

Plagiarism: Guidance note for Centres and Teachers

Introduction

This guidance note has been written for Registered Centres and Teachers who have a responsibility for supervising/marking and/or submitting learners' portfolios of evidence and/or other written assessments to LAMDA Examinations.

As part of the General Conditions of Recognition LAMDA Examinations is required to establish, maintain and comply with a Malpractice and Maladministration Policy. This policy covers malpractice by learners, registered centres or others involved in the development and delivery of qualifications or its units, and maladministration on the part of the centre or any other party involved in the development, delivery and award of qualifications. Plagiarism is a form of malpractice which may compromise or attempt to compromise the process of assessment, the integrity of the qualification/unit or the validity of the result/certification and/or damages the authority, reputation or credibility of the awarding organisation.

If portfolios of evidence and other forms of written assessment are to remain viable assessment methods, it is the duty of all who are preparing and assessing learners as well as those marking and administering the examinations to do whatever they can to counter any act of plagiarism.

What is Plagiarism?

There are many definitions for plagiarism however the definition provided by the organisation Plagiarism Advice is often cited.

“Plagiarism occurs when an author attempts to misrepresent as original, existing and unacknowledged material or ideas from another person, source or (in the case of self- plagiarism) their own work.”

(PlagiarismAdvice.org. nod)

Plagiarism often refers to copying published texts in print or from the internet, but it can also refer to copying essays or pieces of work previously submitted for examinations.

Why do learners plagiarise?

PlagiarismAdvice.org (2006) has identified the following possible reasons why learners plagiarise:

- Ignorance, the learners lack of awareness of the regulations
- Time management issues, failure to allow sufficient time to produce the work
- Striving for better marks/results
- Poor teaching.

The Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) in its guidance notice Plagiarism in Examinations also identifies the following possible reasons:

- Greater availability of information on the internet and the ease with which it can be copied

- Encouragement to use the internet freely as a source of information
- The growth of websites providing coursework examples
- Quick solutions or short cuts appeal to some learners.

Preventing Plagiarism

If you are a teacher or a centre co-ordinator at a registered centre entering learners for a qualification with a written assessment element, you must accept the obligation to authenticate the work submitted for assessment. Before the declaration of authenticity is signed by the learner, a teacher/centre-coordinator needs to be confident that learner has completed the work themselves. The techniques listed below act as a guide to support the authenticity of a learners work.

- Learners should be provided with information on what plagiarism is, that it is forbidden and what the consequences are of submitting plagiarised work.
- Teach learners skills on using electronic resources, referencing sources, using citations, footnotes, bibliographies and paraphrasing.
- Ensure where possible the learners report their progress with you and provide you with annotated copies of the research/background materials that they have found with them.
- Ask learners to provide an annotated bibliography.

(Source: Ofqual – Authenticity A guide for teachers pg 12)

Verifying authentic work

Learners are required to submit a signed declaration with any piece of assessed work proving that the work is their own. Awarding organisations will employ a number of methods to verify the learners work is original and do this to ensure the integrity of the qualifications are upheld. Teachers should also be engaged in reviewing learners work for plagiarism. There are a number of strategies a teacher/centre co-ordinator can employ to verify the authenticity of a learner's work.

The following section identifies a set of strategies which is found in the Ofqual 2009: Authenticity A guide for teachers. You might also like to refer to the JCQ document Plagiarism in Examinations for further details.

1. Check the work for changes in the learner's writing style and tone
2. Check the work for differences in a documents layout and style
3. Check the work for a mix of UK and US spellings and phraseology
4. Check if the learner's cites obscure sources or those sources are not easily accessible or available locally
5. Check for lack of references
6. Check to see if the learner has used out of date sources
7. Has the learner failed to answer the question/task/assessment brief
8. Check phrases using a search engine
9. Check work using plagiarism detection tools.

Identifying Plagiarism

Registered centres and teachers can take steps about suspected plagiarism without informing LAMDA Examinations if the work has not been submitted for assessment and as long as the learner has not signed the declaration of authenticity form. Registered centres and teachers may conduct their own investigations to conclude

whether plagiarism has occurred and decide the outcome according to their policies and procedures.

However if work has been submitted to LAMDA Examinations for assessment with a signed declaration of authenticity form and if the examiner or a qualified member of LAMDA Examinations staff suspects plagiarism, LAMDA Examinations will take action as detailed in LAMDA Examinations Malpractice/Maladministration policy.

If a case of malpractice/maladministration as a result of plagiarism has been established the investigating officer will recommend if a sanction is required. The sanctions applied range from a warning regarding future conduct of the learner, disqualification from the unit/qualification to being barred from entering one or more examinations for a set period of time. Please refer directly to LAMDA Examinations Sanctions Policy for further details.

References

Ofqual 2009: Using Sources: A guide for Students: Find it Check It Credit it
www.ofqual.gov.uk/files/2009-12-24-plagiarism-students.pdf

Ofqual 2009: Avoiding Plagiarism. A guide for Parents and Carers
www.ofqual.gov.uk/files/2009-12-24-plagiarism-parents.pdf

Ofqual 2009: Authenticity A guide for teachers
<http://www.ofqual.gov.uk/files/2009-12-24-plagiarism-teachers.pdf>

JCQ (no date) Plagiarism in Examinations Guidance for teachers/Assessors
www.icq.org.uk

Further Information

The following organisations provide guidance on using sources and avoiding plagiarism.

Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) www.jcq.org.uk

JISC www.jisc.ac.uk

PlagiarismAdvice.org www.PlagiarismAdvice.org