

## Top Tips for Preventing Plagiarism and Collusion

1. **Spend time explaining the assignment brief.** Give students opportunities to ask questions about it. Make sure they understand the basic principles of citation and referencing and how to format references. If you are setting group work, explain what collusion is.
2. **Talk about how to write for your discipline.** Learning how to write as a specialist (biologist, historian, or any other) and use the language of the discipline takes time and requires practice. Encourage your students to develop confidence in their own voice as they write.
3. **Vary assessments.** If the assessment barely changes from year to year (either the topic or task) there is a greater risk of previous work being found and re-packaged in some way. For a student who is struggling this could be one temptation too many.
4. **Aim high with the assignment.** An assignment title that simply calls for description and factual information is asking to be copied from the Internet. Make sure the assignment requires students to work with information through evaluation and analysis, using for example words that ask students to judge, compare and contrast, explore.
5. **Break up the assignment in some way.** A draft version, plan or outline will all reduce the chances of work being commissioned from elsewhere. You do not need to mark any of these formally but making time to discuss them is essential.
6. **Highlight the role of sources.** Set parameters for students to work within when using sources - for example a date range, key journals, particular writers. Consider an annotated bibliography that asks students to present their sources, justifying the choice they have made.
7. **Personalise if possible.** An element in the assignment that relates to a student's own experience and allows for reflection is more likely to motivate and increase a sense of ownership of work. The risk of collusion in group work is reduced if tasks are allocated to individuals.
8. **Consider a work or practice-based assessment.** Reflections on a placement or practice-based situation can be authenticated by a mentor or supervisor, to provide additional verification.
9. **Assess the process as well as the product.** Ask your students to write about the task itself and award marks for this element. They could explain how they planned the work, where they found their particular sources, what search terms they used. For group assessments allow students to evaluate effort and allocate marks to their peers.
10. **Make use of the assessment landscape.** Time management is often at the root of plagiarism offences. Talk to colleagues about the fairest way to schedule assessment across the programme, so that you avoid bunching them or leaving too many towards the end of the module.

