

# Plagiarism

Guidance Document

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# Section 1 Overview of the Guidance

## 1.1 Scope of the guidance

This guidance relates to NCFE (we, us, our etc.) The use of 'NCFE' refers to NCFE and NCFE-owned brand names (such as 'CACHE'). This guidance applies to all individuals working for or on behalf of NCFE, including all colleagues at all locations and at all levels including members of the Executive team, External Contractors, agency workers, partners, suppliers, Centres, customers, any associates, any subsidiaries or their employees or any other person associated with us.

The guidance, where applicable, relates to our regulated qualifications and unregulated products which are owned and/or offered by NCFE.

## 1.2 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 learner achievements.

This guidance should be read in conjunction with NCFE's Maladministration and Malpractice, Sanctions policies, and the Centre Agreement.

## 1.3 Reviewing the guidance

This guidance is regularly reviewed and revised to capture changes in risk, law and best practice. It may be revised in response to the findings of any review.

## 1.4 Complaints

You have the right to express your dissatisfaction regarding our actions, products or services. Please see our Complaints Policy, which is available on our website, for more information.

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## Section 2 Overview of Plagiarism

NCFE is committed to helping our centres provide the best possible outcome for learners in both internal and external assessments.

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

### 2.1 Plagiarism definition

***“The reproduction or appropriation of someone else's work without proper attribution; passing off as one's own the work of someone else.”***

*(Plagiarism.org - Best Practices for Ensuring Originality in Written Work, 2016)*

Examples of plagiarism are likely to be (though not limited to) circumstances where learners have not acknowledged the actual source and:

- copied word for word from a printed or online source
- closely paraphrased the original text with a slight wording change
- used someone else's ideas and conclusions

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

Referencing of sources is an important skill for learners to develop and is essential for the integrity of assessment, 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/award levels (Levels 1 and 2) 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/awards (Level 3 and above), where clear referencing is necessary to support the demonstration of knowledge, understanding and critical thinking.

### 2.2 Detecting and preventing plagiarism

We 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 learners and ensuring learners have sufficient time, subject

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understanding, and the resources to complete assessments can all be important factors in combatting plagiarism.

We 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. The centre should deal with all cases of plagiarism identified before grades/marks and/or assessment work is submitted to NCFE. For external assessments not seen by the centre, the responsibility is on the learner to ensure plagiarism is avoided.

Any instances of plagiarism will be dealt with in conjunction with the NCFE Maladministration and Malpractice Policy, which can be downloaded from our website [www.ncfe.org.uk](http://www.ncfe.org.uk).

### 2.3 Dealing with plagiarism

If plagiarism is suspected by an external NCFE Customer/External Quality Assurer (EQA)/Examiner or brought to our attention by a whistle-blower, then the centre will be notified of actions to be completed. Please refer to our Malpractice and Maladministration Policy for guidance on what may happen next.

If cases of plagiarism continue to be found, we will ask the Head of Centre to conduct an investigation and respond to the allegation. NCFE will then reach a conclusion, and actions as outlined in the Malpractice and Maladministration Policy may be employed. In addition and where necessary, sanctions may be imposed. Please see our Sanctions Policy for further information. When plagiarism is identified by us in external assessments where it is not possible for centres to check for plagiarism beforehand, centres will be notified and achievement may be withheld from the learner.

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## Section 3 Guidance on plagiarism

### 3.1 Plagiarism versus poor academic skills

Plagiarism is using the work of another person without crediting the source. We will apply our Maladministration and Malpractice policy in all cases of plagiarism and where plagiarism has occurred, learner achievements may be withheld or additional work may need to be submitted by the learner. Intent to commit plagiarism is an important factor when concluding if plagiarism has occurred; however, it is difficult to judge intent because accidental plagiarism is still considered as plagiarism.

We take the view that there is no intent to plagiarise if the issue can be defined as poor academic skills relating to deficiencies in knowledge and understanding of how to reference. This means there are identifiable attempts to reference but they are not used correctly, resulting in an honest mistake.

Examples might include:

- reference to a source in a paragraph or section of text but it isn't clear which exact sentence the reference relates to, reference might be found at the start, middle or end of a section in a confused mixture of the learner's own work and the sourced material (see example 1)
- not making it clear if sections with references are a direct quote or if the words have been paraphrased (see examples 2 and 3)
- using partial or confused references such as naming the author but not the correct book references
- minimal references at Level 1 and 2, such as inserting a copy of a website URL or adding a simple reference/bibliography section at the end

Poor academic skills and mistakes in referencing could negatively impact on the achievement awarded but will not be considered as plagiarism.

