A guide to the interpretation of the University of Liverpool’s Academic Integrity Policy, as it pertains to the specifics of teaching, learning and assessment in the English Language Centre

Directorate of Student Experience & Enhancement

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SECTION 1 – PURPOSE OF THIS POLICY

INTRODUCTION

Studying at the English Language Centre (ELC) is both challenging and rewarding. Staff and students alike are expected to embrace and uphold the values of the academic community, and make the ELC a place of integrity, honesty and respect.

The vast majority of students on courses and modules within the ELC are international students, from a wide range of backgrounds, cultures, and studying at various different levels. The ELC recognises that our students are therefore more likely to need help and guidance adjusting to the particular academic practices and standards required at UK universities. It is possible that accepted conventions and practices in one academic community may be regarded as academic misconduct, or poor practice in another. We take the view that while our students are studying at the ELC they are de facto apprentice members of the UK academic community. As apprentices, we will provide them with additional and explicit information and training regarding academic integrity and practice. We also recognise that they are relatively inexperienced in this area, even if they are studying at higher levels, and this understanding will underpin our academic judgement on their practice.

The ethos of many of our courses and modules is one of guidance and support. International Summer School students, for example, are here for a very short period of time, studying a range of subjects at undergraduate level. These modules can be viewed as a taster, or brief introduction to UK university culture, where an in-depth knowledge of academic rigor and practice is not a strict requirement, particularly as they will shortly return to their home universities. Pre-sessional students intend to progress on to study at the University of Liverpool on either UGR, PGT or PGR programmes, on which they will require a good working knowledge of UK academic practice. The PSE course at the ELC is a stepping stone; a transitional stage in which we prepare our students for study at UK universities, not only linguistically, but also in terms of academic readiness and awareness of good practice.

Thus, while we are extremely committed to upholding academic standards and good practice, our approach to dealing with infractions is likely to have a greater emphasis on ensuring that our students understand their infraction in the context of UK academic practice, and how to ensure that they can follow good practice in the future.

SCOPE

Identification of poor academic practice and academic misconduct may take place at any time during a student’s time with the ELC, including during formative as well as summative assessment. Issues relating to academic integrity and practice during day-to-day teaching and learning activities, including formative assessment, will be dealt with directly by the student’s teacher(s), in the spirit of guidance and training. This may include highlighting the issue, providing clear feedback on the severity of the issue and how to correct it, and even issuing a written warning in the case of serious misconduct. A written warning will be issued by the teacher and/or the course coordinator or module leader if deemed necessary.

Formal application of penalties and sanctions will be reserved for summative assessments only. These will include all types of assessment which count towards the final mark for that course or module, including but not limited to exams, written assignments, presentations, group work, and practical assessments. Any instances of suspected academic misconduct on summative assessments will follow the formal procedures laid out below in Section 5.

SECTION 2 – DEFINITIONS AND EXPLANATIONS OF TERMS
ABOUT THIS SECTION

This section contains definitions, examples and explanations of the different types of issues that may arise relating to academic integrity. The category of ‘Poor Academic Practice’ includes infractions that fall into both Category A and B in the UoL Academic Integrity Policy, but these are not considered to be Academic Misconduct, which includes a variety of deliberately dishonest practices.

POOR ACADEMIC PRACTICE

It is likely that many issues relating to academic integrity raised with ELC students will fall into the category of poor academic practice. This occurs where a student shows a lack of understanding of good academic practice and appropriate academic representation. Examples include sources being cited incorrectly or inadequately or without quotation marks, inadequate referencing, poor paraphrasing or patch-writing.

Poor academic practice is generally identified by the lack of clear intent to deceive. Investigation into a case of alleged academic misconduct might yield a decision that the student’s actions fall into the category of poor academic practice, particularly if any of the following are true: - it is the student’s first offence; - the student is in their first year of study in a UK university; - the issue is a fairly minor error of referencing; - there is evidence that the conduct arose from a genuine lack of understanding of academic integrity expectations. In these circumstances, and where the alleged misconduct is not flagrant or pervasive, and is not the result of an overall lack of effort or application, it may be judged to be merely poor academic practice, or minor error.

ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

Academic misconduct refers to any conduct or practice by a student which is dishonest and/or seeks to gain unfair advantage over other students, with a deliberate intent to deceive. The different categories or areas of misconduct are described below.

PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism occurs when a student represents or presents another person’s work, opinions, ideas, images, data, words, etc. as their own. Examples of forms of plagiarism include, but are not limited to:

- **Copying** - the verbatim or direct copying of another’s work (including images, audio-visuals, etc.) without acknowledging and correctly citing the source
- **Close paraphrasing / patch-writing** of another person’s work by making minor changes to wording or order, especially without acknowledging and citing the source
- **Incorrect referencing** – failing to list references appropriately or to identify or cite the source correctly
- **Deliberate and detailed presentation of another’s concept as one’s own.**

Another area of academic misconduct may be the practice of a student submitting work for summative assessments, or academic credit, which that same student has submitted previously or simultaneously for academic credit at the ELC, UoL or any other awarding body. It also refers to the submission of previously published work for academic credit. A student may obtain permission to use their own previously submitted work, but it must be properly referenced as such, and authorisation should be in writing from the course director or coordinator, or the module leader.

CHEATING
Cheating may take a variety of forms, but at its basis constitutes acting dishonestly and without integrity to gain an unfair advantage.

Examples of cheating include, but are not limited to:

- Taking unauthorised material into an exam
- Using unauthorised tools or technology in an exam or practical assessment – e.g. a phone, internet access
- Not following instructions during an exam, either on the exam paper or given by the invigilator.
- Copying or attempting to copy another person’s work during an exam
- Presenting false evidence of extenuating circumstances or learning differences to gain an unfair advantage, such as deadline extension.
- Making up or altering data for research projects or assessments
- Contract cheating

**CONTRACT CHEATING**

This refers to a specific type of cheating which includes, but is not limited to:

- A student purchasing or commissioning an assessment from a professional writing service or third party and presenting it as their own work.
- Third party translation of an entire assessment, or significant portions thereof, from one language to another (including the use of translation software such as Google Translate).
- Use of a professional writing service or third party to edit an assessment or parts of it to cause changes to the structure or content. This includes the use of apps or software such as Grammarly to check or correct aspects of the assessment such as syntax, organisation and structure, or argument. The ELC only permits the use of proof-reading services or software to check spelling and surface-level grammar; similar to the checks offered in a basic word-processor like Word or Pages.

**COLLUSION**

Collusion refers to two or more students deliberately working together to produce or write work which each then submits individually, representing it as their own independent work. It may also refer to unapproved collaboration with another person, such as a friend or family member, in producing work which is represented as the student’s individual effort. Collusion does not refer to group work, or similar collaborative projects, which have official approval and expectation of collaboration.
ACADEMIC JUDGEMENT

This refers to situations where it is necessary to have the opinion of an academic expert, such as those relating to academic practice and integrity. Academic judgement is established through time and experience and related to an academic’s disciplinary expertise in teaching, learning and assessment in a university setting.

The majority of ELC students respect and abide by the values and standards of the UK academic community during their studies here, and are aware of the importance of the hard work required by the learning process. However, a small number may be tempted to take short-cuts or gain an unfair advantage by cheating or otherwise committing academic misconduct.

ELC academic staff have substantial experience and expertise in identifying poor academic practice and academic misconduct. In addition to their own judgement, they may also make use of the software ‘Turnitin’ or other means to help them to identify the original source of a text. The combination of the academic judgement of our staff with tools such as Turnitin helps ensure that academic misconduct is detected and brought to light.

