

# University Policy on Plagiarism and Collusion

## A. STATEMENT OF POLICY

### 1 Introduction

The University takes allegations of plagiarism or collusion seriously. Students who plagiarise or collude threaten the values and beliefs that underpin academic work and devalue the integrity of the University's awards, whether or not such plagiarism or collusion is intentional. Where plagiarism and/or collusion has occurred, offenders may be punished, and the punishment may extend to failing their degree, temporary suspension or permanent expulsion from further study at the University. Suspected plagiarism and/or collusion, at any point of a student's course, whether discovered before or after graduation, will be investigated and dealt with appropriately by the University.

All summative and formative work submitted for assessment by students is accepted on the understanding that it is the student's own effort and written from their own understanding, without falsification of any kind. Students are expected to offer their own analysis and presentation of information gleaned from research, even when group exercises are carried out. In so far as students rely on sources, they should indicate what these are in accordance with the appropriate convention in their discipline.

### 2 Definitions

Plagiarism and collusion are defined as follows:

#### 2.1 Plagiarism

Plagiarism can take the following forms:

2.1.1 The reproduction, without acknowledgement, of work (including the work of fellow students), published or unpublished, either verbatim or in close paraphrase. In this context, the work of others includes material downloaded from computer files and the internet, discussions in seminars, ideas, text and diagrams from lecture handouts.

2.1.2 Poor academic practice which is unintentional.

2.1.3 The reproduction, without acknowledgement, of a student's own previously submitted work.

Plagiarism can occur in 'open-book' examinations and/or coursework assessments, which may take a variety of forms, including, but not exclusively confined to, essays, reports, presentations, dissertations and projects.

#### 2.2 Collusion

Collusion is a form of plagiarism, involving unauthorised co-operation between at least two people. Various forms of collaborative

assessment undertaken in accordance with published requirements do not fall under the heading of collusion; please see further guidance on authorised collaboration in the “*Guidance Note – Assessing Group Work*” and “*Policy on the Use of Proof Readers*”:

<https://www.uea.ac.uk/learningandteaching/documents/assessment/GuidanceNoteonGroupwork>

<https://www.uea.ac.uk/learningandteaching/documents/assessment/PolicyonuseofProofreaders>

Collusion can take the following forms:

2.2.1 The conspiring by two or more students to produce a piece of work together with the intention that at least one passes it off as his or her own work.

2.2.2 The submission by a student of the work of another student in circumstances where the latter has willingly provided the work and where it should be evident that the recipient of the work is likely to submit it as their own. In such cases, **both** students are guilty of collusion.

2.2.3 Unauthorised co-operation between a student and another person in the preparation and production of work which is presented as the student’s own.

2.2.4 The commissioning and submission of work as the student’s own, where the student has purchased or solicited another individual to produce work on the student’s behalf.

### 3 **Obligations of students**

3.1 **All** students should be willing to sign a declaration on registration that the work they are submitting during that academic year (coursework, projects, dissertations, etc) is their own work, that there is no unacknowledged use of another person’s work and that there has been no unauthorised co-operation between them and another person in the preparation and production of work. Even when this is not required, the assumption is that all submitted work is the student’s own.

3.2 Students are expected to familiarise themselves with, and make use of, the method(s) of citing other people’s work in accordance with the appropriate conventions in their discipline.

3.3 Students must not mislead examiners by submitting another person’s work for assessment in a way which intentionally and/or negligently and/or recklessly suggests that factual information has been collected and/or analysed which has not, in fact, been collected and/or analysed by the student.

3.4 Research students are required to sign certifications of originality when submitting their theses. In circumstances where incidents of plagiarism or collusion for postgraduate research students appear to constitute misconduct in research, students may be referred to the Senate Student Discipline Committee (SSDC) for disciplinary action.

### 4 **Graduates**

Where plagiarism and/or collusion is found to have occurred in the work of a graduate of the University, the matter shall be referred by the member(s) of staff who has/have discovered the offence to the Head of the student's School of registration (or most appropriate successor) in accordance with the University's *Disciplinary Procedures*, which can be viewed at:

[http://www.uea.ac.uk/calendar/section3/regs\(gen\)/disciplinary-procedures](http://www.uea.ac.uk/calendar/section3/regs(gen)/disciplinary-procedures)

The Senate has the authority to reduce the classification of a Degree conferred, or to revoke a Degree, Diploma or Certificate or other distinction conferred by the University.

