



TITLE: PLAGIARISM POLICY

Effective Date	31 March 2021	Version	4
			Policy revised to include reference to take-home exams
Approved By	Academic Council	Date Approved	31 March 2021
		Review Date	31 March 2026 <i>or as required</i>
Superseded or Obsolete Policy / Procedure(s)		Owner	
3 – <i>Plagiarism Policy</i> (29 July 2020) Policy revised to include legislative changes in the area of academic integrity and the addition of referenced policies.		Office of the Registrar	
2 – <i>Plagiarism Policy</i> (27 September 2017) Policy reviewed to ensure compatibility with the Assessments and Standards (Revised 2013), alignment with CCSP Policy on Policies and defined procedures / guidelines.			
1 – <i>Quality Assurance Handbook</i> , pp. 40 – 43 (6 December 2011)			
Initial Issue			

1. Purpose of Policy

The purpose of this document is to set out the policy on plagiarism adopted by Carlow College, St. Patrick's (hereafter Carlow College). This *Plagiarism Policy* is informed by QCI [Assessment and Standards \(revised 2013\)](#) and the [Qualifications and Quality Assurance \(Education and Training \(Amendment\) Act 2019 \(Section 43A\)\)](#). The aim underpinning the Policy is to foster academic integrity in learners. A key requirement is that appropriate acknowledgement is made for the contributions of others to any work submitted for assessment.

2. Definitions

Plagiarism is passing off the work of others as one's own. It is defined by the act not the intention, so even careless accidental copying or inadequate referencing are still classed as plagiarism, for it gives the false impression that the learner is the author and denies the genuine author their due acknowledgement.

Examples:

1. Using phrases or sentences that a learner has come across elsewhere
2. Copying word-for-word directly from a text published or electronic without the use of quotation marks.
3. Paraphrasing the words from a text without a reference.
4. Re-submitting all, or in part, academic material used for a different assessment.
5. Using text downloaded / purchased from the Internet
 - a) The [*Qualifications and Quality Assurance \(Education and Training\) \(Amendment\) Act 2019 \(Section 43A\)*](#) empowers Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) to prosecute those who facilitate academic cheating.¹

In addition to examples involving the written word, the copying and submission of other types of information, without attribution, is also classed as plagiarism. This includes, but is not limited to: diagrams, graphics, photographs, music and video files and experimental data.

3. Scope of Policy

This Policy is applicable to all learners in relation to work submitted for credit including, but not limited to essays, projects, portfolios and reports. It is also applicable to answers submitted for take-home examinations.

4. Policy Statement

Carlow College recognises that learners do not enter the institution with a full understanding of academic writing, values or practices. Explicit teaching of academic referencing occurs at various points in the degree programmes, e.g., as part of the Academic and Digital Skills Module and when assignments are set. The method of attributing sources required by the College is in the form of standard and consistent referencing and bibliographic conventions, footnotes and end-notes. In the case of online submissions, including answer booklets for take-home exams, learners must include and fill in the take-home exam cover page and tick the authorship declaration box (Appendix 3). If a hard-copy submission is required, learners must sign a confirmation of authorship on the Continuous Assessment Submission Form which must be included in all submissions.

Learners at Carlow College are required to submit work through a text-matching software system called *Turnitin*. This software allows learners to view *Originality Reports* which indicate if referencing has been done correctly. *Turnitin* may also be used to detect plagiarism. No specific college-wide similarity limit has been set. Each lecturer assesses whether the level of similarity recorded breaches a threshold for plagiarism relevant to the specific assignment (see Appendix 2: *Guidelines for Using Turnitin*).

¹ For more on the revised legislation and the steps being taken by QQI, please visit this [link](#).

The College recognises that there are different levels of plagiarism and that account must be taken of misunderstanding by learners of the correct conventions of referencing at the start of the Degree programmes. However, learners who engage in serious / repeated incidents of plagiarism will be subject to academic sanctions, including a reduced or fail grade for an assignment (see Appendix 1: *Procedures for Dealing with Plagiarism*). In order to protect the integrity of our progression and award processes, the College will also apply academic sanctions, including a reduced or fail grade, where plagiarism is detected in a take-home exam.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

The Office of the Registrar holds responsibility for all matters, including Quality Assurance, in relation to plagiarism. In this role, the Office is supported by the Assistant Registrars, Programme Board Chairs, Academic Advisors and lecturing staff across all programmes.