USE OF TURNITIN

The University uses an internet-based text-matching service called Turnitin to provide evidence of originality of electronic coursework submissions. The tool compares text submitted with a wide range of electronic material, including journals, websites and student work from current and previous years, from Liverpool and other UK universities. The software highlights if students have submitted the same or similar text as another student, or published material, or if they have submitted the same or similar text for more than one assessment.

Turnitin is the most commonly used tool for the submission of assessments across the university. The ELC requires summative assessments to be submitted through Turnitin wherever practicable, for a number of reasons. It provides ease of submission and access to marks and feedback for students, allows staff to track submissions and follow up with any missing work quickly, as well as marking and recording marks and feedback digitally. Additionally, because it is such a commonly used tool in UK HEIs, its use at the ELC provides valuable early training for students in its use and functionality.

The originality reports created by Turnitin are considered for possible plagiarism as part of a review of a submission. However, it is the ELC, and not the software tool, that will make a decision about whether plagiarism has taken place; Turnitin is just one element of the evidence used to inform our academic judgement. Whether or not the ELC has used Turnitin routinely for a particular assessment, if the marker is suspicious of plagiarism, that piece of work may be submitted to Turnitin as an additional precaution.

The ELC will check all originality reports for work submitted electronically through Turnitin for plagiarism during the marking process for that course or module, regardless of the percentage match indicated by the similarity index. The module leader or course director is ultimately responsible for checking originality reports, but may delegate this to the markers.

Training in the use of Turnitin is provided for both the staff and students of the ELC, although may vary depending on the course or module.

SECTION 4 - RESPONSIBILITIES OF STAFF AND STUDENTS

RESPONSIBILITIES OF STAFF
Academic staff at the ELC have a duty to provide guidance and support to our students, and help them to understand and follow the academic practices and standards within the UK while they are studying here.

Our staff are responsible for:

- Familiarising themselves with the ELC Academic Integrity Policy and Code of Practice on Assessment.
- Being aware of additional guidance available in The University of Liverpool CoPA and Academic Integrity Policy.
- Ensuring that all ELC students are aware of the requirement to take the KnowHow module on Academic Integrity.
- Providing students with additional support and guidance as appropriate – e.g. directing them to library resources such as CiteThemRight, incorporating additional Academic Integrity training into the curriculum or classes.
- Dealing with minor issues of poor academic practice informally during regular teaching and learning activities, using these as opportunities to raise student awareness of the importance of academic integrity, and how to avoid similar issues in the future.
- Ensuring that information given to students around issues relating to academic integrity is clear, accurate and easy for students to access.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF STUDENTS

Our students are responsible for:

- Familiarising themselves with the information provided to them in their student handbooks, study materials and other sources provided by the ELC.
- Asking for clarification if they are unsure about any of the information relating to academic standards and integrity.
- Completing the KnowHow module on Academic Integrity as directed.
- Paying attention to and responding to feedback on academic conduct issues, e.g. taking steps to remedy any referencing issues flagged by a teacher in a draft assignment.
- Ensuring that at all times they are acting with academic integrity and honesty, and respecting the academic community, including not allowing or encouraging others to act dishonestly (e.g. not allowing another student to copy work from them).
- Signing a declaration (Appendix 1) with assessed work as required, indicating that the submission is all their own work.

SECTION 5 - PROCEDURES IN CASES OF ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

Issues arising during regular teaching and learning activities, including formative assessments:
Instances of minor errors, such as missing quotation marks or referencing errors, can be dealt with informally by the teacher as part of the learning process, highlighting the problem and ensuring students know how to repair the error.

Instances of poor academic practice, such as patch-writing, accidental plagiarism or collusion, can be dealt with by the teacher. They should ensure that students are reminded of the seriousness of such matters, and that students are directed to remedial help and information as needed.

