

**Chartered Banker**

# **Plagiarism and Collusion**

**A Guide for Students**

**May 2016**

## Plagiarism and Collusion – how to avoid them.

### Introduction

The Chartered Banker Institute is committed to improving quality standards and ensuring that good academic practice is evident across all its qualification programmes.

Central to good academic practice is the requirement that the submitted work of all students is their own and shows no evidence of the academic offences of plagiarism and collusion.

To help the Institute detect academic offences, all assignments and other assessed work which is submitted by students, is passed through a highly sophisticated software system called Turnitin. Turnitin uses three databases for content-matching across a minimum of:

- 45 billion web pages
- 337 million archived student papers
- 130 million articles from over 110,000 journals, periodicals and books.

*(Turnitin – May 2016)*

Students should be under no illusions that the Institute takes incidences of plagiarism and collusion most seriously, given that they potentially represent a breach of the Institute's Code of Professional Conduct.

This document seeks to ensure that student members **do not** fall into the plagiarism and collusion traps!

### Plagiarism

#### What is plagiarism?

There are many and varied definitions of the term "plagiarism".

Whilst some may simply say that it is copying another's work or borrowing someone else's original ideas, others bluntly highlight the seriousness of this academic offence. For example, the *Merriam-Webster* online dictionary, states that to "plagiarise" means:

- "to steal and pass off (the ideas or words of another) as one's own
- to use (another's production) without crediting the source
- to commit literary theft
- to present as new and original, an idea or product derived from an existing source."

In other words, and let's be clear on this, plagiarism is essentially an act of fraud and involves both stealing someone else's work and then lying about it later.

## Examples of plagiarism

Here are some of the most common examples of plagiarism:

- submitting someone else's work as your own
- copying words or ideas from someone else without giving credit
- failing to put a quotation in quotation marks
- giving incorrect information about the source of a quotation
- changing words but copying the sentence structure of a source without giving credit
- copying so many words or ideas from a source that it makes up the majority of your work, whether you give credit or not.

## Potential reasons for plagiarism

There are a number of reasons (excuses) which can be given for committing plagiarism. Here are a few:

- "I didn't know what plagiarism was."
- "Due to work commitments, I didn't have enough time to complete the assignment using my own work."
- "I'm not very organised, so I simply forgot to record all my information sources."
- "My employer was pressurising me to complete the assignment."
- "I thought I would get away with it."
- "I've never had to reference sources before."
- "I thought that I could copy parts of the Institute's textbooks and Study Guides without referencing that material."

Plagiarism can be either intentional or unintentional. Unintentional plagiarism is normally associated with a lack of knowledge or procedure, e.g. a lack of citation or not using quotation marks. An example of intentional plagiarism, is where a student "borrows another student's work and submits that work as their own.

Students should be aware that in common with other academic institutions, the Institute does not differentiate between intentional and unintentional plagiarism.

**Important** – the Institute will **not** deem that students have breached the plagiarism rules when they try in **good faith** to acknowledge others' work but fail to do so accurately or fully.

## How to avoid plagiarism

Most cases of plagiarism can be avoided, however, by simply citing sources. Just acknowledging that certain material has been borrowed and providing the information necessary to find that source is usually enough to prevent plagiarism.

Here are a few more suggestions.

### **1. Plan Your assignment**

Planning your assignment well is the first and most important step you can take toward preventing plagiarism. If you know you are going to use other sources of information, you should plan how you are going to include them in your assignment. This means working out a balance between the ideas you have taken from other sources and your own, original ideas.

### **2. Take effective notes**

One of the best ways to prepare for your assignment is by taking thorough notes from all of your sources so that you have much of the information organised before you begin writing.

Poor note-taking can lead to many problems including improper citations and misquotations, both of which are forms of plagiarism, so please make sure that you record bibliographic information or web addresses for every source right away – finding them again later when you are trying to finish your assignment can be a real nightmare!

### **3. If you are in any doubt, cite sources**

If it is unclear whether an idea in your assignment really came from you, or whether you got it from somewhere else and just changed it a little, you should **always cite your source**. Instead of weakening your assignment and making it seem like you have fewer original ideas, this will actually **strengthen** your paper by, for example, showing that you are not just copying other ideas but are processing and adding to them.

### **4. Know how to paraphrase**

A paraphrase is a restatement in your own words of someone else's ideas.

Changing a few words of the original sentences does **not** make your writing a legitimate paraphrase. You must change both the words and the sentence structure of the original, without changing the content. Also, you should keep in mind that paraphrased passages still require citation because the ideas came from another source, even though you are putting them in your own words.

The purpose of paraphrasing is not to make it seem like you are drawing less directly from other sources or to reduce the number of quotations in your assignment. It is a common misconception among students that you need to hide the fact that you rely on other sources.

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Actually, it's advantageous to highlight the fact that other sources support your own ideas. Using quality sources to support your ideas makes them seem stronger and more valid. Good paraphrasing makes the ideas of the original source fit smoothly into your paper, emphasising the most relevant points and leaving out unrelated information.

