

Top 10 tips on *Detering plagiarism*¹

Use the information in this guide to deter plagiarism in your assessment. For further reading and case study details, go to <http://www.kent.ac.uk/ai/staff/index.html>.

1. Explain the benefits of and reasons for correct referencing

Students should not believe that correct referencing is only required to avoid accusations of plagiarism. Emphasise:

- academic integrity and the student's membership of the academic community plus the effect on the value of their degrees if plagiarism is accepted practice.
- the link between good academic practice and better grades rather than penalties.

2. Promote student engagement

Activities to promote academic integrity and student engagement:

- explicitly include academic skills and referencing in assessment criteria (see *Top ten tips on assessment for learning*)
- include students in assessment design where practicable (see *Top ten tips on self, peer and group assessment*)
- encourage students to become involved in departmental discussions on plagiarism
- provide examples of good academic writing at a suitable level from your discipline.

2. Make sure your students understand what constitutes plagiarism in your assignment, subject or course

- give students very clear assignment instructions
- clarify the distinction between collaboration and collusion as some students find this confusing
- identify what may constitute 'general knowledge' and not need referencing
- give examples of the type of citations and sources you expect students to use
- further activities on raising student awareness of plagiarism can be found on the Academic Integrity website at <http://www.kent.ac.uk/ai/staff/deteringplagiarism/index.html>

3. Make sure your students are aware of the consequences of plagiarising

The procedures for dealing with breaches of the General Regulations relating to academic misconduct and plagiarism changed in October 2007. Updated information can be found on the Academic Integrity website at the Academic Policies page at www.kent.ac.uk/ai/academicpolicies.html.

4. Understand why your students may cheat so you can remove this incentive

Reasons for cheating include:

- running out of time and being unable to cope with the work
- pressure to succeed and perceived lack of interest from lecturers
- unable to reference and wanting to pass not learn
- because it is so easy! Reusing tasks that rely on simple tasks invites cheating.

¹ Information in this guide is adapted from the Academic Integrity website and sources listed in 'References and further reading'.

5. Design your course and assessment tasks to promote learning and to make plagiarism difficult and less rewarding for students

Design engaging assessment tasks (See *Top ten tips on diversifying assessment*):

- Students value assessments which appear to have some meaning or relevance outside of academia (See *Report on Students' Views of Assessment*, UELT 2005).

Carroll (2007) suggests:

- give students clear instructions and narrow task requirements
- include random vivas or supervised 'meta-tasks' eg: 'I learned...'
- ask for lists of sources or reflections on the task
- include peer review (see *Top ten tips on self, peer and group assessment*)

Tips on course design (*adapted from Carroll & Appleton, 2001*)

6. Rewrite your assessment tasks for each time the course is taught

Reusing tasks invites copying of previous work. Include current information and personal reflection where possible as this is not so easily downloaded from the Internet and invites student engagement.

7. Include 'process' in the assessment as well as analysis, evaluation and synthesis.

Check the steps in the assessment process i.e. check drafts or interim work (which may or may not be assessed).

8. Avoid information gathering tasks

Include an aspect of manipulating information to prevent students simply gathering and reporting facts.

9. Individualise tasks and create tasks which may have multiple solutions

In certain subjects it may be useful to give students the same task but with differing data sets.

10. Integrate tasks so that student build on previous achievements

This both makes the individual tasks useful and relevant, and prevents students from simply jumping to the final task and attempting to short-cut the learning involved.

References and further reading

- Carroll, J. (2007) *A Handbook for Deterring Plagiarism in Higher Education* 2nd edition, Oxford: Oxford Centre for Staff and Learning Development.
- Carroll, J. & Appleton, J. (2001) *Plagiarism: A Good Practice Guide* [online] available from: JISC, http://www.jisc.ac.uk/uploaded_documents/brookes.pdf [accessed 05 October 2006].
- Chester, G. (2001) *Plagiarism Detection and Prevention: Final Report on the JISC Electronic Plagiarism Detection Project*, JISC, available from: http://www.jisc.ac.uk/uploaded_documents/plagiarism_final.pdf [accessed 05 October 2006].
- UEL (2005) *Report on students' views on assessment* [online]. Available from University of Kent: <http://www.kent.ac.uk/uelt/ced/themes/assessment/studentviews.pdf> [accessed 24 November 2007].