite the source of the information.

Student F has attempted to explain the information in his/her own words and is **not guilty** of plagiarism. S/he would be expected to quote any sources they have used in a bibliography.

Scenario 3

Student G is definitely **guilty of plagiarism** as the entire essay has been written by someone else. In addition, the listing of 12 other references which were not used is a clear attempt to deceive.

Student H is also **guilty of plagiarism** since none of the essay was their own work even though three internet sources were given. It is **not acceptable** to submit an essay which has been entirely or even partly copied in this way.

Student I is **not** guilty of plagiarism because they have referenced their sources correctly. To avoid a charge of plagiarism (and because it is good academic practice) you should reference web sources in the same way as you would a textbook.

Scenario 4

Both of you will be accused of plagiarism and/or collusion. Your tutor will not know whether one of you has copied from the other (plagiarism) or whether you have worked together and produced identical reports. For this reason you will both be penalised and may both be subjected to a disciplinary procedure. In actual fact, your friend is **guilty of plagiarism** whilst you are guilty of **aiding plagiarism**. You should never allow a fellow student to copy your work even if you have carried out a laboratory exercise together.

Scenario 5

If you download a figure from an Internet website, or even photocopy a figure from a book, you must reference the source of the figure to avoid being accused of plagiarism. The **best practice** is to cite the reference on the figure

itself and in the reference list, including the date it was accessed. You should always write a legend which is appropriate to the figure as used in your essay.

Scenario 6

It is not wrong for students to work together, and you may well be encouraged to do so. However, students are colluding when they write the essay together and guilty of collusion when they write the essay in class because each student is then submitting the work as their own. The students will be penalised because tutors will not know who has done the work.

Endnote

Students often do worry about committing plagiarism unintentionally. In the questionnaire that you completed, we included the most common types of plagiarism and collusion that we come across. Because the penalties for plagiarism may be severe, you need to be aware of which activities are wrong and which are examples of poor practice. A good student will avoid both. If you are in any doubt about whether you are plagiarising in an assignment, you should check with the tutor who set that assignment.

Reference

Carroll, J (2002) A handbook for deterring plagiarism in higher education (Oxford Brookes University).

Supplementary Material : The Plagiarism Questionnaire

The purpose of this questionnaire is to get you to think about what is meant by the term 'plagiarism' The questionnaire is in two sections:

Section A contains a few multiple-choice questions.

Section B contains a number of scenarios. Read through them and answer the questions.

Please complete this on your own; the answers are **anonymous**.

Section A

In each case you should circle the answer(s) which you feel are correct. Circle as many answers as you think appropriate

1. Plagiarism is:

- a) Using someone else's words as if they were your own
- b) Using someone else's ideas as if they were your own
- c) Using someone else's results as if they were your own
- d) Sharing work with someone else and pooling ideas
- e) Getting your ideas from a text book

2. Plagiarism is morally wrong because:

- a) You may get caught and lose marks
- b) It is dishonest
- c) Assignments that are plagiarised fail to demonstrate your knowledge of the work
- d) You don't learn anything by copying someone else's work
- e) It steals other people's ideas

3) You may be accused of collusion if you:

- a) Submit an assignment produced as a joint effort, under your name only
- b) Copy a completed assignment that your friend has emailed to you
- c) Work in a group as instructed to produce a poster as a joint effort
- d) Lend a completed assignment to a friend, who then copies any part of it
- e) Pass off someone else's work as your own, for your own benefit

Section B : Plagiarism scenarios

Scenario 1 : The following paragraph is taken from 'Introduction to Transfusion Science' by (Overfield, Dawson and Hamer, 1999)

'The genes responsible for particular blood group antigens may be carried on the autosomal chromosomes or on the sex chromosomes. When they are carried on the sex chromosomes they are linked to the X-chromosome. As the genes may also be dominant, co-dominant or recessive, they can be inherited in a variety of possible ways. Most blood groups fall into the category of autosomal dominant or codominant, though X-linked dominant inheritance is occasionally seen, for example in the blood

group system Xg^a . The mating of heterozygous individuals may result in a homozygous recessive trait being inherited. For example, $H+$ parents, each of whom has the genotype Hh , may produce an offspring who has the genotype hh , and this is the genetic basis of the rare Bombay phenotype. Family pedigrees are sometimes used to trace the inheritance of a particular gene.'

Students were asked to write an essay on the inheritance of blood groups and the following paragraphs were written by students A, B and C:

Student A:

'All of us have a blood group that is passed down through families. Most blood groups fall into the category of autosomal dominant or codominant, though X-linked dominant inheritance is occasionally seen, for example in the blood group system Xg^a . The mating of heterozygous individuals may result in a homozygous recessive trait being inherited. For example, $H+$ parents, each of whom has the genotype Hh , may produce an offspring who has the genotype hh , and this is the genetic basis of the rare Bombay phenotype.'

