

Guide to using the AMBeR Plagiarism Tariff

Context

In order to address the challenges of transparency and consistency in the penalties imposed for student plagiarism in the UK, the AMBeR *Plagiarism Reference Tariff* was designed as a guide to the application of penalties that may be imposed for student plagiarism in Higher Education. It is widely used in the United Kingdom and to a lesser extent in Ireland.

The tariff is available at <https://tinyurl.com/w9qnkb5> and a report on its development is available at <https://www.plagiarism.org/paper/plagiarism-reference-tariff>.

The tariff is not designed to be used to assist in determining whether a student has plagiarised. The purpose of the tariff is to determine an appropriate penalty, once plagiarism has been established.

UCD

With the introduction of the revised Student Plagiarism Policy in UCD in 2020, it is proposed to use the AMBeR Plagiarism Tariff as a basis for a UCD Tariff to guide relevant staff, e.g., student plagiarism committees, student discipline committees, in making plagiarism penalty decisions.

While the tariff is primarily designed to be used for deciding penalties in cases of plagiarism identified in assessments that are graded, an additional tariff table has been included in the proposed UCD tariff to take account of a) research degree theses, b) PhD Stage Transfer Assessments, or c) final PhD dissertation submission or d) pass/fail assessments, because they do not receive a graded outcome.

Notes

The tariff is a guide for penalties and only takes account of aspects directly associated with plagiarism. Some of its weaknesses that have been highlighted in <https://www.plagiarismtoday.com/2012/08/06/looking-at-the-AMBeR-benchmark-plagiarism-tariff/> are shown below.

1. **Collusion:** The tariff is not designed to deal with collusion, cases of students working inappropriately together on the same assignment.
2. **Extenuating Circumstances:** The tariff does not take account of extenuating circumstances.
3. **Long-Term Impact:** The tariff does not weigh the long-term impact of any punishment on a student's career, which may be relevant in some professions, depending on the extent of plagiarism.
4. **Different Types of Plagiarism:** The tariff is built for verbatim plagiarism but may not adequately address other types, such as source plagiarism, plagiarism of ideas, etc.
5. **Some Room for Judgment:** Though the tariff works to remove most of the human error out of the process and succeeds, there's still some discussion to be had about what the value of the assignment is and whether there was an attempt to hide the plagiarism. In short, two people can use the same tariff and come up with different scores.

Development of a UCD Plagiarism Tariff based on the AMBeR model

- The AMBeR Plagiarism Tariff scoring system is shown on page 2; scoring does not take place until after a decision has been made that plagiarism has taken place.
- The AMBeR Plagiarism Tariff penalty system is shown on page 3.
- The proposed UCD Plagiarism penalty system, adapted from the AMBeR tariff is shown on page 4. Penalties noted at the Discipline level are taken from the Student Code of Conduct.

The original tariff document and associated research report can be found at <https://www.plagiarism.org/paper/plagiarism-reference-tariff>

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Assign points based on the following criteria

HISTORY

1st Time	100 points
2nd Time	150 points
3rd/+ Time	200 points

AMOUNT / EXTENT

Below 5% AND less than two sentences	80 points
As above but with critical aspects* plagiarised	105 points
Between 5% and 20% OR more than two sentences but not more than two paragraphs	105 points
As above but with critical aspects* plagiarised	130 points
Between 20% and 50% OR more than two paragraphs but not more than five paragraphs	130 points
As above but with critical aspects* plagiarised	160 points
Above 50% OR more than five paragraphs	160 points
Submission purchased from essay mill or ghostwriting service †	225 points

* Critical aspects are key ideas central to the assignment

† Some institutions may consider this to be a separate form of academic malpractice

LEVEL / STAGE

Level 1	70 points
Level 2	115 points
Level 3/Postgraduate	140 points

VALUE OF ASSIGNMENT

Standard weighting	30 points
Large project (e.g. final year dissertation)	60 points

ADDITIONAL CHARACTERISTICS

Evidence of deliberate attempt to disguise plagiarism by changing words, sentences or references to avoid detection **40 points**

Tariff amended for UCD use

Level	Points	Work submitted for gradable assessment
All	n/a	In all cases where it is determined that plagiarism has taken place a formal verbal or written warning is given, and a record is made contributing to the student's previous history on the UCD Plagiarism Record System. In addition, the committee may apply any of the following penalties as appropriate:
School	280-329	Assessment component provisionally awarded NM - resubmission permitted, with a late submission grade penalty*
School	330-379	Assessment component provisionally awarded NM - resubmission permitted, with a late submission grade penalty*, or Assessment component provisionally awarded NM – resubmission permitted but grade for the resubmitted assessment further capped or reduced
School	380-479	Assessment component provisionally awarded NM – resubmission permitted but grade for the resubmitted assessment further capped or reduced, or Assessment component provisionally awarded NM – no opportunity to resubmit
Discipline*	480-524	Assessment component provisionally awarded NM – no opportunity to resubmit, or Module provisionally awarded NM – module remediation required, but grade capped or reduced, or Module awarded NM – no opportunity to remediate, or Written reprimand, or Fine not exceeding €1,000.
Discipline*	525+	Module provisionally awarded NM – module remediation permitted, but grade capped or reduced, or Module awarded NM – no opportunity to remediate module Written reprimand Fine not exceeding €1,000 Exclusion from sittings of examinations for a specified period Deprivation of any academic award Suspension from the University for a stated period Expulsion from the University

Level	Points	Work submitted for Pass/Resubmit/Fail assessments, including Stage Transfer Assessments and Research Degree Dissertations
All	n/a	In all cases where it is determined that plagiarism has taken place a formal verbal or written warning is given, and a record is made contributing to the student's previous history on the UCD Plagiarism Record System. In addition, the committee may apply any of the following penalties as appropriate:
School	280-479	Revise, repeat or resubmission of the assessment permitted
Discipline*	479+	An appropriate penalty is taken from within the Discipline range of penalties

* Student Discipline Committees may decide to impose any of the penalties available to them under the Student Discipline Procedure separately or in combination as appropriate to the nature of the breach of the Student Code of Conduct.