

Higher Education Policy on Plagiarism and Collusion: Guidance on Investigating Suspected Cases

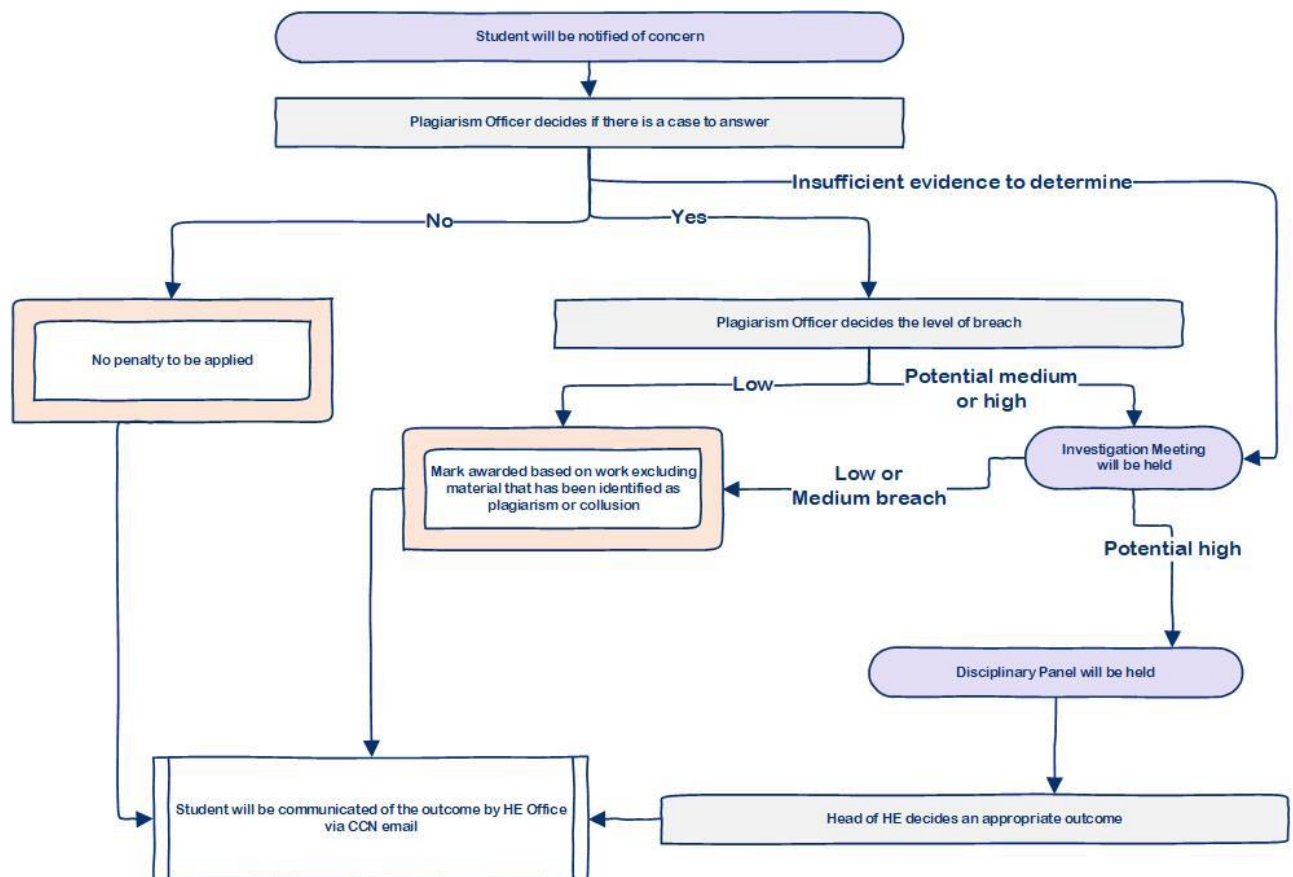
Within the School of Higher Education, the role of the Plagiarism Officer is may be fulfilled by any of the following individuals, as appointed by the Head of Higher Education:

- Alex Guy (Higher Education Delivery Manager)
- Andy Chappel (Programme Manager)
- Lisa Collyer (Higher Education Delivery Manager)
- Russell Board (Higher Education Delivery Manager)

Presumption of Innocence

Where a concern under the Policy for Plagiarism and Collusion is present, presumption of innocence will apply. It will be up to the College to prove that that on the balance of probabilities a breach has occurred before any penalty is applied. Therefore, where a tutor suspects a breach has occurred, the piece of work concerned will be marked normally and a result for the piece determined according to the assessment criteria. The mark for this work may change as a result of any investigation.

