NPQ Plagiarism policy

KEEP
GETTING
BETTER

Policy Owner	NPQ Programme Operations
Version	1.1
Last reviewed	Autumn 2023
Approved by	Nicola Podd, Programme Director
Next review due	July 2023
Applies to	Participants on all NPQ programmes.
Exceptions	Participants on the Masters in Expert Teaching are excluded from this policy and should instead refer to Plymouth Marjon University's Academic Integrity Procedure
Audience	Available on Sharepoint and on Ambition Institute's website. Staff, delivery partners, participants, and contractors.

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Section 1: Overview

1.1   Purpose

1.1.1   This policy outlines how Ambition Institute detects and manages instances of plagiarism on NPQs.

1.1.2   The policy details how Ambition Institute identifies cases of plagiarism. This ensures our participants, our partners and the DfE can have confidence in the qualifications we award.

1.2   Scope

1.2.1   This policy applies to all participants on all NPQ programmes.

Section 2: Policy and Procedure

2.1 What is plagiarism?

2.1.1   Plagiarism is submitting another's work as your own without acknowledgement or reference. This can be done with or without consent. Submitting another's work as your own is viewed as a breach of trust between Ambition Institute and the participant.

2.1.2   Plagiarism can take many forms including, but not limited to, direct copying of another participant's work, collusion between peers, copying work from other sources, quoting verbatim without acknowledgement and paraphrasing. Self-plagiarism, where a participant submits all or part of a piece of work for which they have been awarded another qualification may also be considered under this policy. Finally, participants should be aware that the use of new technologies or external sources, such as A.I. chatbots, would be considered plagiarism.

2.2 How does Ambition Institute identify plagiarism?

2.2.1   Conducting plagiarism checks is also part of our contractual requirements with the DfE (Department for Education) and therefore affects Ambition Institute's reputation and credibility with customers, participants, and funding partners.

2.2.2   Ambition Institute utilises plagiarism software to detect potential plagiarism.

2.2.3   Scripts detected by the software are investigated by the assessment team.

2.2.4   If plagiarism is confirmed the assessment team will send their recommendation and evidence to our Plagiarism Panel for review.

2.2.5   The Plagiarism Panel will include the Lead Moderator, the Programme Associate Director(s) for the programme(s) in question and the Associate Director, NPQ Operations.

2.2.6   If plagiarism is found to be a systemic or endemic process (e.g., plagiarism encouraged or assisted by Ambition Institute itself, delivery partners or schools/trusts), a review will be undertaken. Please see the Malpractice and Maladministration Policy.

2.3 What happens when plagiarism is detected?

2.3.1   As part of our assessment process, participants will be asked to declare their work as their own before they can press submit.

2.3.2   Ambition Institute will also utilise a formal software tool called Turnitin to detect and flag potential plagiarism in a submission.

2.3.3   Our formal plagiarism procedure follows these steps:

> All scripts within a similarity boundary will be individually investigated by several members of the assessment team.
> In most circumstances, the similarity % is only used as an indicator for further checks to be conducted. In no way is the similarity % used in isolation, as evidence that plagiarism has occurred, without further investigation.
> Should any form of plagiarism be found, the assessment team will send their recommendations and evidence to the Plagiarism Panel which includes the Lead Moderator, the Programme Leader(s) for the programme(s) in question and the Associate Director, NPQ Operations.
> The Plagiarism Panel will agree on the final disqualifications. Where appropriate, Ambition Institute will undertake a review of the delivery partner, to establish if they/the school were complicit in and/or aware of the plagiarism. Please refer to the Malpractice and Maladministration Policy.

2.4 Procedure Following Detection

2.4.1   The participant, either directly from Ambition Institute, or via their delivery partner, will be informed of the outcome of any plagiarism detected in their submission alongside the communication of all participant outcomes at the end of the three-month marking and moderation process. When participants are informed of their disqualification they will receive:

> Their case study response including highlighted sections of similarity that were detected using our plagiarism software*.
> Next steps in terms of the number of resubmissions attempts and timelines.

2.4.2   Please note that the similarity % found on the scripts presented back to participants is used by Ambition Institute as part of a wider and more complex, rigorous plagiarism process (see appendix below). It is not the only reason the script has failed the plagiarism checks. Due to GDPR reasons, we cannot share the corresponding script with participants to compare.

2.4.3   For more detailed information on the Turnitin similarity software and how it is used against scripts, please see Appendix A.

2.4.4   Actions following Outcome:

> Regulatory/external moderating bodies overseeing the qualification will be informed in accordance with guidelines.
> If Ambition Institute or delivery partners are found to be at fault, a review will be conducted in accordance with the Malpractice and Maladministration Policy.

