



Queen Margaret University
EDINBURGH

QMU's Response to Plagiarism A Guide for Students and Staff

QMU's Assessment Regulations¹ define plagiarism as:

The presentation by an individual of another person's idea or work (in any medium, or unpublished) as though they were his or her own work...academic collusion is deemed to be unacceptable where it involves the unauthorised and unattributed collaboration of students or others' work resulting in plagiarism, which is against University discipline

For further guidance and information on how to avoid plagiarism, students are referred to the Effective Learning Service guidance, which can be found here: <https://www.qmu.ac.uk/study-here/student-services/effective-learning-service-els/how-to-avoid-plagiarism/>

The following procedures apply where plagiarism has been alleged in student work:

Any marker, or Module Co-ordinator, who suspects a case of plagiarism, meets with the Programme Leader initially in order to determine whether or not, at face value, the work presented has been plagiarised, or alternatively, the work presented represents poor academic practice.

Poor Academic Practice

Where it has been determined that the work presented represents poor academic practice, rather than plagiarism or collusion, the Programme Leader will meet with the student to provide feedback. Penalties applied to such work will be limited to the following:

- the mark may be reduced as appropriate to the rubric;
- a verbal warning may be given.

The Programme Leader will have a discussion with the student to ensure their full understanding regarding expected academic standards; to direct the student to the [Effective Learning Service](#); and to issue a verbal warning that any reoccurrence may be treated more seriously.

Repeated Instances of Poor Academic Practice or Alleged Moderate Plagiarism

Where instances of Poor Academic Practice are repeated, or where it has been determined that plagiarism (as defined above) has been identified, the Programme Leader will refer the matter to the Head of Division. No provisional mark will be issued until the next steps are determined.

Having reviewed the evidence available, the Head of Division will determine whether the allegation should be considered under the University Regulations Governing Discipline². Where the evidence available suggests the work presented for assessment has been plagiarised to a moderate degree, the Head of Division may move to a Summary Disciplinary Hearing under the provisions of the Regulations Governing Student Discipline. As the Head of Division is acting on the matter under powers delegated to the Head by the Dean of

¹ <https://www.qmu.ac.uk/media/6613/assessment-regulations-and-policy-december-2018.pdf>

² <https://www.qmu.ac.uk/media/3993/student-discipline.pdf>

School, under the Regulations Governing Student Discipline, the Dean of School and the University Secretary will be notified of the allegation, and the outcome of the investigation.

The Head of Division will conduct a summary hearing with a note-taker present. The student against whom the allegation has been made may be accompanied by a friend or a representative of the Students' Union, if they so request. If the allegation of plagiarism to a moderate extent is upheld, a penalty will be recommended to the Board of Examiners in line with the severity of the alleged misconduct and the powers provided for in a summary hearing. These may include:

- mark reduced to 0 G;
- mark capped at a 40/50 pass.

The Head of Division may suspend the meeting and refer the case to the Dean on the grounds of any additional evidence arising from the summary hearing that move the allegation from moderate to significant. No student may be disciplined twice for the same alleged offence.

Alleged Significant Plagiarism or Collusion

Where the allegation constitutes a repeat offence of plagiarism or collusion, involves the alleged use of 'essay mills' or where the extent of alleged copying or collusion is significant in scale, the following will apply.

The Dean of School will conduct a summary hearing with a note-taker present. If the allegation is upheld, penalties will be recommended to the Board of Examiners in line with the Regulations Governing Student Discipline, which include:

- marks may be reduced to 0 G;
- marks may be capped at a 40/50 pass;
- degree classification may be reduced;
- the student may be disallowed from further reassessment, which may result in the student being withdrawn by the Board of Examiners.

The Fitness to Practise Policy³ may also apply. Where significant plagiarism is alleged with respect to students on professional programmes, a full Disciplinary Hearing may be convened, the outcome of which may be suspension or withdrawal.

Full Disciplinary Hearings

In cases where the extent of the alleged plagiarism has been identified as significant, which will include allegations of repeated plagiarism, or cheating to an extent that would lead to potential suspension, exclusion or expulsion from the University, the University Secretary may determine that a full Disciplinary Hearing is required. QMU's Regulations Governing Discipline will apply. If a disciplinary allegation is upheld, the Disciplinary Hearing may determine that a student be suspended, excluded or expelled from their programme of study.

Staff are referred to the Plagiarism Flowchart for detailed guidance regarding procedures, and this should be read in conjunction with that document.

Student Experience Committee
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³ <https://www.qmu.ac.uk/media/3973/fitness-to-practise-policy.pdf>