Figure 1. Flowchart for Investigating Suspected Cases



Notification

Students will be notified via a letter attached to an email sent to their CCN email address that there is a concern with a specific piece of work. This will be sent at the same time that the mark and feedback is made available, following the marking process being completed.

No Case to Answer

If the Plagiarism Officer decides that there is no case to answer, the student will be notified by the Higher Education Office via email which will be sent to their CCN email address. In this case, the original mark and feedback will remain and there will not be a record on the student's profile.

Low Level Outcome

If the Plagiarism Officer decides that the case is a low level incident, then they will apply the penalty for this. This will be a mark which is based on the work excluding that which has been identified as plagiarism or collusion (or which treats a particular learning outcome as not having been satisfied).

The student will be notified of this outcome by the Higher Education Office via email which will be sent to their CCN email address.

If an offence is decided to be low level, there will not be an investigative meeting.

Potential Medium or High Outcome

If the Plagiarism Officer has reasonable suspicion that the breach would be a medium or high-level offence, an investigation meeting will be arranged. At least 5 working days before the meeting, the student will be notified of the meeting and, where appropriate, some or all of the evidence on which the Plagiarism Officer intends to rely at the meeting will be shared.

The meeting will be held by one Plagiarism Officer, plus the marker (or a statement from the marker where they are unable to attend), and a member of the HE Office (to take minutes) in attendance.

If you want, you can bring a companion with you to the meeting. Please refer to point 22 in the Policy on Plagiarism and Collusion for more information.

The agenda for the meeting will be as follows:

1. The allegations/concerns will be set out
2. The marker and Plagiarism Officer will have the opportunity to ask questions. This may include, but not limited to, topics such as:
 - a. to examine the student's understanding of the subject matter of the work that has been submitted
 - b. how the work was produced
 - c. the student's understanding of what constitutes a breach of this policy
 - d. the experience of the student
3. The student will have the opportunity to raise any mitigating circumstances
4. The student will have the opportunity to respond to the allegations/concerns
5. The student and marker will leave the meeting and the Plagiarism Officer will decide on an outcome

N.B. Where the allegations are of collusion, the meeting may involve the inclusion of other students alleged to be involved in the same breach or may involve students being recalled after the panel has had the opportunity to speak to other students.

If the Plagiarism Officer decides that the case is a medium level incident, then they will apply the penalty for this.

For Plagiarism, this will be a mark which is based on the work excluding that which has been identified as plagiarism or collusion (or which treats a particular learning outcome as not having been satisfied).

For Collusion, where two or more students have worked together, the pieces of work will be marked as they stand and the highest mark of those awarded will be divided equally among the number of students deemed to have colluded. If one student has lent their completed or almost-completed work to the others, the starting point remains equal division of the marks, to reflect the medium level of culpability. However, the Plagiarism Officer may record marks to take account of the effort put in by the student who produced the work, and the lack of effort from the other students who colluded, if they feel that this is merited.

The student will be notified by the Higher Education Office via email which will be sent to their CCN email address.

Potential High Outcome

The Plagiarism Officer will refer the case to a disciplinary panel with the Head of Higher Education if:

- The student denies the allegation
- The Plagiarism Officer believes that the breach would be a high level offence
- The case is so complex that the Plagiarism Officer cannot decide whether you have breached the policy or not, or are worried about the proportionality of the outcome in the particular circumstances

The student will be notified of the outcome of the disciplinary panel by the Higher Education Office via email which will be sent to their CCN email address.

The agenda for the meeting will be as follows:

1. The allegations/concerns will be set out
2. The student will have the opportunity to respond to the allegations/concerns
3. The Head of Higher Education will have the opportunity to ask questions. This may include, but not limited to, topics such as:
 - a. to examine the students understanding of the subject matter of the work that has been submitted
 - b. how the work was produced
 - c. the students understanding of what constitutes a breach of this policy
 - d. the experience of the student
4. The student will have the opportunity to raise any mitigating circumstances
5. The student will leave the meeting and the Head of Higher Education will decide on an outcome

Appeals

A student may appeal against a penalty (i.e. the level and consequences) except where they have been referred for disciplinary action and should do so by completing a Stage One Academic Appeal form within 10 working days of the notification of the outcome setting out the grounds for the appeal.