Referencing techniques are a key part of how learners provide evidence that supports their knowledge and understanding. Poor academic skills makes it more difficult for the Examiner to attribute marks for the demonstration of knowledge and understanding. Centres will be informed in these situations and advice will be provided. Centres will also be strongly encouraged to re-visit referencing techniques with their learners.

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## 3.2 Examples of best practice and poor practice

### 3.2.1 Example 1 – Embedding references correctly in a paragraph

#### **Best practice:**

Professor Scott believes that “environmental reform in Alaska in the 1970s accelerated rapidly alongside pipeline expansion” (Scott, 1999). Alaska is a state in the northern part of the USA and I believe it is also important to protect the environment in the UK from any pollution from the oil and gas pipelines in the North Sea. Oil spills in Alaska have already caused a great deal of damage to the wildlife there (Scott, 1999).

*(The source has been referenced in the two relevant sentences and it is clear to the Examiner that the middle sentence represents the learner’s own ideas.)*

#### **Poor practice:**

Professor Scott believes that environmental reform in Alaska in the 1970s accelerated rapidly alongside pipeline expansion. Alaska is a state in the northern part of the USA and I believe it is also important to protect the environment in the UK from any pollution from the oil and gas pipelines in the North Sea. Oil spills in Alaska have already caused a great deal of damage to the wildlife there (Scott, 1999).

*(Research has been referenced but it is unclear which parts are learner generated and which parts are from the sourced material. This makes it harder for the Examiner to credit the learner’s own ideas.)*

#### **Plagiarism:**

Environmental reform in Alaska in the 1970s accelerated rapidly alongside pipeline expansion. Alaska is a state in the northern part of the USA and I believe it is also important to protect the environment in the UK from any pollution from the oil and gas pipelines in the North Sea. Oil spills in Alaska have already caused a great deal of damage to the wildlife there.

*(The learner has not referenced or quoted any of the text.)*

### 3.2.2 Example 2 – Paraphrasing

#### **Best practice:**

In the book *The Art of the Novel*, Milan Kundera put forward the idea that if novels become no longer relevant it will be because people have changed and can no longer relate to them, rather than because they have lost their impact.

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*(The source has been referenced and the idea has been re-structured using the learners own words to demonstrate an understanding of the point.)*

**Poor practice:**

Milan Kundera said in the book, *The Art of the Novel* that if the novel should disappear, it will not be because it has lost its powers but because the world has grown alien to it.

*(Though referenced, only a few words have been changed from the source, becoming a non-highlighted quote rather than an attempt at paraphrasing. This is poor practice and a mistake by the learner, and makes it difficult for the Examiner to be convinced that the learner has understood and correctly made use of the sourced knowledge.)*

**Plagiarism:**

If the novel should really disappear, it will do so not because it has exhausted its powers but because it exists in a world grown alien to it.

*(The learner has used an exact quote that is not highlighted or referenced.)*

### 3.2.3 Example 3 - Citing a quotation

**Best practice:**

Professor Scott believes that “environmental reform in Alaska in the 1970s accelerated rapidly alongside pipeline expansion” (Scott, 1999).

*(Quotation marks are used to highlight source material and the reference is also acknowledged.)*

**Poor practice:**

Environmental reform in Alaska in the 1970s accelerated rapidly alongside pipeline expansion (Scott, 1999).

*(The Examiner is lead to believe that this is a paraphrased version but it's actually a direct quote. This is a mistake by the learner and indicates poor educational practice. The Examiner may have difficulty awarding marks for knowledge and understanding if it is difficult to distinguish between the learner's work and the poorly referenced supporting source material.)*

**Plagiarism:**

Environmental reform in Alaska in the 1970s accelerated rapidly alongside pipeline expansion.

*(The word-for-word quote is not highlighted here and there is no reference provided.)*

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## Section 4 How to contact us

If you have any queries about the contents of this policy, please contact our Quality Assurance team:

**NCFE – Awarding**

**Quality Assurance team**

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**\*To continue to improve our levels of customer service, telephone calls may be recorded for training and quality purposes.**

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## Appendix A References

Plagiarism.org - Best Practices for Ensuring Originality in Written Work. (2016). Glossary. [online] Available at: <http://www.plagiarism.org/plagiarism-101/glossary/> [Accessed 13 Apr. 2016].