> The Faculty Planning and Assessment team will conduct analysis of submissions with plagiarism concerns detected and upheld during each assessment window, including breakdowns by programme and by delivery partner.
> If the participant is on their first assessment attempt, they will be given one further opportunity to resubmit.
> If the participant is on their second and final assessment attempt, they will not be given any further opportunities to submit and will fail the qualification.

2.5 Appeals in cases of plagiarism

2.5.1   Please refer to our Assessment and Appeals policy for more information.

2.6 Confidentiality

2.6.1   All cases of plagiarism detected in participants submission will be recorded on Ambition database and this information will be retained in accordance with Ambition retention policy.

2.7 Links to other policies

2.7.1   Other policies referenced here are available on our website:

> NPQ Malpractice and Maladministration Policy
> NPQ Assessment and Appeals Policy

Section 3: Version control

Version	Issue/release date	Summary of changes	Approver
1.1	10 Jan 2024	- Reformatting to new template. - Language changes to clause 2.3.3 - Change to section 2.5, to direct to appeals policy.	Steve Walton

Section 4: Appendices

Appendix A: Turnitin Software

Turnitin's similarity software is a robust and comprehensive plagiarism checker. Participant responses are uploaded to the system and similarity is checked against multiple areas:
> Participant responses from across Ambition Institute, including previous submissions across all NPQ programmes.
> Any responses or scripts that have been uploaded to Turnitin from any other provider, at any time.
> From the internet such as online sources, evidence, and research.

Appendix B: The Turnitin Process

Before each assessment window, we upload the case study, case study questions, supporting documents and course materials to the Turnitin software. This ensures the software does not consider this material during the similarity check. This means that participants may reference the case study or any materials within it, without the software identifying a similarity. the software will not pick up similarities within responses that are comprehending the case study and the information within it.
> Participant responses are uploaded to the similarity software. Due to our scale, we upload 100 scripts at a time.
> The software then compares similarity across the database (explained in section 1) to calculate a similarity % score.
> We upload scripts in batches (see point 1), and the system can only check similarity against scripts that are in the system at that time. This means that two identical scripts may receive different similarity % scores if they were uploaded separately. The script that was uploaded first will have a lower similarity % than the script uploaded later as the script it is like is already in the system.

Therefore, participants may see a low % score on the highlighted script we share. This similarity % does not reflect the similarity detected and should not be to understand the plagiarism disqualification.

Appendix C: Our approach to detecting plagiarism by using Turnitin.

Ambition Institute's Approach to detecting plagiarism	
Approach	**Description**
Which responses do we view?	The Assessment team look at every response that has a similarity % of 25% or higher. The Assessment team also review a 10% random sample from responses below 25%

What does the similarity software tell us when we go into an individual response?	The software allows us to review each response and see: > The % of similarity against each individual source > Where the similarity of each source is coming from e.g., other Ambition responses vs online sources etc. > Highlighted sections of the response and where the similarity is within each submission The software allows us to click on similarity against each source and compare the two side by side.
What is usually found in responses with high similarity %s?	> In most cases, the high similarity % is a combination of: > Lots of smaller similarity % against a wide range of sources, equating to a higher % overall. Where the high similarity results from a range of sources, rather than a single source, it would suggest plagiarism has not occurred. > Similarly, the high % of similarity may result from referencing sources using a referencing style the system does not recognise. > Similarly, two scripts can sometimes be similar because they used much of the same language and terms/phrases in reference to the case study, but it is clear through the highlighting that sentences have been formed independently and not directly copied as large amounts of similar text.
How does Ambition Institute decide when a response is plagiarism vs not?	In nearly all cases, plagiarism is easily identified when following the above steps. Responses that have a high % similarity to one other script is the first indicator that there could be potential plagiarism. When reviewing the two responses side by side, we review: > How much of the script is highlighted, looking for large amounts of text/paragraphs which are identical to each other. > We review the responses side by side to see whether the structure of their responses is the same. We review the sentences within the highlighted sections to check they are not quoting without the correct punctuation etc. Each response is read in full side by side against its similar counterpart.

What happens when plagiarism has been detected?	For each script, the Assessment team document where they feel plagiarism could have occurred, the rationale and any evidence (e.g., other scripts/sources). When two or more scripts are similar to each other, all are flagged as potential plagiarism. This could mean one script has a similarity score of 10% and is under our >25% check threshold, but its similar counterpart is 46% similarity. This does not mean that one script is like the other, but just suggests they were uploaded at different times and therefore both must be checked and flagged. Once notes are complete, a recommendation is made and all responses in question, including notes, are sent to the Plagiarism Panel for review. A meeting is conducted to agree final outcomes of plagiarism and therefore disqualifications against each response.