## **5 Use of Software for Matching Text to Detect Plagiarism**

Turnitin (software that searches for text in work submitted to it that matches text contained in its databases to aid the detection of plagiarism) may be used for students taking undergraduate modules or postgraduate modules.

Schools that make use of Turnitin shall:

- 5.1 appoint a Turnitin specialist (a member of academic staff who shall be familiar with the use of Turnitin and the interpretation of its reports);
- 5.2 monitor its use for equality impact assessment.

Turnitin may only be used to assist with the identification of the source(s) of information that has/have been drawn on/copied from once a marker suspects plagiarism and/or collusion and needs to collect evidence in accordance with paragraph B(2) below.

## **B. PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH SUSPECTED CASES OF PLAGIARISM AND/OR COLLUSION**

### **1 Plagiarism Officer**

The Head of each School shall appoint a Plagiarism Officer (who shall not be the Head of School) who is responsible for investigation into cases of suspected plagiarism and/or collusion in accordance with paragraphs 3, 4 and 5 below. The Plagiarism Officer shall consider alleged offences committed by students enrolled on the module(s) offered by the Plagiarism Officer's School.

### **2 Collection of Evidence**

If a marker suspects plagiarism and/or collusion, s/he will continue to mark the work as if not plagiarised, keeping a separate copy of the annotated work as evidence. S/he will gather the necessary evidence to allow the Plagiarism Officer to pursue the appropriate investigation. Wherever possible or appropriate, the main evidence for plagiarism and/or collusion will be the original sources(s) that has/have been drawn on/copied from. In cases identified as Medium or High Level, the Plagiarism Officer may collect other work completed by the student, whether produced for modules located in their own School or produced for modules located in other Schools, and may seek help from the relevant School Turnitin specialist. Where an allegation of plagiarism and/or collusion concerns a

module in a School other than the School in which the student is registered, the Plagiarism Officer of the School 'owning' the module shall deal with the allegation and, during the investigation, will liaise with the Plagiarism Officer in the School in which the student is registered. If the student's work completed within the Stage is to be recalled and is for a module(s) which is/are not located in the student's School of registration, the Plagiarism Officer in the student's School of registration will initiate the process of recalling the work. Subsequently, the Plagiarism Officer in the School in which the module(s) is/are located, will arrange for relevant Plagiarism/Collusion Meetings (as detailed under B4) to be held and inform the Plagiarism Officer of the student's School of registration of the outcome(s) of the relevant Plagiarism/Collusion Meeting(s). This will allow the Plagiarism Officer in the student's School of registration to complete the investigation having knowledge of all the relevant information.

Where there is an allegation of plagiarism and/or collusion in respect of assessed work that has been submitted in word-processed format and Turnitin is used during the investigation for the particular module(s) under review, a student will be asked in writing (or by e-mail) by the relevant Office within the Learning and Teaching Service (LTS) or Postgraduate Research Office (PGR) to submit an electronic copy of the assessed work in question. The student will be given five working days from the date of the letter or e-mail of the request (Saturdays, Sundays and University closure days excepted) within which to provide an electronic copy. Where a student does not provide an electronic copy in word format of the assessed work in question within the required timescale and there are no extenuating circumstances to account for the delay or non-submission, an automatic mark of zero will be recorded for the assessment item. Where the electronic copy is corrupted or is different from the original submission, a mark of zero will be recorded for the assessed work in question.

If an internal marker suspects plagiarism and/or collusion but is unable to identify the original sources, s/he should collect what evidence is available and present it to the Plagiarism Officer, who will decide if there is a prima facie case for plagiarism and/or collusion which would warrant a School Plagiarism/Collusion Meeting. If a Turnitin report has been used as evidence to show that plagiarism and/or collusion has been committed, then this should be referenced within the Plagiarism Officer's hard copy report and should form part of the documentation for the School Plagiarism/Collusion Meeting.

