

## Procedure for examinations other than Research Degrees<sup>1</sup> if plagiarism or collusion is suspected in work submitted for assessment

### University definition of plagiarism

Plagiarism is defined as submitting as one's own work, irrespective of intent to deceive, that which derives in part or in its entirety from the work of others without due acknowledgement.<sup>2</sup>

Candidates are expected to have read the University-wide statement on plagiarism and to follow the discipline-specific guidance about referencing techniques and other academic conventions issued by their faculty or department in all work submitted for assessment.

### Procedure for Examiners

The procedure for dealing with suspected cases of plagiarism distinguishes between academic and disciplinary aspects of the case. Academic assessment is the responsibility of the Examiners whereas discipline is the domain of the Proctors, the University Advocate and the Court of Discipline.

The following procedure should be followed if you suspect plagiarism or collusion in work submitted for assessment.

1. Determine the extent and significance of any material that you consider to have been badly referenced, plagiarised, or to derive from collusion with other students. Compile and retain all evidence for future reference by the relevant Board of Examiners/Degree Committee, and in case the matter is pursued by the Proctors or disputed by the student under the Examination Review Procedure.

Evidence could include: extracts from primary or secondary sources; work submitted by other students; TurnitinUK originality reports; and text matches identified by Google.

2. Assess the work according to the relevant marking scheme on the basis that the suspect material has been ignored so that the mark reflects the extent and academic merit of the material that you believe to be the candidate's own work. You can then deduct marks to reflect the nature and extent of the poor scholarship.

The total mark deduction must be proportionate to the level of faulty scholarship. You must not introduce a punitive element into your assessment (e.g. you should not automatically award a mark of zero or reduce marks for unconnected parts of the student's work where suspect material has not been found).

3. Report the case to the Chair of Examiners/Degree Committee and send them the marked work, annotated to show the suspect material, and any additional evidence. If collusion between students is suspected, both assignments, annotated as appropriate, should be referred to the Chair.
4. The Chair will decide whether the case is relatively minor or more serious. If in doubt s/he should consult Secretary of the Board of Examinations/Graduate Studies who will contact the Proctors.

Factors to consider include: the amount of plagiarised material, its value in relation to the work as a whole (e.g. whether critical ideas are plagiarised).

5. **Minor cases** may be addressed by the Examiners by deducting a number of marks proportionate to the level of poor scholarship (see step 2). **More serious cases** must be referred to the Proctors and the Secretary of the relevant Board for further investigation as a disciplinary offence may have been committed.

For relatively minor cases the burden of proof will be on the balance of probabilities: for more serious offences a higher standard of proof will be required.

For minor cases the Chair of Examiners/Degree Committee may summon a candidate for interview (see *Statutes and Ordinances 2011*, p. 235 and regulations for graduate degrees).

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<sup>1</sup> Appendix A lists the awards covered by this procedure

<sup>2</sup> *Statutes and Ordinances 2011*, p.196

The interview should be held before the final meeting of the Board of Examiners/Degree Committee. It has no disciplinary function.

For more serious cases the Chair of Examiners/Degree Committee in consultation with the Proctors may call a formal investigative meeting (for further information see the [Guide to the investigative and disciplinary process](#)).

6. The Chair of Examiners/Degree Committee will ensure that the final mark (allocated on the basis of the interview and/or supporting evidence) and any further action is approved collectively by the Board/Degree Committee and recorded in the minutes.

### Further information

The University's plagiarism-related policy and guidance is online at: [www.cam.ac.uk/plagiarism](http://www.cam.ac.uk/plagiarism). This includes:

#### For staff and examiners

- The General Board's requirements of Faculty Boards and equivalent bodies
- Flowchart of the process for handling suspected cases of plagiarism and collusion
- The investigative and disciplinary process: procedure for Chairs of Examiners and Proctors
- University policy on the use of Turnitin text-matching software
- Plagiarism and good academic practice: notes for Supervisors, Directors of Studies and Tutors

#### For students

- University-wide statement on plagiarism
- Discipline-specific guidance issued by faculties and departments
- Proctorial notice on plagiarism
- 'University Discipline' entry in the Student Handbook

### Contacts

Contact details for the Proctors are online at: [www.admin.cam.ac.uk/offices/proctors/](http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/offices/proctors/)

The Secretaries of the Boards of Examinations ([Kate.Allen@admin.cam.ac.uk](mailto:Kate.Allen@admin.cam.ac.uk)) and Graduate Studies ([Catherine.Maxwell@admin.cam.ac.uk](mailto:Catherine.Maxwell@admin.cam.ac.uk)) are also available to offer procedural advice.

### Appendix A: awards covered by this procedure

This procedure applies to all work submitted for assessment apart from examinations for the PhD, MSc, MLitt, EngD, EdD, CPGS and MPhils by thesis and oral only.

Separate procedures apply for Research Degrees and Diplomas and Certificates open to Non-Members of the University (*Statutes and Ordinances 2011*, p. 551).