Student B:

'Blood groups are determined by the presence of genes which code for antigens on red cells. Most blood groups fall into the category of autosomal dominant or codominant, though X-linked dominant inheritance is occasionally seen, for example in the blood group system Xg^a . The mating of heterozygous individuals may result in a homozygous recessive trait being inherited. For example, $H+$ parents, each of whom has the genotype Hh , may produce an offspring who has the genotype hh , and this is the genetic basis of the rare Bombay phenotype.' (Overfield, Dawson and Hamer, 1999)

Student C:

'Red blood cells have membrane cell surface antigens which are characteristic of a particular blood group. Overfield, Dawson and Hamer (1999) have stated that 'Most blood groups fall into the category of autosomal dominant or codominant, though X-linked dominant inheritance is occasionally seen, for example in the blood group system Xg^a . The mating of heterozygous individuals may result in a homozygous recessive trait being inherited. For example, $H+$ parents, each of whom has the genotype Hh , may produce an offspring who has the genotype hh , and this is the genetic basis of the rare Bombay phenotype.'

Question 1: Please read the above examples carefully and circle whether you feel any of the students are guilty of plagiarism

Student A	Yes	No
Student B	Yes	No
Student C	Yes	No

Question 2: If you believe that any of the above are examples of plagiarism, please give your reason below:

Student A

Student B

Student C

Scenario 2

The following is a short paragraph from a text book:

'T lymphocytes (both CD4+ and CD8+) respond to the foreign histocompatibility antigens on the surface of the donated cells. The immune system produces cytotoxic T lymphocytes (CTL) directed against the foreign histocompatibility antigens on the grafted cells' (Overfield, Dawson and Hamer, 1999)

Students D, E and F have all read the text when producing their essays on bone marrow transplantation. Their individual essays contain the following phrases:

Student D : 'The surface of the donated cells have foreign histocompatibility antigens to which T lymphocytes (both CD4+ and CD8+) respond.'

Student E: 'T lymphocytes (both CD4+ and CD8+) respond to the foreign histocompatibility antigens on the surface of the donated cells'

Student F: 'Histocompatibility antigens on the surface of the graft cells stimulate CD4+ and CD8+ lymphocytes. These cells recognise and respond to the foreign MHC antigens.'

Question 1 : Please read the above examples carefully and circle whether you feel they are examples of plagiarism:

Student D	Yes	No
Student E	Yes	No
Student F	Yes	No

Question 2: If you believe that any of the above are examples of plagiarism, please give your reason below:

Student D

Student E

Student F

Scenario 3

Students were asked to submit an essay entitled 'autoimmune disease'. All the essays were subjected to electronic detection of plagiarism, based on detection of key phrases, with the following results:

Student G:

This essay was found to be downloaded entirely from a single website which was not referenced. The student had listed 12 other references including books, journals and Internet sources.

Student H:

This essay was found to have been downloaded entirely from 3 Internet sources all of which were referenced.

Student I: This essay listed 12 references from books, journals and Internet sources. Electronic detection of plagiarism revealed that the Internet sources listed had been used correctly.

Question 1 : Please read the above examples carefully and circle whether you feel they are examples of plagiarism:

Student G	Yes	No
Student H	Yes	No
Student I	Yes	No

Question 2: If you believe that any of the above are examples of plagiarism, please give your reason below:

Student G

Student H

Student I

Scenario 4

The deadline for handing in a practical is Monday 30th September. You have completed your report by the 28th. Your friend, who partnered you in the practical class, calls round on Sunday evening- he has just remembered the deadline and is panicking because he has lost the results. You agree to lend him your practical report. Without your knowing, your friend copies the whole report and hands it in the following day. The tutor notices that the two pieces of work are identical, he speaks to both of you about it. Your friend denies copying your work.

Questions: please circle any statements which you think are correct:

- a) Your friend is guilty of plagiarism
- b) You are guilty of aiding plagiarism
- c) Copying the work was reasonable, since you had both worked together in class
- d) Your friend will be subjected to a disciplinary procedure
- e) You will be subjected to a disciplinary procedure

Scenario 5

Student J has produced an essay on nuclear pores. He has read the appropriate literature and written the essay, giving references to the literature where necessary. He has obtained a picture, with written title and legend, of nuclear pores from an internet website and has downloaded it entirely into his essay. In which of the following cases would this student be guilty of plagiarism?

- a) He has cited the web reference in the reference list at the end of the essay

- b) He has cited the web reference on the figure itself and in the reference list
- c) He has cited the web reference in both places and has re-written the legend.
- d) He has made no reference to where he obtained the figure

Scenario 6

A group of students have been given an essay title 'The use of spectrophotometry in the biosciences'. They have been told to research their essay, and that they will write the essay under examination conditions during a lecture period. Two students, K and L, have decided to work together to research different aspects of the subject. They get together to share what they have found. They then sit down and write an essay together which they memorise. The essays which they write in class are almost identical (with around 80% of the sentences and phrases being word-for-word). At what stage do you think the students are guilty of collusion? **(Circle one response only)**

- a) When they decide to work together?
- b) When they share the results of their research?
- c) When they write the essay together?
- d) When they memorise the essay?
- e) When they write the essay in class?

Now please fill in your course and level (below)

Course: _____

Level (circle) Foundation, Level 1, Level 2, Level 3, Postgraduate