

Student Guidance on Unfair Practice

Unfair Practice consists of actions or practices that create an unfair advantage in an assessment. The main form of Unfair Practice happens during written assessments, where someone submits work that is not their own. It is known as plagiarism, and it is outlined on page 2.

However, Unfair Practice may include a range of things, such as: cheating in an exam or test, plagiarism, self-plagiarism, collusion, and others.

When you first begin a course there is a lot of uncertainty about what you will be faced with, how well you will cope with the demands of the course, whether your knowledge is good enough, whether you have the right skills. Don't worry: there is a lot of support and help available.

When you begin work on an assignment you may feel anxious about whether you are writing the right thing; you may feel a lack of confidence in your own ability to complete it; you may find that you have gaps in your understanding of the topic.

These things are common among students – especially first year students – and they may lead to insecurity and pressure. Don't let that pressure push you towards making shortcuts or relying on someone else to do it for you. Speak to your tutor about your concerns and they will try to help you understand the assignment you're struggling with. Ask a member of the Academic Skills Team for advice and they will give you as much help as possible. Speak to other students in your group to see if they can support you, and you may find that you're not the only one with worries!

Please don't struggle along on your own: talk about your concerns and share them with those who can do something to help you.

Read this carefully

When you submit a piece of written work for assessment via Moodle, you declare that you understand what Unfair Practice is and that you know about the Unfair Practice Policy and Procedure. This Student Guidance should give you a clear idea about Unfair Practice and what it means for you.

Moodle

During induction on an HE course, you should be introduced to the College Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), Moodle. Moodle is very important for you as a student because it is where you will submit your written work for assessment. It is also where your course information is kept and where your tutor will post important messages for your course group.

Turnitin

The College uses **Turnitin** as a tool to check your work for similarity to other published work, including sources such as books, websites and journals. Turnitin also holds a copy of every piece of work that has been submitted through it, so it checks for similarity with those, too.

Your Tutors

Your tutors are experienced educators and will swiftly recognise if your work displays any of the characteristics of Unfair Practice, including:

- A **Turnitin** report that highlights similarities with other written materials
- Recognising sections of texts on the course reading list
- Changes in style within your writing
- Similarities with submitted work from other members of your course group

Protect yourself

Academic writing always draws on the work of others in the subject, including key thinkers, practitioners and pioneers. You will be using published work such as books, journal articles, magazine articles, reports, policy documents and others. You may also use commentary such as newspaper articles, blogs, videos or other sources.

It deemed Unfair Practice not to show clearly where you have used source material because:

Substituting someone else's writing or ideas	Does not demonstrate your own understanding
Passing off someone else's writing as your own	Is dishonest – hiding the real author of the work
By using already published work	You are potentially gaining an unfair advantage over your peer group
By copying and pasting others' writing into your assessed work	You will not have done any of the work in the creation of the writing

This kind of Unfair Practice is called Plagiarism.

You can protect yourself against accusations of unfair practice by developing your academic skills. A key skill that you need to learn is referencing – which is the correct method for giving credit to others, where their work has been used in your writing. It is fine to include a short extract from someone else's writing if you make it clear that it is their writing and not yours.

If you are suspected:

If your tutor suspects Unfair Practice they will ask you to attend a Tutorial to discuss their concerns and make a decision about what to do next.

If the case is more serious, you may be asked to attend an Unfair Practice Hearing. This is a much more formal process and is only used where necessary.

On the following pages you can find:

- The Unfair Practice Reference Tariff
- The Penalties that apply, if proven

Unfair Practice Reference Tariff

Judgements about your suspected case will be made on the basis of your history of other offences, the amount or extent of the suspected plagiarism, your level of study, the value of the assignment, and the additional characteristics (below).

History	
1 st Time	100 points
2 nd Time	150 points
3 rd /+ Time	200 points

Amount/Extent	
Below 5% AND less than 2 sentences	80 points
As above but with critical aspects * plagiarised	105 points
Between 5% and 20% OR more than two sentences but not more than two paragraphs	105 points
As above but with critical aspects * plagiarised	130 points
Between 20% and 50% OR more than two paragraphs but not more than five paragraphs	130 points
As above but with critical aspects * plagiarised	160 points
Above 50% OR more than five paragraphs	160 points
Submission purchased from essay mill or ghost-writing service	225 points

* Critical aspects are key ideas central to the assignment

Level of study (FHEQ)	
Level 4	70 points
Level 5	115 points
Level 6	140 points

Value of Assignment	
Standard module (usually 20 credits)	30 points
Large project (for example, dissertation or major project, usually 40 credits)	60 points

Additional Characteristics	
Evidence of deliberate attempt to disguise plagiarism by changing words, sentences or references to avoid detection	40 points

Penalties

Depending on how your case is judged a range of penalties can be applied. Penalties 1 and 2 can be given during an Unfair Practice Tutorial; penalties 3 and 4 can only be given at an Unfair Practice Hearing.

Points		
		Penalty 1
280 - 329	Actioned by Marker at course level in a tutorial (may also be referred to DUPO for advice)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formal warning Assignment task/s awarded 0% - resubmission of assignment task/s required, with no cap on mark Referral to Academic Skills Team for referencing and plagiarism support Record made on Promonitor
330 - 379		Penalty 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assignment task/s awarded 0% - resubmission of assignment task/s required but mark capped at Pass Record made on Promonitor, including copy of outcome letter Copy of outcome letter sent via email to student, marker and Quality Manager
		Penalty 3
380 - 524	Actioned by DUPO at an Unfair Practice Hearing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Module awarded 0% - re-submission of module required but mark capped at Pass Record made on Promonitor, including copy of outcome letter Copy of outcome letter sent via email to student, marker and Quality Manager
525 – 559		Penalty 4 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Module awarded 0% - no opportunity to re-sit, and credit lost Withdrawal from institution but credits retained
560+		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Module awarded 0% - no opportunity to resit, and credit lost Withdrawal from institution with credits lost

Note:

The Designated Unfair Practice officer (DUPO) is an experienced member of staff with experience of teaching and learning who acts in an advisory role for staff and students throughout the Unfair Practice process