### **3 Initial screening of evidence**

The Plagiarism Officer shall review the evidence as presented by the marker or Module Organiser and classify as being of Low, Medium or High Level. For cases classified as Low Level, the Plagiarism Officer will proceed as stated in B5.2.1 below and may recommend an action plan setting out an appropriate learning package (to include referral to the Learning Enhancement Team in the Dean of Students Office) without having a formal School Plagiarism/Collusion Meeting. The student may either accept the action plan and learning package as offered by the

Plagiarism Officer or can request that a formal School Plagiarism/Collusion Meeting takes place. In all other cases, a formal School Plagiarism/Collusion Meeting should be held.

#### **4 Formal School Plagiarism/Collusion Meeting**

Where a formal School Plagiarism/Collusion Meeting is held, the case shall be considered by a panel consisting of the Plagiarism Officer from the School, the marker and a Plagiarism Officer from another School, hereafter referred to as the Panel. The student will be summoned to a meeting to discuss the alleged plagiarism and/or collusion for the module(s) in question, which may also include other work being recalled as set out under B2, by the meeting's Secretary, who shall normally be a senior member of administrative staff in the relevant Office within LTS or PGR. In addition to the summons, the student will be provided with a copy of the annotated work and the Turnitin report, if appropriate. The student will also be advised within the summons to bring along any supporting evidence to assist with the investigation (documents normally in hard copy format), including those relating to any mitigating circumstances. The summons shall be delivered to the student's pigeon-hole in his or her Faculty/School of Studies and/or University e-mail address at least five working days (Saturdays, Sundays and University closure days excepted) before the meeting. Alternative arrangements will be made for correspondence with students who are on placement or other permitted absence.

If a student wishes to appear and can prove that s/he is unable to appear at the School Plagiarism/Collusion meeting for good reason by notifying the Secretary of the Plagiarism/Collusion meeting at the earliest convenience, the meeting may be rescheduled or alternative arrangements made, e.g. by correspondence or video-conferencing facilities. If a student fails to appear at the meeting without providing good reason, the meeting shall proceed in the student's absence.

The meeting shall be chaired by the School Plagiarism Officer. If the School Plagiarism Officer is also the Module Organiser/internal marker, then a Plagiarism Officer from another School will act as Chair. The Plagiarism/Collusion Meeting should establish the relevant facts. The internal marker who has identified the alleged plagiarism and/or collusion shall also be in attendance. The student may, if s/he wishes, bring an accompanying person, who shall not take an active part in the proceedings. In all cases, the student themselves shall answer any questions raised in the meeting. The accompanying person shall not be a member of UEA academic staff. If, in the opinion of the Panel, the accompanying person is, or appears to be, interfering with the proper conduct of the business of the meeting, the Panel has the right to i) adjourn the meeting and reconvene it at a later date, and ii) exclude that person from attending the reconvened meeting. A record of the meeting shall be taken by the Secretary to the School Plagiarism/Collusion Meeting.

The meeting shall proceed in the following order:

- 4.1 the marker who has initially raised the suspicion of plagiarism/collusion presents their concerns but, however, is not part of the outcome decision-making process;
- 4.2 the Panel shall then provide the student with an opportunity to respond to the concerns of the marker;
- 4.3 the Panel may ask further questions;
- 4.4 the Panel shall advise the student that, where plagiarism/collusion is denied, the case shall be referred to a Senate Student Discipline Committee Panel and the student will be able to present their case at that time;
- 4.5 the marker, student and accompanying person shall then leave the meeting;
- 4.6 the Panel shall decide on the suitable outcome;
- 4.7 the student shall be advised of the outcome of the meeting in writing within five working days
- 4.8 the student can reconsider their plea within five working days of the formal meeting;
- 4.9 the Head of School shall be advised of the outcome.

