Plagiarism, Collusion and Cheating: Tutorial Material

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Consider each of the following scenarios. Do you think it counts as plagiarism? Do you think it is cheating? Should any of those involved be referred to the Head of School? Should any those involved be awarded zero for the coursework? Should some marks be deducted? Are the actions taken by the students justified by the circumstances? fair on other students on the module?

1. Two students both get stuck at the same point in a programming coursework the results of which count towards their final module mark. They work on this together and come up with a subroutine that solves the problem. They cut and paste this into both courseworks and carry on working individually.

2. A student realises they have no time to do a maths exercise because they had to go home for several days because a family member is ill. This exercise counts towards their final mark for a module. They ask a friend for help who lends them their own answers which the student copies and submits as their own.

3. A non-native English speaker is faced with a large essay for a module assessed entirely by coursework. This module is a computer science module. They write this essay in their own language and then pay someone to translate it into English for them.

4. Two students discuss an essay coursework together, they share any references they have found and agree on what they believe are the key points in the essay.

5. A non-native English speaker is writing an essay. They have read a lot of articles which make many good points they wish to include in the essay. They take paragraphs from these sources, place them in italics and put a reference by each paragraph in the text and in a list at the end. The finished result contains more text in italics than it does in normal font.

6. Two students work together on a maths exercise the results of which do not count towards their final module mark and produce the same answers.

7. Two students work together on a programming coursework and both submit the result as their own.

8. A student is completely stuck on a programming coursework and is convinced they can not make any more progress. They look in a friend's H: drive and manage to find a version of the coursework they can copy. The student then modifies this copy, changing the variable names, rewording all the comments and print statements and switching round some of the code lines where the order doesn't seem to make a difference. They then submit this as their own.

9. A student is working on a large programming exercise. This is for a compulsory module in which they have no interest and they believe they will never have to use the programming language involved again. In the student's opinion they have not been provided with enough information in lectures to complete the coursework and they know that more able students than themselves are struggling. Unable to make any progress at all over the vacation, they ask a friend they knew at school for help. This friend produces a working answer which they then submit as their own.

10. A student copies a paragraph from a textbook or web page making small changes – eg. replacing words with synonyms. The source is not mentioned anywhere in the essay.

11. A student composes a paragraph by taking short phrases of 10 to 15 words from a number of sources and putting them together, adding words of their own to make a coherent whole. Although they list all the sources at the end of the coursework, they do not mention them in the paragraph concerned.

12. A student paraphrases a paragraph with substantial changes in language, organisation and the amount of detail used. The source material is acknowledged in the text (eg. (Jones, 1999)) and included in a list of references at the end of the coursework.

13. A student, who has not attended many lectures, becomes stuck over how to read information in from a file in Java. They ask a friend for help who explains how Java fileIO works, tells them which set of lecture notes to read and points out which examples in the lecture notes are relevant to the problem.