6. Associated Documentation

- Appendix 1: Procedures for Dealing with Plagiarism
- Appendix 1.1: Plagiarism Report Form
- Appendix 2: Guidelines for Using *Turnitin* at Carlow College, St. Patrick's
- Appendix 3: Take-Home Exam Cover Page

7. Referenced Policies

- *Assessment of Learners Policy*
- *Internet and Email Usage Policy*
- *Learner Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Policy*

8. Monitoring and Review

The Policy will be subject to continuous assessment and evaluation. Staff and learners will receive refresher training at regular intervals. The Policy will be formally monitored on an annual basis by the Office of the Registrar and formally reviewed every five years.

Appendix 1: Procedures for Dealing with Plagiarism



Procedures for Dealing with Plagiarism

The lecturer should carefully consider the evidence of plagiarism. Indicators and / or proof of plagiarism may include, but are not limited to one or more of the following:

- an excessively high similarity score in *Turnitin*;
- identification of the source of the materials used by the learner without proper attribution, or represented as the learner's own work;
- a demonstrably marked difference in the writing style of the learner, as compared to previous work, or variations in font, grammar and spelling from section to section;
- written testimony from others regarding a learner's use of academically dishonest means to complete the assignment;
- firsthand observation of the learner engaging in plagiarism;
- an unusual or suspicious degree of similarity in work submitted by different learners; and / or
- admission by the learner that s/he has plagiarised.

It is acknowledged that cases of plagiarism are rarely the same and some are far more serious than others. Seriousness varies according to the learner and the assignment. First year undergraduate learners are arguably still learning what academic integrity means but as they progress, learners are accountable to the highest standards of scholarship. Seriousness also involves the intent to deceive or not. Soft plagiarism is a pedagogical issue while hard plagiarism is an ethical one. Plagiarism is then viewed as minor, moderate and serious.²

Plagiarism in Continuous Assessments

As soon as possible after the discovery of the alleged plagiarism, taking account of the context and nature of the case, the following course of action may be taken:

- Direct discussion with the learner to provide further advice about correct citation protocols and how to avoid plagiarism in the future. The learner may be required to re-submit the work / assignment with or without any of the sanctions listed below:
 - a) Resubmission of the work / assignment without penalty;
 - b) Resubmission of the work / assignment with a penalty of a mark reduction of 5% or 10%;

² 'Contract cheating services' or 'essay mills' are becoming increasingly more prevalent in the higher education sector. Cases where a learner is caught availing of these illegal services will be processed as a 'gross misconduct' utilising the *Learner Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Policy*.

- c) Resubmission of the work / assignment with a capping of the grade / mark to a pass / 40%.

In the case of b) and c) above, a *Plagiarism Record Form* must be filled in (see Appendix 1.1). This form should be emailed to the Office of the Registrar, the Programme Director and the relevant Academic Advisor.

Where a pattern of offences by a learner is deemed by the Registrar to potentially threaten or compromise the integrity of the learner's achievement of the required learning outcomes and standards of the programme, a letter will be issued by the Registrar informing the learner of the gravity of the situation and the implications should a further offence occur.

If a subsequent offence occurs, this may be processed as a 'gross misconduct' utilising the *Learner Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Policy*.

Plagiarism in a Take-Home Exam

If a lecturer detects plagiarism in an answer submitted for a take-home exam, they should make an assessment of how extensive the plagiarism is as a proportion of the overall answer and apply sanctions as outlined below:

- a) 10 marks should be deducted when a small amount of plagiarised material is detected (e.g. a couple of sentences or less than 10%³ of the answer)
- b) The mark should be capped to 40 when a larger amount of plagiarised material is detected (e.g. a whole paragraph or between 10-30% of the answer)
- c) Zero marks should be awarded when a significant amount of plagiarism is detected (e.g. over 30% of the answer)

Learners should be informed by the Office of the Registrar when their take-home exams marks have been reduced because of plagiarism. If a subsequent offence occurs, this may be processed as a 'gross misconduct' utilising the *Learner Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Policy*.

Appeals

Appeals by a learner in relation to a plagiarism penalty may be made to the Registrar within two weeks of the application of a sanction. The grounds for appeal may relate to (i) the decision as to whether plagiarism occurred and (ii) the penalty imposed. On receiving an appeal, the Registrar will adjudicate on the matter. The result of the appeal will be conveyed to both parties.

