

Procedure 6.3 Plagiarism

This procedure relates to LFA Procedure 1.7 - Intellectual property and to LFA Procedure 6.2 - Academic misconduct

1. Introduction

London Film Academy (LFA) is committed to fair assessment procedures for all students. Academic misconduct threatens fair assessment, which in itself can then disadvantage all students and challenge the quality of awards made by LFA. Plagiarism is one aspect of academic misconduct, but it is also a subject which raises important learning and teaching issues.

LFA is committed to:

- enabling students to avoid plagiarism through a programme of support and education at course level, aligned with LFA policy and procedure
- ensuring that staff have a shared understanding of policy and procedure, and implementing this consistently across courses.

Awareness of plagiarism and effective means to avoid it in scholarly work is an important element of higher education. The acquisition of higher level skills is progressive. The approach to educating higher education students should therefore be student-friendly, for example in language and exemplar material. Inevitably, cases of plagiarism occurring at more advanced levels of study will tend to attract a more penalty-driven approach, but we wish still to emphasize the importance of developmental training and education at every level.

Wherever possible, assessment strategies across courses should be designed in such a way as to minimise the opportunity for plagiarism.

2. Definition

Plagiarism is the act of presenting the material, ideas, and arguments of another person/persons as one's own. To copy sentences, phrases or even particular striking expressions without acknowledgement, in a manner which may deceive the reader as to the source, is plagiarism; to paraphrase, in a manner which may deceive the reader, is likewise plagiarism.

Section 3 of LFA Procedure 6.2 - Academic misconduct some common examples of plagiarism. Staff will be asked periodically to review with students their understanding of LFA's expectations concerning plagiarism and to demonstrate this at programme level by an appropriate record.

3. Support in educating students to avoid plagiarism

Appropriate support, information and educational materials are crucial, for example in course materials, web- based support, classroom teaching and tutorials. Personal tutoring and workshops can also be used to identify students' concerns at an early stage.



3.1. Clarity of guidance for students

Clear guidance on what constitutes plagiarism and strategies to avoid it will be provided as generic text for use in course materials.

3.2. Developing academic skills

The avoidance of plagiarism is part of education for effective academic writing and necessarily continues at all levels. Learning to write in a formal register, whilst ensuring that the work of others is acknowledged, takes time to learn and should be seen as a progression which may take time and skills to refine. Education and formative development of students' understanding of plagiarism should be emphasised at all phases, particularly pre-detection, but also in the detection and investigation phase, so that no student can convincingly argue that help was not available and given in the key stages of their submission of work, or staff response to it.

3.3. Educational resources

In addition to any local resources, a central suite of educational resources will be available to students and tutors via a web interface. Items from the suite may be downloaded by tutors and embedded within modules. These will show an increasing level of sophistication to support student progression and staff expectations.

3.4. Referencing/citing correctly

LFA has agreed that the common standards for citation and referencing will be the Harvard system.

4. Detection of plagiarism and follow-up investigation

LFA has invested in comprehensive *Turnitin* plagiarism detection software and will use this to manage all detected instances of plagiarism. *Turnitin* reports can be accessed by Course Teams and tutors when they are assessing student work.

4.1. Actions taken in the event of a case of suspected plagiarism

Students who are suspected of plagiarism will have the relevant work and personal circumstances investigated according to LFA disciplinary procedures. The procedures set out several possible courses of action and are designed to ensure that all students are treated consistently.

The procedures are also designed to ensure that all investigations into suspected plagiarism are carried out fairly, thoroughly and impartially. This is achieved by the convening of independent panels of academic staff to investigate the alleged plagiarism and, where appropriate, award a suitable penalty. It is fundamental, as part of natural justice, that students facing charges of plagiarism must (i) understand properly and fully the case being brought against them, and (ii) be allowed to meet the panel to put their case.

LFA recognises that plagiarism offences are not all equally serious; they vary from quite minor cases to those that are extremely serious. If a student offends a second time, this is more serious by virtue of it being a subsequent offence. Initially, offences are divided into two broad categories, minor and serious. The procedures allow for panel investigation. LFA permits students to contest the decision of a panel if they feel it was unjust and have their case reconsidered at a higher level by the Academic Board.



LFA is committed to fair assessment procedures for all students. These procedures are designed to help in understanding what plagiarism is and how to avoid it. To this end, students are advised to read their Student Handbook and other academic guidance carefully.

Academic misconduct threatens fair assessment, which in itself can disadvantage all students and challenge the quality of awards made by LFA. LFA is committed to enabling students to avoid plagiarism through a programme of support and education at course level. In addition to educating for the avoidance of plagiarism, LFA is committed to detecting and acting when a case of plagiarism is suspected.

The avoidance of plagiarism is part of education for effective academic writing and necessarily continues at all levels.

