

ICA Plagiarism and Collusion Guidelines

1. Plagiarism

Plagiarism, a form of academic malpractice, is presenting the ideas, work, or words of other people without proper, clear, and unambiguous acknowledgement. It also includes 'self-plagiarism' (which occurs where, for example, you submit work that you have presented for assessment on a previous occasion), and the submission of material from 'essay banks' (even if the authors of such material appear to be giving you permission to use it in this way). Obviously, the most blatant example of plagiarism would be to copy another candidate's work. Hence, it is essential to make clear in your assignments the distinction between:

- the ideas and work of other people that you may have quite legitimately exploited and developed, and
- the ideas or material that you have personally contributed.

To assist you, here are a few important dos and don'ts.

- Do get lots of background information on subjects you are writing about to help you form your own view of the subject. The information could be from electronic journals, technical reports, unpublished dissertations, etc. Make a note of the source of every piece of information at the time you record it, even if it is just one sentence.
- Don't construct a piece of work by cutting and pasting or copying material written by other people, or by you for any other purpose, into something you are submitting as your own work. Remember, we cannot mark other people's work while marking yours. Sometimes you may need to quote someone else's exact form of words in order to analyse or criticise them, in which case the quotation must be enclosed in quotation marks to show that it is a direct quote, and it must have the source properly acknowledged at that point. Any omissions from a quotation must be indicated by an ellipsis (...) and any additions for clarity must be enclosed in square brackets, e.g. '[These] results suggest... that the hypothesis is correct.'
- It may also be appropriate to reproduce a diagram from someone else's work, but again the source must be explicitly and fully acknowledged in your assignment. Nonetheless, constructing large chunks of documents from a string of quotes, even if they are acknowledged, is another form of plagiarism.
- Do attribute all ideas to their original authors. Written 'ideas' are the product that authors produce. You would not appreciate it if other people passed off your ideas as their own, and that is what plagiarism rules are intended to prevent. A good rule of thumb is that each idea or statement that you write should be attributed to a source unless it is your personal idea, or it is common knowledge. (If you are unsure if something is common knowledge, ask other candidates: if they don't know what you are talking about, then it is not common knowledge!)

As you can see, it is most important that you understand what is expected of you when you prepare and produce assignments and that you always observe proper academic conventions for referencing and acknowledgement. This should ensure that you do not inadvertently lay yourself open to a charge of plagiarism through ignorance of what is expected.

It is also important to remember that you do not absolve yourself from a charge of plagiarism simply by including a reference to a source in a bibliography that you have included with your assignment; you should always be scrupulous about indicating precisely where and to what extent you have made use of such a source.

Plagiarism also includes a close paraphrase of someone else's words, diagram, graph, illustration and so on taken from a variety of sources without proper acknowledgement. These could be workshop notes, printed material, the internet, or other electronic/AV sources.

2. Collusion

ICA encourages the forming of study groups. We believe these have a positive effect on a candidate's experience of studying for an ICA qualification. Nonetheless, while you may wish to share ideas about a forthcoming assignment, it is important that your assignment is your own work, written in your own style and using your own ideas. It is unacceptable to collude with another candidate or group of candidates while claiming that the work you have submitted is entirely your own.

Collusion is when a candidate or candidates collaborate with another candidate or candidates, as an individual or group, to gain a mark or grade to which they are not entitled. Candidates who allow another candidate to copy their work are also committing collusion and both the copier and the provider of the work are liable to be penalised.

When collusion occurs, it is relatively straightforward to detect. It is clear that, when two or more candidates submit work that is substantially the same, even if some attempts have been made to disguise this fact, an unacceptable level of collaboration has occurred that is considered evidence of collusion.

If you require further clarification, you can contact ICTA Delegate Services at studentadmin@int-comp.com