# PLAGIARISM GUIDANCE DOCUMENT

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## OVERVIEW OF THE GUIDANCE

### Purpose of the guidance

This guidance sets out the framework when dealing with plagiarism and to allow centres to understand the implications of plagiarism and how best to detect and prevent plagiarism from impacting on candidate's achievements.

### Reviewing the guidance

This guidance is regularly reviewed and revised to capture changes in risk, regulatory guidance, and best practice.


## OVERVIEW OF PLAGIARISM

PIABC is committed to helping centres provide the best possible outcome for candidates in both internal and external assessments.

PIABC consider that cases of plagiarism may constitute maladministration or, depending on the nature and level of seriousness, malpractice. Accordingly, and in line with *Malpractice & Maladministration Policy and Procedure*, PIABC expect candidates and centres to ensure all assessments are completed without any plagiarised aspects.

This guidance should be read in conjunction with PIABC's *Malpractice & Maladministration Policy and Procedure*, which is available for centres to download from the PIABC website or from the PIABC Team (piabc@iom3.org).

### Plagiarism Definition

There are several definitions of plagiarism, but they all have in common the idea of taking someone else's intellectual effort and presenting it as one's own. The Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) define plagiarism as: *"unacknowledged copying from, or reproduction of, third party sources or incomplete referencing (including the internet and AI tools)"*.

Plagiarism refers to a candidate copying work and submitting it as their own. This can involve published resources (whether in print or on the internet), AI-generated content, essays, or pieces of work previously submitted for assessments by others or manufactured artefacts. Copying can involve memorisation and reproduction of text.

A strict interpretation of the definition of plagiarism would include the original ideas as well as the actual words or artefacts produced by another.

Plagiarism also incorporates the direct and unacknowledged translation of foreign language texts into English.

Candidates, when submitting assessments (e.g. assignment, project, etc.) for marking are required to complete a covering sheet which states that the work is their own and that other sources of information are acknowledged. Therefore, candidates must make sure that all the work that they submit is their own work and that it is properly and fully referenced using the Harvard or other recognised referencing system. Except for short, fully referenced material, candidates must under no circumstances reproduce passages, diagrams, drawings, tables, or photos borrowed wholesale from books, articles, the internet, AI generated, or other sources written/produced by a person or people other than themselves. Where a short section of text is used it should be shown in quotation marks in the text, followed by the reference making it absolutely clear to the reader exactly which material originates from other

sources and what the sources are. This reference is then included in the bibliography at the end of the assessment. Similarly, candidates must not summarise an author's ideas or arguments without providing a full reference. If candidates do so they are wrongly indicating that they have thought of the points themselves.

In practice, severe cases of plagiarism are rare, but typical examples are as follows:

- Downloading information/whole sections of text from the internet, without reference to the original source or using quotation marks and without using the material to answer the question or to support an argument.
- Quoting, re-writing or scanning information from books, journal articles etc., again without adequate reference.
- Copying information from colleagues and including this as if it were their own work (whether modified or not), e.g. individual reports, tutorial assignments, coursework scripts.
- Published resources (whether in print or on the internet), AI-generated content, essays, or pieces of work previously submitted for assessments by others or manufactured artefacts. Copying can involve memorisation and reproduction of text.

It is difficult to produce definitive guidelines for exactly what is or is not acceptable. Where candidates are in any doubt, they should always fully acknowledge a source.

When copied work is referenced, a candidate may not meet the relevant grading criteria in the marker's judgment, but plagiarism and therefore maladministration or malpractice will not be considered to have occurred.

Referencing of sources is an important skill for candidates to develop and is essential for the integrity of assessments, qualifications, and awards. Centres should apply their own internal policies on plagiarism including what they believe to be the most appropriate recognised method for acknowledging sources at the point of use, such as referencing by including citations or identifying quotations and generating a bibliography. It is understandable that only minimal referencing can be expected at lower qualification levels where a simple bibliography at the end with an identification of copied and pasted text in the main body might be sufficient. Demands for more thorough references become greater for higher level qualifications, where clear referencing is necessary to support the demonstration of knowledge, understanding and critical thinking.

**Detecting and preventing plagiarism**

PIABC expect centres to have mechanisms in place to prevent plagiarism such as being vigilant and continuously checking for any occurrences where this is allowed by the type of assessment, possibly in conjunction with the use of plagiarism-identifying software. Teaching the techniques of referencing to candidates and ensuring candidates have sufficient time, subject understanding, and the resources to complete assessments can all be important factors in combatting plagiarism.

PIABC also expect centres to address all cases of potential plagiarism. This may range from dealing with unreferenced work to investigating cases of deliberate attempts to copy unacknowledged material. Any instances of plagiarism will be dealt with in conjunction with the PIABC's *Malpractice & Maladministration Policy and Procedure,* which is available for centres to download from the PIABC website or from the PIABC Team (piabc@iom3.org).

ALL assessments submitted to PIABC for marking will be checked, regardless of whether or not plagiarism is suspected. PIABC fully expects that all internally marked assessments are also fully checked for plagiarism and that centres apply their own internal policies on plagiarism.

As part of its ongoing efforts to detect plagiarism (including the use of generative AI tools) more successfully, PIABC uses Turnitin software which checks for the similarity between a candidate's work and other people's work. Turnitin will makes no decisions as to whether a piece of work has been plagiarised, it simply highlights sections of text that have been found in other sources. Turnitin software will give PIABC a score based on the percentage of text that is similar to others.

The percentage level of plagiarism which PIABC is going to consider acceptable is 15%. Although PIABC reserves the right to increase or decrease this level. PIABC feels that a return percentage of below 15% would probably indicate that plagiarism has not occurred. However, if the 15% of matching text is one continuous block this could still be considered plagiarism. A high percentage would probably be anything over 25%.

**Dealing with plagiarism**

If plagiarism is suspected, then the centre will be notified of actions to be completed. Please refer to PIABC's *Malpractice & Maladministration Policy and Procedure* for guidance on what actions may happen next. When plagiarism is confirmed, then sanction(s) will be imposed as laid out within PIABC's *Malpractice & Maladministration Policy and Procedure.*