Addressing plagiarism: what is it, how do I spot it, and what do the University Regulations say?

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Session overview

1. What is plagiarism?
2. Using Turnitin to support students’ academic writing.
3. Using Turnitin and other approaches to identify plagiarism.
4. The Academic Regulations.
5. Putting a malpractice case together within your Department and for a University Panel.
1 What is plagiarism?

Definition of Malpractice, Appendix 8, p 4-6.
1 What is plagiarism?

2.2.2 Plagiarism is broadly described as an attempt to pass off work as one’s own which is not one’s own. It includes the representation of work, written or otherwise, of any other person, including another student, or any institution, as the candidate’s own. It may take the form of:

i. verbatim copying or insertion of another person’s work (published or unpublished and including material freely available in electronic form) without appropriate acknowledgement;

ii. the close paraphrasing of another person’s work by simply changing a few words or altering the order of presentation, without appropriate acknowledgement;

iii. unacknowledged quotation of phrases from another person’s work;
1 What is plagiarism?

iv. the deliberate and detailed presentation of another person’s concept as one’s own;

v. submitting the same piece of work twice for more than one coursework assessment unless authorised by the module leader. Such activity will be regarded as an offence of 'self-plagiarism'.
What are your worries around plagiarism?
2 Using Turnitin to support students’ academic writing.

“Turnitin. Turnitin is a commercial, Internet-based plagiarism-detection service launched in 1997. ... Results can identify similarities with existing sources, and can also be used in formative assessment to help students learn to avoid plagiarism and improve their writing.”

• https://www.plagiarism.org/
• https://www.turnitin.com/static/plagiarism-spectrum/
EHU position on Turnitin

1. A formative feedback tool not a plagiarism tool:
   • Supportive
   • Developmental
   • Formative

2. To support students:
   • Academic writing
   • Support academic integrity helping students improve their writing and reinforce appropriate ways to use and cite source materials
   • Unlimited submissions
“Turnitin has become one of the key components of our electronic management of assessment and is widely used for this purpose in addition to its functions as a tool to support in addressing plagiarism. All students have access to Turnitin and it is integral to the teaching of the conventions of academic writing in the disciplines. Students are trained in its use as part of induction into assessment practices as part of our approach to Assessment Literacy and they routinely use it to self-check their work for similarity and alignment with the expectations of academic referencing conventions. Staff use the Turnitin similarity index as a guide to assist with academic judgements, where necessary, when considering potential plagiarism”

Mark Schofield, Dean of Teaching & Learning Development 2017
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EHU Position Statement

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3 Using Turnitin and other approaches to identify plagiarism.

Turnitin Similarity Index:

2000 word essay

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FINAL GRADE</th>
<th>GENERAL COMMENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Instructor</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What does this number mean to the student? What does it mean to us, as tutors?
The Plagiarism Spectrum

The Plagiarism Spectrum identifies 10 types of plagiarism based on findings from a worldwide survey of nearly 900 secondary and higher education instructors. Each type has been given an easy-to-remember moniker to help students and instructors better identify and discuss the ramifications of plagiarism in student writing.

#1 Clone

Submitting another's work, word-for-word, as one's own
Identifying Plagiarism

Identifying it by:
• Writing style
• Not quite
• Shift in tone
• Too much – technical/academic/complex language
• Formatting changes
• Outdated information
• Essay mills

• Do you have any other diagnostics to help identify plagiarism?
4 The Academic Regulations.

Academic Regulations 2018/19

for students commencing undergraduate and postgraduate taught provision leading to Edge Hill University awards
The Academic Regs can be found on the EHU home page
The Academic Regulations

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5 Putting a malpractice case together within your Department and for a University Panel.

Your Department can deal with:

- naïve plagiarism (L4 only);
- 1st Minor offences;
- 1\textsuperscript{st} Major offences;
- 1\textsuperscript{st} Multiple offences.
You must refer the following to a University panel:

• Subsequent offences;
• Grave offences.
Establishing a case

1. Marker liaises with Module Leader (or Module Associate/ Moderator, etc) and a 2\textsuperscript{nd} marking procedure is undertaken by appropriate colleague.

2. A viva can be undertaken in a “fair and collegiate” setting with an independent chair. Student must be informed of the purpose of the viva, and allowed to bring a “Friend”.

Establishing a case

1. First naïve does not need a meeting with the student.

2. All other offences require a meeting.

3. Again, the student must be given prior notice, access to the assessment piece in question, and allowed to be accompanied by a “Friend”.
Establishing a case

4. Once the meeting is over, the Department Representatives decide whether or not an offence has been committed.

5. If an offence has occurred, then establish the level of offence (Appendix p19-20) and either apply sanctions within Department or refer to a University Panel of Inquiry. (See flow-chart in Appendix 8, p23.)
Establishing a case

6. Make sure to follow up with the report sent to your Faculty, and to malpractice@edgehill.ac.uk and the official letter to the student signed by your HoD or the PL.

7. No offence – no penalty!
Establishing a case for a University Panel

1. The Turnitin Similarity Report by itself is not sufficient evidence to establish a case.

2. Academic colleagues must present a case based on academic judgement which interprets the Similarity Report and uses it as supporting evidence.

3. Similarity reports are not the only form of acceptable evidence.
Establishing a case for a University Panel

1. The Panel will want to see the alleged plagiarised work and the exact source from which it is taken, along side your assessment of the evidence.

2. The student will be sent an exact copy of all the documentation that you submit.
The University Panel

1. Departments will be invited to send an academic representative to the Panel.

2. Make sure that they are fully informed about the case and about relevant aspects of the module, eg:
   • the type of assessment;
   • assessment weightings;
   • how the Programme makes students aware of relevant aspects of malpractice and how to avoid it;
   • evidence of student engagement, DPSMs, extensions, EMC, etc.
If in doubt:

• contact your Faculty Academic Registrar,
• contact Tim Parr, or
• contact Helen Smallbone.
Useful Resources


Edge Hill University. 2018/19. Academic regulations, Appendix 8 Procedures relating to malpractice

Edge Hill University. 2018/19. Academic regulations, Section H8 Academic Malpractice

QAA. 2017. Contracting to cheat in higher education: how to address contract cheating, the use of third-party services and essay mills. https://www.qaa.ac.uk/search-results?indexCatalogue=global&searchQuery=Contracting%20to%20cheat%20in%20Higher&words Mode=AllW