## 5 Outcomes

The grid should be interpreted with reference to the associated guidance notes which can be viewed at:

<http://www.uea.ac.uk/learningandteaching/documents/discipline/P+%26+C+-+Guidance+for+Staff+and+Students>

## Plagiarism/Collusion Classification Guide

| Plagiarism and Collusion   |  |   |  |
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|  | Classification   |   |  |
| Criteria   | Low Level  | Medium Level  | High Level   |
| <b>Experience of student</b><br><i>Considers the extent to which the University can expect that the student is aware of the requirements and expectations of academic writing, the nature of plagiarism and collusion and the seriousness of their actions</i> | <b>Indicator:</b><br>The University cannot rely on an assumption that the student is familiar with the requirements and expectations of academic writing | <b>Indicator:</b><br>The University is entitled to assume familiarity with the requirements and expectations of academic writing and the rules governing plagiarism and collusion but the student may be uncertain as to their precise nature and application | <b>Indicator:</b><br>The University is entitled to assume understanding of the requirements and expectations of academic writing and knowledge of the regulations governing plagiarism and collusion |

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|   | <p><b>For example:</b></p> <p>The student is unaware; has not been instructed, advised or informed about plagiarism and collusion;</p> <p>No instructions re groupwork were made known;</p> <p>Student(s) is/are in first year or first semester of their course;</p> <p>No previous record of plagiarism or collusion.</p> | <p><b>For example:</b></p> <p>The student has received guidance or instruction about plagiarism and collusion but has not fully understood or demonstrated its application;</p> <p>Instructions re groupwork are ambiguous, incomplete or unclear;</p> <p>Student(s) is/are in the second or later semester/term of their course;</p> <p>Student has transferred in from another course/institution;</p> <p>Student has completed known instruction(s) in avoiding plagiarism and/or collusion;</p> <p>Previous low level case detected.</p> | <p><b>For example:</b></p> <p>The student is aware, eg has undertaken instruction in plagiarism and collusion;</p> <p>Clear instructions re groupwork have been given but have been ignored;</p> <p>Student(s) has spent 2 years or more in UK HEI or similar;</p> <p>Previous medium or high level case detected.</p> |
| <p><b>Nature of plagiarism</b></p> <p><i>Nature of the breach of academic scholarship</i></p> | <p><b>Indicator:</b></p> <p>Poor academic practice;</p> <p><b>Plagiarism</b></p> <p><b>For example:</b></p> <p>Suspect text is incidental to fundamental argument and is largely descriptive rather than analytical or supportive of</p>  | <p><b>Indicator:</b></p> <p>Bad academic practice;</p> <p><b>Plagiarism</b></p> <p><b>For example:</b></p> <p>Suspect text contributes to or supports analysis, argument or conclusions but student's own work can be identified and is of greater or</p>  | <p><b>Indicator:</b></p> <p>Clear breach of acceptable academic practice;</p> <p><b>Plagiarism</b></p> <p><b>For example:</b></p> <p>Suspect text contributes the sole or greater part of analysis argument or conclusion and the student's own work cannot readily be discerned;</p>                                  |

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|   | <p>argument or conclusions;</p> <p>Referencing or attribution of work is not clear or is inadequate, or has numerous errors;</p> <p>Inappropriate paraphrasing.</p> <p><b>Collusion</b></p> <p><b>For example:</b></p> <p>Misunderstanding of what constitutes collective activity;</p> <p>Lending own work to another student in the belief that it will not be copied;</p> | <p>at least comparable significance;</p> <p>Failure to reference and/or cite adequately;</p> <p>Copying phrases, sentences or paragraphs of material from websites, book or other publications;</p> <p>Writing style improved beyond proof-reading limits.</p> <p><b>Collusion</b></p> <p><b>For example:</b></p> <p>Copying segments of other students' assignment work;</p> <p>Lending own work to another student in the knowledge that it may be copied.</p> | <p>Fabricated references or citations;</p> <p>Whole work is copied (from other students without their knowledge or consent or from other sources published or unpublished);</p> <p>Writing style improved far beyond proof-reading limits;</p> <p><b>Collusion</b></p> <p><b>For example:</b></p> <p>Whole/substantial parts of the work is copied from other students without their knowledge/consent;</p> <p>The sharing of work or content in the knowledge that it will be copied;</p> <p>Deliberate concealment of the collective activity.</p> |
| <p><b>Extent of plagiarism/collusion</b></p> <p><i>Amount or proportion of assessment item or work that is not the students' own;</i></p> <p><i>Extent to which the</i></p> | <p><b>Indicator:</b></p> <p>Suspect text constitutes less than 5% by volume of the whole.</p>  | <p><b>Indicator:</b></p> <p>Suspect text constitutes more than 5% but less than 20% by volume of the whole;</p>  | <p><b>Indicator:</b></p> <p>Suspect text constitutes more than 20% by volume of the whole;</p> <p>There is significant appropriation of ideas, artistic work or elements of the</p>  |

