



UNIVERSITY OF
LIVERPOOL

Policy on Plagiarism identified by the UCAS Similarity Detection Service as part of the Undergraduate Admissions Process

1 Introduction

The main aim of the University of Liverpool's admissions policy is to admit students with the ability to benefit from the opportunities available at the University. However, the integrity of the University's admissions procedures relies on the information contained in the application form being the applicant's own work.

It is important for applicants to understand that copying material from other sources without appropriate acknowledgement is considered a serious academic offence, and is known as plagiarism. If a University student is engaged in plagiarism the University could decide to terminate their studies. A full explanation of what is meant by plagiarism and how the University of Liverpool deals with it may be found on our website at: https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/media/livacuk/tqsd/code-of-practice-on-assessment/appendix_L_cop_assess.pdf

The procedures described below are intended as a mechanism to ensure that decisions regarding the admission of an applicant where plagiarism is indicated are taken fairly.

This policy covers the Faculties of Humanities and Social Sciences and Science and Engineering, the School of Life Sciences and the School of Psychology. The Schools of Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences have separate procedures in place which may be found at:

School of Dentistry: <https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/dentistry/undergraduate/>

School of Health Sciences <https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/health-sciences/admissions/admissions-useful-information/>

School of Medicine <https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/medicine/study-with-us/undergraduate/admissions-information/>

2 Similarity Detection Service

During the admissions cycle the UCAS Similarity Detection Service provides admissions staff with additional information about applicants. All personal statements submitted to UCAS are checked against a library of personal statements, and if an applicant's statement contains phrases or sentences that are identical to those held in UCAS's student records, UCAS will notify each institution the applicant has applied to and contact the student directly to alert all parties to the fact that potential plagiarism has been identified.

The email from UCAS to institutions indicates the 'similarity score' and includes a link to the transcript of the personal statement with the similar text highlighted.

3 Procedure

If UCAS notifies us of potential plagiarism, the University will email the applicant to invite them to provide a new personal statement and to indicate the reason why their application has been picked up by the Similarity Detection Service. The applicant will be given two weeks from the date of the email to respond. If we do not receive the reply by that date, we will assume that the applicant has decided to withdraw their application to study at Liverpool and will notify UCAS accordingly.

If the applicant declines to provide a new personal statement, the University will regard the applicant as having withdrawn their application and will record the appropriate decision at UCAS and on the University's student records database.

There may be a reason for the similarity in content. For example, the applicant may have copied material from templates, websites or reference sources or had help to write the personal statement. They may not have realised that this constitutes plagiarism.

In order for us to assess the application further, the applicant should:

- 1) Tell us why the personal statement contains sentences that UCAS has seen before.
- 2) Provide a new personal statement, which we will consider in place of the one which contains the similar material. The statement must be all the student's own work. We may also check this new statement for plagiarism.

The University will consider the applicant's response carefully and decide whether or not to progress the application.

If an applicant has already been made an offer, the University will decide whether that offer will stand. If the application is for a professional programme (for example Engineering, Law or Accounting and Finance) we will also consider the response in terms of required standards of professional conduct.

4 Recording information relating to Plagiarism

All correspondence relating to plagiarism by an applicant will be held by the Admissions Team and attached to the applicant's electronic record.

5 Appeals

Appeals about admissions decisions under these procedures will be dealt with on an individual basis with the applicant concerned in accordance with the Admissions Appeals and Complaints Policy. Any appeal should be forwarded as soon as reasonably practicable to the Associate Director, Admissions in Student Recruitment, Admissions and Widening Participation (SRAWP) and should be made in writing. Applicants should normally make an appeal within one month of receiving the decision on their application.

The University's Admissions Appeals and Complaints Policy may be invoked if the applicant feels that a procedural error has been made, but no appeal will be allowed which disputes the University's

judgement in arriving at a decision to admit the applicant. Where it appears after investigation of the appeal that a procedural error has occurred, consideration will be given to what steps (if any) should be taken to reconsider the matter.

The University's Admissions Appeals and Complaints Policy is available on the University website at: <https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/applying/admissions-policy/>

6 Monitoring of the Plagiarism Policy

Any queries about the operation of this policy should be directed to:

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Student Recruitment, Admissions and Widening Participation (SRAWP)
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