**NB.** Please refer to the Institute's Reference Guidelines for a fuller explanation of the referencing requirements.

## Collusion

### What is collusion?

Collusion is a form of plagiarism, and involves the co-operation of at least two students, with the intent to deceive the Institute's tutors and / or examiners.

A student will be deemed to have colluded if:

- he or she obtains, by any means, another student's work, and submits it, either in part or in whole, as their own work
- he or she allows any of their work to be obtained by another student for subsequent submission as if it were that student's own work.

It is important to note that collusion does not usually manifest itself in an identical copy of one student's assignment being submitted by the other student. More likely, the second student will cleverly (or not so cleverly!) paraphrase the assignment, often using the same references in the same order and using an identical structure and argument.

If two submissions are deemed to be so similar to the extent that the probability of mere coincidence can easily be discounted, the students concerned are likely to be accused of colluding with each other and will be invited to appear before a Disciplinary Panel under the Institute's formal disciplinary procedures.

### Collusion – what is permitted

The Institute recognises that some collaborative activities may assist the learning process – here are a few acceptable practices:

- 'V discussing your textbooks, Study Guides, online resources, lectures and workshops with other students
- 'V working together and perhaps sharing references – **the submitted work must however be independently written**
- 'V after your work has been marked, you can discuss your work submission and any feedback you may have received.

## Collusion – what is not permitted

- ' Allowing another student to “borrow” your assessment submission – this includes providing a hard copy or transferring your document to another student by means of email, memory stick or other similar method
- ' “Borrowing” another student's work **with or without** their consent
- ' Collaborating with another student to produce notes and then using them as a basis for your own submission

## Avoiding collusion and protecting your assessment

- . Do not give your assessment work to another student – apart from you committing a serious academic offence, why should they benefit from all your hard work?
- . Do not ask another student for a copy of their assessment – if it is given to you, both of you will have committed a serious academic offence and there will be major repercussions
- . Protect your work at all times if you are working on your assessment in your office or other public place – this can be achieved by one or more of the following steps:
  - password-protect your document and do not reveal that password to anyone – no matter how much they might beg! (Password-protection is especially important if your work is stored on a shared drive)
  - if you leave your desktop / laptop computer, save the document and close it
  - if you are printing your work, ensure that you are at the printer to pick it up and that you collect all the pages.

Importantly, the Institute expects you to protect your assessments and thus prevent others from unauthorised access to them. Should another student use your work without your consent, you too could well be held liable.

## **Consequences of plagiarism and collusion**

Even if you were not fully aware before, you should now be in no doubt that the Institute treats instances of plagiarism and collusion extremely seriously.

Students who have committed these offences can expect to receive some form of sanction.

Sanctions, and how they are administered, are dependent on the severity of the offence and whether or not a first offence was committed.

### **“Non-material” Disciplinary Breaches**

Offences which are deemed to be “non-material” disciplinary breaches would include for example low, medium and high levels of plagiarism.

“Non-material” disciplinary breaches are assessed by an Investigating Officer (the Institute’s Chief Executive or nominee)

Sanctions could include one or more of the following:

- the member may be admonished
- the issue of a Warning Letter
- the reduction of any mark awarded by the Institute
- the requirement that the member resubmits or re-sits any assessment and / or
- the requirement that the member undertakes a new assessment.

### **“Material” Disciplinary Breaches**

Offences which are deemed to be “material” disciplinary breaches would include for example very high levels of plagiarism and collusion.

“Material” disciplinary breaches are initially assessed by an Investigating Officer (the Institute’s Chief Executive or nominee) and then usually referred to and dealt with by a Disciplinary Committee Panel.

Sanctions could include one or more of the following:

- the member may be admonished
- a record of the member's breach of the Code of Professional Conduct may be noted for a specified period on the member's record of membership of the Institute
- all or any of the member’s benefits and privileges of membership of the Institute may be withdrawn for a specified period
- a requirement to attend (at own expense) additional training or to complete additional tests, examinations or assessments
- any passes by the member in current or previous diets of examinations or assessments of the Institute may be cancelled
- a requirement to re-sit one or more examinations or assessments of the Institute at the member's own expense

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- suspension from membership of the Institute for a specified period during which the benefits of membership of the Institute, including the use of professional titles and designatory letters, shall be withdrawn from the member
- temporary / permanent expulsion from membership of the Institute

Many employers also take their own disciplinary action when it is proven that one of their staff members has committed an academic offence.

The Institute strongly believes that **prevention is always better than the cure** and this document aims to help you avoid committing these academic offences.

If you need further guidance, you can visit [www.plagiarism.org](http://www.plagiarism.org) which was a source of some of the information contained in this document.

## Sources

[www.turnitin.com](http://www.turnitin.com)

[www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary](http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary)

[www.plagiarism.org](http://www.plagiarism.org)

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