

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is **never** acceptable and it is a student's responsibility to ensure that any piece of work submitted for assessment is original and entirely their own work.

Plagiarism is commonly defined as follows:

'The practice of taking someone else's work or ideas and passing them off as one's own.'

Oxford Dictionaries, <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/>

However, plagiarism and academic impropriety are **not limited** to this definition. Other examples to watch for are given below.

Self-Plagiarism

Academic Impropriety also includes **self-plagiarism**, where a student uses work previously submitted for another assessment or publication and re-purposes it in another assignment. While it is legitimate to draw on and develop ideas that may be covered elsewhere, it is **not** acceptable to resubmit a piece of work for assessment twice, and this includes blocks of text within a piece of work.

Over-Quoting

It is important that any body of work comprises significant analysis by the learner. Therefore it is not appropriate for an essay to consist of large numbers of referenced quotations from other sources without suitable discussion and analysis.

Essay Mills

Purchasing assignments from online 'essay mills' is an intentional attempt by the student to submit work that is not their own and will be dealt with severely.

It should be noted that there is a draft law in train to make essay mills **illegal** in Ireland.

Paraphrasing/Re-wording

It is **not sufficient** to merely reword/paraphrase content (either from an external source or your own work). Ideas and concepts must be reframed and insights provided. Deliberate plagiarism, including changing words to disguise a source, is a serious offence. The Urkund report may not identify this, but re-wording in this way generally results in disjointed or inelegant prose which is easy for a lecturer to spot.

Some examples are given below.

Original Source Text
Reflection involves not simply a sequence of ideas, but a <i>consequence</i> — a consecutive ordering in such a way that each determines the next as its proper outcome, while each in turn leans back on its predecessors. The successive portions of the reflective thought grow out of one another and support one another; they do not come and go in a medley. John Dewey, <i>How We Think</i> , 1910

Unacceptable Re-Wording
Dewey (1910) considers reflection is not just a series of thoughts, but an outcome – a successive collation such that each defines the following as its correct result, with each sequentially relating back to its forerunners. The consecutive elements of the reflection emerge from each other and scaffold each other. They don't arrive and leave in combination.
Unacceptable Using Google Translate to Re-Word – generates nonsense
The set of reflection ideas is not only the result – in turn they are sequentially turning back on top of the predecessor, while in the way each defines the following as the correct answer. Continuous parts of reflex thought grow and support each other. They do not come with the medley.
Acceptable
Dewey's seminal 1910 text, ' <i>How We Think</i> ' remains relevant today, and considers reflective thinking as a process through which we order information and ideas into a logical flow, with each idea supporting and leading to the next.

Urkund Guidelines – What percentage of similarity is acceptable?

Urkund is a tool for students and lecturers/markers to help ensure good academic practice. While Urkund is text comparison software that can help in detecting plagiarism, the software itself **will not** tell you definitively if a document is plagiarised.

Students and lecturers have asked for defined 'acceptable' percentages of commonality in Urkund reports. However, it is important to note that Urkund **only reports on similarity of text**, so this will include quotations that are properly referenced. Likewise, a low percentage of commonality does not mean that an assignment is entirely plagiarism-free – for example a 200-word paragraph in a 5000-word assignment is just 4% of the total, but if the paragraph is lifted word-for-word from another source and not referenced, **this is still plagiarism, and is not acceptable**.

Additionally, it has recently come to light that software exists that effectively blocks the Urkund comparison entirely, thus returning a similarity report at 0%. If a document includes appropriate references then it should never return a 0% similarity, so if you see this score it is grounds for further investigation.

Students should use Urkund as a learning tool to interrogate your writing. It is a useful tool to ensure all work is properly referenced and to identify if, in collating notes and ideas, you have inadvertently included word-for-word text from another source, or if you have over-quoted from other texts as described above.

Lecturers should use Urkund as a **starting point** to identify areas of commonality in an assignment or piece of work. You should then compare the assignment text to the source texts and assess if the assignment is properly referenced and contains an appropriate amount of a learner's own work (i.e. not over-quoting).