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| <p><i>assessment process is compromised;</i></p> <p><i>Note: in determining the volume of work in question, it is likely that reliance will be placed on a Turnitin or similar plagiarism detection report.</i></p> | <p><b>For non-text content:</b></p> <p>One (minor) graphic;</p> <p>A few elements of computer source code;</p> <p>Simple mathematical or scientific proof/algorithm/formulae.</p>  | <p><b>For non-text content:</b></p> <p>More than one graphic;</p> <p>Several lines or segments of computer source code;</p> <p>Several or major/more complex mathematical or scientific proof/algorithm/formulae.</p>  | <p>argument/conclusion.</p> <p><b>For non-text content:</b></p> <p>Multiple graphics copied;</p> <p>Little or no own work can be identified with certainty ;</p> <p>Complex, advanced proofs or algorithms have been copied.</p>  |
| <p><b>Intent of student to cheat by way of plagiarism or collusion</b></p> <p><i>Intentionality of the act of plagiarism and/or collusion and intent to cheat by way of plagiarism and/or collusion</i></p>         | <p><b>For example:</b></p> <p>On the balance of probability, intent to cheat is unlikely or doubtful;</p> <p>The evidence indicates that the act of plagiarism and/or collusion was unintentional or due to lack of knowledge.</p> | <p><b>For example:</b></p> <p>On the balance of probability, intent to cheat is probable but cannot clearly be substantiated;</p> <p>The evidence indicates that the act of plagiarism or collusion was as a result of negligence or carelessness;</p> <p>The student(s) will be aware of the nature of the offence of plagiarism or collusion but has/have disregarded or ignored it.</p> | <p><b>For example:</b></p> <p>On the balance of probability, intent to cheat is evidence and can be substantiated;</p> <p>The evidence indicates that the act of plagiarism and/or collusion was deliberate and planned;</p> <p>The student(s) will be aware of the nature of the offence of plagiarism or collusion but have deliberately attempted to conceal the activity.</p> |

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In cases where the Panel is aware of any mitigating circumstances which should be taken into consideration before the outcome of the

<sup>1</sup> UEA kindly acknowledges permission from Curtin University, Australia, to use its table of determining the seriousness of plagiarism as published in: *Dealing with Student Plagiarism: Guidelines for Staff 2007*.

Plagiarism/Collusion meeting is conveyed in writing to the student, the School Plagiarism Officer should bring these to the attention of the Head of the School. Where a Head of School (or Head of School designate) believes that the mitigating circumstances should reduce the level of an offence from High Level to Medium Level or from Medium Level to Low Level, the Chair of the SSDC should be consulted for a view to ensure consistency of practice across UEA.

5.2 After classification of the offence, the following outcomes should apply:

**5.2.1 LOW LEVEL** (technical breach to be dealt with educatively)

The Plagiarism Officer shall not impose a marks penalty and the student may be given the opportunity of resubmitting the work as if for the first time to be submitted not later than five days after the adjudication of the decision, regardless of whether it is a summative or formative assessment item. In order to help the student avoid plagiarism and/or collusion in future assignments, the student shall be offered support which may be in the form of an appropriate learning support package.

**5.2.2 MEDIUM LEVEL**

**(a) Plagiarism:**

This applies to any incident of plagiarism which occurs at a point where the University is confident that the student has received sufficient Plagiarism and Collusion training. The marker shall record a mark for a summative item of assessment which assesses the work as far as possible excluding the plagiarised material. This ensures that the recorded mark reflects the student's own work.

As no marks deduction is possible for a formative item of assessment, the offence should be recorded as a Medium Level plagiarism offence for future reference.

**(b) Collusion (summative and formative work):**

**(i) Summative work**

Where two or more students have worked together and it is impossible to determine who has produced the work, 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, however, it is clear that one of the students has produced most/all of the work and lent it to the others, the Plagiarism Officer shall 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.

**(ii) Formative work**

If possible, determine which student has produced which proportion of the work, note the proportion of work attributable to each student and record this as a Medium Level collusion offence for future reference.

