

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://marketing-porg-statamic-assets-us-west-2.s3-us-west-2.amazonaws.com/main/Tennant_benchmarkreport-\(1\).pdf](https://marketing-porg-statamic-assets-us-west-2.s3-us-west-2.amazonaws.com/main/Tennant_benchmarkreport-(1).pdf) 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

The AMBeR Plagiarism Tariff was used as a basis for the development of the UCD Tariff. The purpose of the Tariff is to guide those responsible for making decisions with regard to penalties for students who have been found to have plagiarised, i.e. Student Plagiarism Committees, the Registrar or their nominee under the Student Conduct stage of the Student Discipline Procedure and members of Student Disciplinary Committees. The UCD Student Academic Misconduct Procedure permits module coordinators to deal with very minor infringements and poor academic practice through providing advice or arranging that the student receives advice about good writing practice and how to avoid plagiarism (see section 7.1.C. Module coordinators may reflect poor academic practice in the grade awarded, but they do not apply penalties under the Student Academic Misconduct Procedure or the student discipline procedure and therefore will not use the tariff.

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 Plagiarism 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. The tariff is not suitable for use in such cases because it is difficult to accurately determine the extent of plagiarism of individual students when they have worked together. Suspected collusion cases may be referred to be dealt with under the Student Discipline Procedure. Reports of alleged misconduct should be supported by documentary evidence. For information on submitting reports of alleged breaches see <https://www.ucd.ie/secca/studentconduct/> - Information For Staff and the [Guide to Completing Student Misconduct Incident Report](#).
2. **Extenuating Circumstances:** The tariff does not take account of extenuating circumstances. The School Academic Integrity Committee have the discretion to separately factor-in the presence of mitigating circumstances and may adjust penalties accordingly.

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 Discipline Procedure.

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 (UCD Plagiarism Tariff)

Level	Points	Work submitted for gradable assessment
All	n/a	In all cases where it is determined by the School Academic Integrity Committee 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 <u>may</u> apply any of the following penalties as appropriate
School Academic Integrity Committee	280-329	Assessment component provisionally awarded NM ⁹ - resubmission permitted, with a late submission grade penalty ¹⁰
School Academic Integrity Committee	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 capped. School Academic Integrity Committees may select the capped grade from all passing grades of the Component Grading Scale as deemed appropriate. When capping grades School Academic Integrity Committees may wish to limit this to a D- or at the original grade or an adjusted original grade in line with Academic Regulation 4.26 and the Component Grade Scale
School Academic Integrity Committee	380-479	Assessment component provisionally awarded NM – resubmission permitted but grade for the resubmitted assessment capped. Direct that the assessment grade is reduced with no opportunity to resubmit. School Academic Integrity Committees may select grades from all passing grades of the Component Grading Scale as deemed appropriate.
University Student Discipline Procedure ¹¹	480-524	Penalties applied under the Student Discipline Procedure are done so at two stages of the process 1) a Student Conduct Meeting and 2) the Student Disciplinary Committee Hearing. Penalties will be applied as appropriate to the circumstances of the case. Cases scoring 525 and above will normally attract more severe penalties, however, the under the Student Discipline Procedure decision-makers have the authority to select penalties following consideration of all circumstances relating to the case. The lists of penalties available under the Student Discipline Procedure are included in full. They include some penalties that are more appropriate for non-academic misconduct which may not be relevant to incidents of plagiarism.
University Student Discipline Procedure	525+	1. Student Conduct Meeting

⁹ In Academic Regulations the grade “NM” means *No grade - work submitted did not merit a grade*

¹⁰ See [Late Submission of Coursework Policy](#).

¹¹ Penalties available under the [Student Discipline Procedure](#) are set out in full in sections 5.5 and 7. All penalties remain available to Student Disciplinary Committee

Penalties available at the Student Conduct Meeting stage are presented section 5.5 of the Student Discipline Procedure. Applicable penalties may be applied in combination.:

- *Issue a warning.*
- *Impose a fine not exceeding €250.*
- *Require the respondent to pay for, or contribute towards making good any damage or loss they have caused.*
- *In the case of academic breaches, reduction of an assessment component grade (assessment where breach occurred) up to and including the application of No Grade (NM).*
- *In the case of plagiarism, referred by a School Academic Integrity Committee, reduction of a grade up to and including the application of No Grade (NM) for the module where the breach has occurred.*
- *In addition to the penalties above, a respondent may be required to undertake an activity / action intended to satisfy the University that the respondent understands the consequences of their conduct and learns from the experience*

2. Student Disciplinary Committee Hearing Stage

Student Disciplinary Committee may impose any of the penalties available at the Student Conduct Meeting stage of the process, and any of the following penalties, either separately or in combination as appropriate to the breach or nature of the breach. Penalties are taken from section 7 of the Student Discipline Procedure

- *A written reprimand;*
- *A fine not exceeding €1000;*
- *Reduction of a component assessment grade or module grade up to and including the application of No Grade (NM) for the module;*
- *exclusion from sittings of examinations for a specified period;*
- *withhold any academic award, scholarship or prize including on a permanent basis;*
- *require the reparation of any damage or loss caused, either to the University or to any of its members of staff or students or members of the public;*
- *suspension from accessing specific University facilities;*
- *permanent exclusion from accessing specific University facilities;*
- *suspension from a UCD Residence;*
- *terminate licence to reside at a UCD Residence;*
- *suspension from the University for a specified period, or until such time as any requirements laid down by the Committee such as payment of a fine or the restitution of damage or loss are fulfilled;*
- *permanent expulsion from the University.*

In addition to the penalties above, a student may be required to complete an activity / action intended to satisfy the University that a student understands the consequences of their actions. The Committee may in exceptional cases, having regard to all the circumstances of the case, decide not to impose any penalty.

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