What is plagiarism?

Plagiarism is the copying, paraphrasing or summarising of work, in any form, without acknowledgment of sources, and presenting this as a student's own work (BSSS 2014).

With the increasing use of the internet for research, and information gathering and sharing, what actually constitutes plagiarism can be problematic for some students.

Examples of plagiarism

The following are some common examples of plagiarism. There are varying degrees of severity within each example, making detection problematic. These examples are not a fully comprehensive list:

- Word-for-word copying of sentences or paragraphs from the work or data of another person without proper acknowledgment. This copying relates to any form of paper text or that which has been sourced electronically
- Close paraphrasing of sentences or paragraphs from one or more sources without appropriate referencing
- Using appropriate acknowledgment; however, the copied text is not identified through the use of quotation marks
- Using another person's ideas, work, or research data without appropriate acknowledgment
- Submitting the work of another person, with or without their knowledge, as if it were the student's own
- Submitting work produced collaboratively with others as if it were independently written
- Submitting a properly researched and referenced piece of work for more than one assessment
- Including any image, photograph, sound or animation, whether it has been modified or not, without appropriate acknowledgment.

Plagiarism is not acceptable in any student work and Devlin (2002) suggests that each instance should be treated individually and with consideration given to:

- The extent of the plagiarism
- Level of severity
- The level of intent by the student
- The resulting consequence or action.

As the use of the internet as a tool for research increases so have the types of plagiarism, which has given rise to differing opinions amongst academics and teachers about the severity of these different types of plagiarism. This has impacted on students in that they may find it difficult to understand therefore avoid plagiarising.

LEAST SEVERE

Poor referencing and/or incorrect use of quotes and paraphrasing

MOST SEVERE

Submitting another person's work word-for-word without any acknowledgment

Plagiarism in student work will sit somewhere within this scale. The level of severity should be considered in conjunction with a measure of the level of intent when determining an appropriate consequence or action.

Intent: what were the student's motives?

It can be easy to assume that plagiarism is intentional. However, there are many reasons why a student may plagiarise, some of which are intentional and others unintentional, including:

INTENTIONAL REASONS	UNINTENTIONAL REASONS
Poor time management	Misconceptions and lack of understanding surrounding what plagiarism actually is and how to avoid it
Work load pressures	Limited understanding and application of referencing styles
Consequences of failure and pressure to pass	Limited understanding and skills in note taking, summarising and paraphrasing
Likelihood of not being detected	
Lenient punitive measures	

ACCIDENTAL

Using another person's work and not referencing correctly

DELIBERATE

Copying another person's work because of poor time management

Consequences, actions and education

There may be consequences for students who plagiarise. Plagiarism needs to be considered on an individual basis and the consequences should be appropriate to the level of intent by the student and the extent of the plagiarised material.

Non-SACE Subjects

If plagiarism is detected in a draft submitted by a student, teachers should, wherever possible, give no feedback other than to advise the student that one or more parts of the work have been identified as being plagiarised. The student then has the opportunity to revise the draft, including removal of any plagiarised material, and submit a draft for comment before the due date.

A penalty for plagiarism should be determined by the teacher in accordance with the performance standards.

If plagiarism is detected in the work submitted for marking, teachers should allocate a grade based on the work that has been done by the student.

As a guide, where the proportion of the work that has been plagiarised is more than 80% of the content, the student is likely to receive a result of 'I' (no result), equivalent to a value of zero. A piece of work should not automatically be given a result of 'I'.

SACE Subjects

For school assessment, the action will be determined by the principal (or delegate); the SACE Board can provide advice on procedures. In cases of plagiarism in external assessments, the Principal (or SACE coordinator or subject teacher) should interview the student before the assessment is submitted and make a recommendation regarding an appropriate action. See also the Breach of rules form and the Breach of rules information sheet. The SACE Board will determine the amendment of student grades, marks or scores, and whether the student will be subject to further action such as exclusion from future external assessments. See also the Supervision and Verification of students' Work policy.

It is also appropriate to re-educate students and improve their skills in note taking, summarising, paraphrasing and referencing. This is particularly

pertinent in cases when the student's intent to plagiarise is unclear or accidental.

Examples of plagiarism

Original Version of text

Students may plagiarise for a wide variety of reasons and with different levels of intent and severity. In some cases students may not have developed the skills to properly summarise the work of another person or to reference sources correctly. In these situations the level of intent is low and the plagiarism may be entirely accidental. In other situations students may find themselves under pressure from workload and time management issues and so copy intentionally.

DESCRIPTION (most severe to least severe)	STUDENT WORK (italics used to identify copied work)
Significant copying from one source with limited change to the original and no in-text referencing (with or without a bibliography).	*Students may plagiarise for a wide variety of reasons and with different levels of intent and severity. Sometimes students may not have developed the skills to properly summarise the work of another person or to reference sources correctly. In these cases the level of intent is low and the plagiarism may be entirely accidental. Sometimes students may find themselves under pressure from workload and time management issues and so copy intentionally.*
Mixes up copied work from different sources with no in-text referencing.	*Students may plagiarise for a wide variety of reasons and with different levels of intent and severity. Some may be unaware of the correct way to reference and the plagiarism may be considered to be unintentional. Sometimes students may find themselves under pressure from workload and time management issues and so copy intentionally.*
Some words and sentences have been changed but the text still closely represents the original source and there is no in-text referencing.	*Young people at school and university may plagiarise for a large variety of reasons and with different levels of intent and severity. In some instances students may not have the skills to properly summarise or paraphrase the work of somebody else, or to acknowledge sources correctly. When this is the case the level of intent*

DESCRIPTION (most severe to least severe)	STUDENT WORK (italics used to identify copied work)
	is low and the plagiarism may be entirely accidental. In other cases students may also be under pressure from workload and time management issues and as a result they may choose to copy intentionally.
Proper in-text referencing is used but most of the text is not the student's own work.	*Students may plagiarise for a wide variety of reasons and with different levels of intent and severity. 1 Some may be unaware of the correct way to reference and the plagiarism may be considered to be unintentional. 2 However, where a student has copied another person's work because they have run out of time this should be considered as intentional plagiarism.* 1 Author 1, Made up text 1 (publisher, 2014), page number 2 Author 2, Made up text 2 (publisher, 2014), page number 3 Author 3, Made up text 3 (publisher, 2014), page number

How can plagiarism be reduced?

In addition to teaching students how to summarise, paraphrase and reference sources correctly, attention should be paid to the design of assessments and the collection of evidence. The following list identifies some other strategies which can be applied to help reduce the number of opportunities for plagiarism by students. See also the supervision and Verification of student's Work policy.

- Use different assessments each year. This helps to prevent students from using the work of students from previous years. If parallel classes are taught, varying the tests from one class to another.
- Give appropriate advice when students are choosing research questions in order to ensure they select a question or hypothesis which allows them to undertake individual research and investigation.

- Incorporate check points in assessments for which students have to provide a brief summary of the work they have undertaken and the sources they have used.
- Advise students of potential plagiarism or poor referencing during the drafting stages of their work.
- Check the student's familiarity with, and understanding of, their work through oral questioning or asking them to provide a short written summary before submission of an assessment.
- Make students aware of the availability of plagiarism checking software. Students can use these resources to check their own work, and the knowledge that it may be checked by a teacher may help to deter them from intentional plagiarism. An example of this type of software is 'Turnitin'.

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