5. Obligations upon students to prevent plagiarism

To distinguish between their own work and that of others, students should ensure that:

- phrases, sentences and passages taken verbatim from a published work are placed in quotation marks/grades, or indented, and the source is acknowledged
- paraphrasing, ideas and arguments taken from a published work are clearly referenced
- the inclusion of any other intellectual property, for example, illustrations, diagrams, proofs, designs, computer software, in written text or project work is clearly identified and acknowledged
- the inclusion of material from electronic sources is carefully referenced and only websites freely accessible to the marker should be used
- the use of the work of others is not of such volume or importance to the submitted work as to compromise ownership of the work
- no significant collaboration has occurred where there is a requirement to submit the work as an individual piece. Where work is done collaboratively and a single piece of work is submitted, the collaboration must be permitted by the Course Team and it must be declared on the work
- they have not presented previously or simultaneously for assessment in LFA or elsewhere, any work, or any substantial amount of such work, that is submitted

5.1. Citations, references and bibliographies

When writing a report or an essay, it is important that each time someone else's ideas from a book, article, film, TV programme, newspaper report or conference proceeding are used, readers are informed immediately in the text. This is called a 'citation'. The citation links to a reference usually provided as a bibliography at the end of the work (failure to provide a reference may expose a student to charges of plagiarism).

Citations are normally used to:

- give support for arguments used in essays or dossiers, and/or
- acknowledge a writer who has influenced the writer's thinking.

References provide details for the reader of:

- the source of particular ideas and models
- the source of quotations
- the source of statistics or other data
- the sources of diagrams, pictures or charts

Expectations of standards of citation and referencing should conform to those agreed institutionally. (LFA recognises that some disciplines require alternative systems, e.g. to meet professional standards at a national level. Where this is the case, guidance will be given on using the alternative system equivalent to that provided for the LFA standard)



6. Obligations upon staff to minimise plagiarism

6.1. Designing out plagiarism in assessment

It is important that assessment practices allow for the designing out of plagiarism, that is, to create and to implement specific programme and course assessment initiatives which are known to reduce the incidence of inadvertent and/or deliberate plagiaristic activity. Some of these strategies involve placing emphasis on certain kinds of well-known summative assessment techniques, for example terminal examinations, but there is a range of possibilities in designing assessment tools which are both formative and plagiarism-resistant. In addition to specific assessment tools, courses and programmes can also factor in specific anti-plagiarism procedures. A combination of tools and procedures might include the following:

6.2. Reworking assessments on a continuing and randomised basis

This ensures that questions are not recycled. The editing out of 'essay banks' is also useful in this area. Cosmetic changes to assignment drafts should be avoided, as they are easily spotted by students. This technique should apply not only to essays and analogous coursework examples, but also to practical assignments, reports, reviews and case-studies.

6.3. Avoiding obvious links between learning outcomes and essay setting

Assessors should make analytic tasks more three-dimensional, and use information-gathering more widely in assessments.

6.4. Individualising tasks whenever consistent with good pedagogy.

The use of poster work is particularly helpful in this area, as is tutorial-based essay-title planning. Some Course Teams may find that abandoning 'set' essay titles on the one hand, and disallowing wholly student-created titles on the other, helps in resisting the temptation to plagiarise, as well as providing other assessment benefits, e.g. tailoring tasks to specific skills and interests of students.

6.5. Building in specific plagiarism-moderation procedures

The principle of checking assignments should be embedded within programme or course documentation and made clear in handbooks and other information material.

6.6. Using specific assessment tools

Assessors should use methods which are known to reduce the incidence of plagiarism, for example academic reviews and information searches, posters and annotated bibliographies. Variety in assessments tends to reduce plagiarism.

6.7. Creating a collaborative research environment

This will tend to reduce plagiarism through peer pressure, for example, group written projects moderated by peers and/or tutors. The challenge of peer evaluation tends to reduce plagiaristic activity, as does group assessment.



7. Note on intellectual property

7.1 Original work

Work can be classified as original if it is the result of *independent creative effort*; it will not be original if it has been copied from something that already exists. In usual circumstances, creative documentation in the workplace would not be classified as original work, but there is always the possibility that a highly innovative new idea may arise during everyday activities, resulting in a very imaginative and unusual proposal, process or procedure, expressed in a document. If so, it is essential that this be protected under copyright. The idea itself must be expressed in written form before copyright can apply; simply using the © symbol will be sufficient. Should the written output then be copied without authorisation, LFA could seek legal redress through the Courts.

Original filmed content, which includes films made on courses, ([see LFA Terms & Conditions](#)) distance or open learning materials that may be produced by LFA, will probably fall into the category of original work and it will obviously be very important to protect their copyright.