³ Note that the percentage figures mentioned here bear no relation to the 'similarity score' generated by the Turnitin software. The percentage is calculated by the assessor following a careful analysis of the extent of plagiarised material in the answer. A high 'similarity score' taken on its own is not evidence of plagiarism.

Appendix 1.1: *Plagiarism Report Form*

Plagiarism Report Form



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Directions:

This form should be completed in all cases where a lecturer has imposed a plagiarism penalty.

Once completed, it should be emailed to the Office of the Registrar (officeoftheregistrar@carlowcollege.ie) and the relevant Programme Director and Academic Advisor.

Form:

Name of Learner	
Stage	
Programme	
Academic Advisor	
Name of Lecturer	
Name of Module	
Assignment type and title	
Summary of the type and quantity of plagiarised material detected	
Penalty imposed	
Date	

Appendix 2: Guidelines for Using Turnitin at Carlow College, St Patrick's

Guidelines for Using *Turnitin* at Carlow College, St. Patrick's



Learners

Most written assignments are required to be submitted through *Turnitin*.⁴ Assignments are submitted through the *Turnitin* link set up on the relevant module's Moodle page. Learners who are enrolled on a module are able to access the link. The lecturer will set up a 'test link' and a 'final submission' link.

Learners are given the opportunity to make a test submission before the assignment's deadline. This submission will generate an *Originality Report*. This is the result of the comparison between the submitted work and open websites on the internet as well as *Turnitin*'s own database of previously submitted papers. The percentage of matched material is represented by a 'score' between 1 and 100.

The similarity score does not tell the learner if an essay is plagiarised, it just records how much is matching to published material. **There is no correct score.** A high score does not necessarily indicate plagiarism. It may indicate an overly high level of quotations from primary or secondary sources. This might be bad essay writing practice but if the material is correctly referenced, there is no issue of plagiarism. A low score, on the other hand, does not mean there has not been plagiarism. If an assignment scores 10%, but that 10% is unreferenced material, then it means that 10% of the assignment has been plagiarised, and that is clearly problematic.

Following the test submission, learners have the opportunity to look at their *Originality Reports* and make changes to the assignment if they wish. Changing the essay solely in order to lower the score is counter-productive and misses the point of *Turnitin*. Learners should concentrate on developing good academic referencing skills and honing their ability to use their own voice in their written work.

Assignments must be submitted through the final submission link before the assignment deadline. A hard copy of the assignment, showing a *Turnitin* number, must also be submitted to Administration.

Lecturers

Lecturers should set up the *Turnitin* links on their relevant Moodle page in good time, preferably at least four weeks before the assignment is due. A 'test link' should be set up which allows learners to see *Originality Reports* and a 'final submission link' which also allows learners to see *Originality Reports*. Assignments submitted through the 'final submission link' are the ones to be graded. Lecturers are encouraged to use settings which exclude quotations, bibliography and small matches such as common phrases.

⁴ Lecturers may decide that specific pieces of personal / reflective / creative writing do not need to be processed through *Turnitin* and will advise the class if this is the case.

Lecturers should avoid giving learners the impression that there is a ‘threshold’ for the similarity score above which assignments will be considered to be ‘plagiarised’. It is more helpful to give learners examples of good quotation and referencing techniques.

Turnitin can assist in the detection of plagiarism as it is faster and more effective than investigating for the original sources through conventional search engines (i.e. Google). However, the lecturer must use his or her own judgement in determining whether a learner has plagiarised material in their assignment.

Procedures to be followed if plagiarism is detected are covered in the *Plagiarism Policy*.

Appendix 3: Cover Page for Take-Home Exams



**TAKE HOME EXAM ANSWER BOOKLET
[DATE]**

**ALL EXAM ANSWERS TO BE SUBMITTED THROUGH
TURNITIN WITHIN 24 HOURS* AFTER THE RELEASE OF
THE EXAM PAPER.**

Please complete all the information below.

Name	
Student Number	
Programme	
Stage	
Exam Module Title	
Date of Exam	
Date submitted	

Authorship Declaration

By ticking the box below and submitting my answer booklet, I confirm that the work presented here is my own work.

I have read and understood the Carlow College Plagiarism Policy accessed at <https://www.carlowcollege.ie/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/PlagiarismPolicy.pdf>

Please place a tick or an X in this box

***Students who have additional time as a reasonable accommodation should submit within 28 hours of the release of the paper.**