**5.2.3 HIGH LEVEL**

**(a) Serial plagiarism or collusion**

This applies to any incident of plagiarism and/or collusion which occurs at a point where the University is confident that the student has received sufficient Plagiarism and Collusion training.

**(i) Summative work only**

Where a High Level offence is judged to be the result of serial plagiarism and/or collusion, i.e. there have been previous instances of Medium Level plagiarism and/or collusion as set out below under 5.2.3(ii) the work should be marked in accordance with a Medium Level offence.

**(ii) Formative and summative work**

A formal judgement of serial plagiarism cannot result from previous work being identified as plagiarised without plagiarism in this work having been drawn formally to the student's attention either via the procedure as stipulated under paragraph B3 of this policy or via a formal School Plagiarism/Collusion Meeting (i.e. serial plagiarism cannot result from work having been recalled in accordance with B2 but in which plagiarism had not been identified at the time). An example of a serial offence being classed as a High Level offence will normally be at least three previous occasions of Medium Level offences relating to formative and/or summative work, all of which would need to have been formally drawn to the student's attention via a School Plagiarism/Collusion meeting.

**(b) High Level – not serial plagiarism or collusion**

Where the offence is serious and has been identified as a High Level offence but there is no evidence of serial plagiarism/collusion committed by the student, the Plagiarism Officer shall record a mark of 0% for summative work and record the offence as a High level offence for both summative and formative work.

**(c) Disciplinary action**

After identifying a High Level offence as described under paragraphs 5.2.3(a) or 5.2.3(b) above, the Head of School in which the student is registered shall refer the case to the Senate Student Discipline Committee for further action,

regardless of whether the work is of a summative or formative nature.

#### **(d) Fitness to Practise Panel**

Where programmes lead to professional qualifications, a Head of School may refer a student with a confirmed High Level offence to a Fitness to Practise Panel.

- 5.3 The documentation relating to the (i) record of the meeting, (ii) the assessed work in question, (iii) the findings and (iv) for summative work, the mark recorded by the Plagiarism Officer, shall be retained on the student's file in the appropriate Office within LTS or PGR (this shall be the case even where a student is found not to have plagiarised or colluded).

The student will be given a copy of the documentation relating to (i)–(iv) above. The Secretary of the meeting shall also inform the Head of School in which the student is registered by sending the documentation relating to points (iii) and (iv) to her/him.

The Secretary to the meeting shall ensure that, for summative work, the correct mark is recorded for the student to be forwarded for confirmation to the relevant Board of Examiners. The Board of Examiners may be made aware by the Chair of the Board of any marks recorded reflecting plagiarism and/or collusion. It is, however, the responsibility of the Chair of the Board of Examiners to ensure that any decisions on progression, classification or the award of academic qualifications are not further influenced by a student having plagiarised and/or colluded.

- 5.4 Where the student has decided not to proceed to a formal School Plagiarism/Collusion Meeting when a Low Level offence has been identified by the Plagiarism Officer, as described under paragraph B3 of this policy, the student will receive a paper copy of the action plan/learning package as identified by the Plagiarism Officer. A copy of the action plan/learning package shall be retained for the duration of the student's period of registration on the student's file in the appropriate Office within LTS or PGR.

## **6 Denial**

- 6.1 In the event that a student denies that he or she is guilty of plagiarism or collusion after a Medium or High Level case of plagiarism or collusion has been identified by the School Plagiarism Officer, the case is referred to the Senate Student Discipline Committee for further action.

## **7 Appeals**

A student may appeal against a **penalty** (i.e. the level and consequences) applied under paragraphs B5.2 and should do so in writing to the Head of LTS for taught students and the Head of PGR for research students within ten working days of the notification of the outcome, setting out the grounds for the appeal. The appeal shall be

heard at Stage 1 of the *Academic Appeals and Complaints Procedure*, which can be viewed at:

[http://www.uea.ac.uk/learningandteaching/documents/appeals\\_complaints](http://www.uea.ac.uk/learningandteaching/documents/appeals_complaints)

#### **8 Reporting Plagiarism**

School Plagiarism Officers shall complete an annual report to the Learning and Teaching Committee of Senate which should include equality monitoring data and a summary of any use of Turnitin by the School for the year of the report.