

Plagiarism policy

Updated in March 2024

Not yet in effect

ARB's definition of plagiarism

The representation of the work or ideas of a third party as your own without proper citation or acknowledgement that could provide an advantage over others. Competence or sufficient knowledge to join the Register has not been demonstrated in the areas that were plagiarised and that plagiarism may have also shown dishonesty and a lack of integrity in presenting the work of a third party as your own. Both accidental and intentional plagiarism are an offence under the policy. This means it is plagiarism if it is either:

- Accidental, meaning, for example, the individual did not consider that they were committing plagiarism by not including proper citations in their work.
- Intentional, meaning the individual knew they were committing plagiarism in their submitted work. This also includes colluding with other individuals to submit work that is not the applicant's own.

As examples, ARB considers all of the following to be plagiarism:

- Accidentally or intentionally submitting or using a third party's work as your own in an accredited examination.
- Accidentally or intentionally failing to properly credit a third party's work in your own submission.
- Intentionally copying a third party's work but changing the wording slightly to make it appear as your own.
- Fabrication, wherein you provide false quotations, figures or information about a source or individual.
- Collusion, wherein you conspire with one or more individuals to gain an advantage over others in examinations.

ARB considers any of the above plagiarism offences cause to call into question the character and fitness to practise of the individual found to have committed them.

Process

Examiners will check references are correct and all material that is not the individual's own is correctly cited in the submission.

Examiners will highlight to ARB staff any submission that they suspect includes the following:

- The submission provided includes improper referencing of their sources.
- The submission contains no references at all, but the Examiner has identified it includes the work of others.
- The submission contains fabricated material.

ARB will then deliberate the extent of the offence and any penalties to impose upon the applicant at ARB's discretion. As part of their deliberation, the ARB decision maker will contact the applicant to give them the opportunity to provide an explanation.¹

Declaration

All applicants to an exam or application covered by this policy must confirm that they have read and understood the guidance on plagiarism and cheating, and are aware of ARB's policy.

Applicants should be cautious that, while there may be legitimate uses of software to aid writing and translation, users of this should be particularly vigilant that they do not inadvertently plagiarise.

¹ 'Decision maker' would normally be the ARB registration team processing the application, with the Registrar as appropriate.

Guidance for ARB

Outcome:

Potential penalties for plagiarism are at ARB's discretion and are separated into two categories:

- 1) The effect on the applicant's current application and whether it is rejected.
- 2) The impact on their eligibility to reapply should their current application be rejected.

Reapplication:

Impacts on the applicant's eligibility to reapply can include:

- None, whereby the applicant will automatically be able to reapply at the next opportunity, or
- The applicant will automatically be able to reapply after 1 year, or
- The applicant will not automatically be able to reapply. Instead, reapplication will be at the discretion of the Registrar and after at least 2 years. The Registrar will take into account the severity of the offence and any reflection or steps taken by the applicant.

Considerations for the ARB decision maker:

When deciding on the most appropriate penalty, the ARB decision maker should give reasons, taking into account the following examples of mitigating circumstances:

- Plagiarism is limited to an isolated or small number of mistakes that appear to be incompetence rather than intentional dishonesty.
- The applicant has voluntarily contacted ARB to correct mistakes after submitting their application.
- Any explanation provided by the applicant after being contacted by ARB.
- Any other mitigation that they consider to be relevant in determining the applicant's level of dishonesty.

The table below indicates the type of offences that might occur, and typical potential outcomes. These examples are a guide for decision makers to aid their deliberation and not a definite and prescriptive set of outcomes.

In all circumstances where plagiarism has been identified, applicants will be informed and should reflect on how they can improve in the future based on the feedback.

In any circumstance where the applicant is only able to reapply at the Registrar's discretion, when seeking reapplication, they will be expected to demonstrate substantial reflection and professional development in order to be able to do so.

Example offence	Interpretation
<p>Applicant's submission includes an isolated or very small number of incomplete or incorrect citations and references to the work of others.</p>	<p>This would suggest incompetence rather than genuine intentional dishonesty. As a competency issue, penalties would normally be limited to a failure of the criteria in which the offence took place. Failing one of the criteria means their application was unsuccessful. The applicant will be able to reapply at the next available time.</p>
<p>Applicant's submission includes a large number of incorrect citations and references to the work of others.</p>	<p>More mistakes suggest a stronger concern about the applicant's integrity, character and fitness to practise.</p> <p>The decision maker should consider the extent of the mistakes alongside any mitigating circumstances. Penalties in more severe cases may include immediate failure of the exam or rejection of the application and, in extreme cases, a prevention from reapplying for one year.</p>
<p>Applicant's submission contains the work of others with no attempt to reference, or it contains fabricated information.</p>	<p>The applicant has not only failed to demonstrate competence in these areas but has shown dishonesty in using the work of others to gain an advantage. This suggests a longer-term concern about their fitness to practise.</p> <p>Unless the offending material is a very small section of their work, penalties in this situation would normally be immediate failure of the exam or rejection of the application and a prevention from applying for at least one year.</p> <p>In circumstances where approximately over 30% of the submission contains offending material, they would normally be unable to automatically reapply and would instead have to seek the Registrar's discretion to do so after at least two years.</p>
<p>Combinations of more than one type of plagiarism within the same application.</p>	<p>This would indicate more serious disregard and raise more serious concerns about their integrity.</p> <p>This should be treated as an aggravating circumstance alongside considering the actual offences.</p>
<p>Any second offence.</p>	<p>The applicant has not learnt from previous offences and has demonstrated continued incompetence or dishonesty.</p> <p>In the absence of significant mitigations, the applicant would normally be unable to automatically reapply and would instead have to seek the Registrar's discretion to do so after at least two years.</p>