

## Case\* #10: Re-submitting assignments

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**Allegation:** In a written assignment, a student appears to have copied a substantial amount of material from another essay as there is a similarity match rate of 50% according to Turnitin.com. The course instructor believed this constituted as plagiarism. According to section 5.16.1 of the university's Academic Calendar "Plagiarism, which is the act of presenting the ideas, words, or other intellectual property of another as one's own, including images, designs, processes, computer software, digital, audio and video files, Internet resources and other works without appropriate attribution or credit. The use of other people's work must be properly acknowledged and referenced in all written material."

**Background:** The student is a first-year student in a first-year course. It is the first time this student has been accused of any offense. Because this is a first time offence and the assignment is worth only 20%, the course instructor can deal with the situation. The course instructor contacted the student by UOIT email and in the course Blackboard messages requesting a meeting with the student. At the meeting, the instructor explained the allegation. The student immediately admitted to having re-used parts of an essay submitted in the first term. The instructor explained that re-submitting assignments or parts of a previously submitted assignment without both permission from the current course instructor and without citing the earlier assignment was, in fact, academically dishonest. Although the student properly cited the articles used in the assignment, she was not aware that she was required to cite herself. After discussion, the student seemed sincere in her apology and seemed to understand what she did wrong. The course instructor is confident that the student did not fully understand citation requirements and believed she would not commit this offense again in the future.

**Decision:** The course instructor believed that an appropriate sanction in this situation was a requirement for the student to re-write and re-submit the assignment without grade deduction.

**Rationale:** Given that it is the student's first offence and she is a first-year student, the instructor wanted to ensure that the student fully understood how to research and write an essay and to use correct citations and references. The instructor explained to the student that because the resubmitted essay was a second attempt, expectations for the quality and accuracy of the essay was higher than it was for the first attempt. The student was also reminded that any subsequent offences would result in a more severe penalty.

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\* Case studies are based on examples of common problems with academic misconduct. All names and identifying information have been removed.