In the unlikely event that students act with deliberate intent to deceive and gain unfair advantage outside of summative assessments (e.g. they submit a draft essay for formative assessment that is not their own work, or blatantly cheat during a class test) this should be dealt with swiftly and decisively. A teacher who suspects or witnesses such misconduct should inform the course coordinator or module leader as soon as possible, and no later than 24 hours after the fact. The course coordinator or module leader should then confirm the teacher’s judgement if possible. If both agree, a suitable course of action should be decided and initiated as soon as possible and no later than a week after the fact. This course of action may include some or all of the following:

- A meeting with the teacher, the course coordinator/module leader and another senior academic to ask the student to account for their behaviour and to impress upon them the possible serious implications of such behaviour
- A formal written warning from the course coordinator/module leader and a note being added to their record for the rest of their studies with the ELC, ensuring that any future misconduct would be dealt with as a repeat offence
- A requirement to complete additional remedial work or training to help address the cause of the issue if applicable
- A requirement to resubmit an original draft and bear any late penalties that result from this, if applicable.

Issues arising during summative assessments

Instances of minor errors and poor academic practice can be dealt with by the marker or examiner directly. A mark penalty of up to 10% of the total mark available may be applied, as laid out in the marking scheme. Clear feedback should also be provided as to how to avoid this error or issue in the future.

If the marker or examiner has any reason to suspect an intent to deceive, such as pervasive or flagrant patch-writing or plagiarism, deliberate cheating in an exam, or contract cheating, then the following procedures should be followed:

- Where appropriate the work should be submitted to Turnitin by the marker/examiner and the similarity report checked.
- The marker/examiner should then report the suspected academic malpractice to the course coordinator/module leader and to the assessment team.
- A member of the assessment team will investigate the alleged misconduct by inviting the marker/examiner to provide evidence and reasons for the allegation, and inviting the student(s) to provide an explanation of the circumstances. (Appendix 2) This will normally take the place of a formal meeting in person, but may be held online or via email if necessary.
- If the academic staff involved in the investigation are satisfied that academic misconduct has taken place the assessment team representative should provide a report to the Academic Integrity Committee who will convene earlier in the day of the relevant Exam Board. The AIC will consider the report and make a recommendation as to the penalty or sanction to be imposed.
- The report and the AIC’s recommendation will be taken forward to the Exam Board who will check and confirm the penalties or sanctions to be imposed. A copy of the report will also be sent to the student(s) involved, which will also include a dated written warning outlining the consequences of any further academic misconduct. (Appendix 3)

PROCEDURES SPECIFIC TO THE PSE COURSE

1. Teachers are to flag any cases of suspected academic misconduct in the SAM spreadsheet when marking.
2. This includes chunks of text four lines or more of directly copied text, work with sustained examples of patch writing with poorly paraphrased ideas and/or suspected collusion.
3. Teachers should apply a mark using the criteria for the remainder of the work as usual.
4. Coordinator and Director will review the work on Turnitin to determine the extent of the penalty to be applied to the mark for Task Achievement.
5. For minor infringements such as one or two paragraphs of patchwriting, a penalty of one score within the band will be applied. For example within the band CEFR B2-, a script could be awarded a mark of 13 or 15, if a script was awarded 15, the penalty will reduce this mark to 13.
6. For major infringements with a high similarity, a penalty of two scores will be applied taking the work into a different band. For example, reducing the score from 15 to 12 (now CEFR B1+).
7. The Coordinator and Director will amend the score on Turnitin and add the penalty to the SAM spreadsheet.
8. Students whose work has been penalised will receive notification of this in the feedback section of Turnitin and in an official letter sent by email.

In repeated cases, the student will be called into a meeting with the Coordinator and Director. In cases where students fail the writing assessment, this information will be made available to the Board of Examiners.

**COLLUSION WITH SOFTWARE**

If a teacher suspects that the work is not the student’s own, then they should ask specific questions relating to the criteria (e.g. about specific lexis for Grammatical Lexical Range Accuracy or about a key idea from a source - use of sources or choices in structure or referencing techniques that are not the ones taught on the course) to allow the student to demonstrate authorship of their essay.

If the student’s writing is far beyond what is reasonably expected for them to produce (based on previous writing the teacher has seen) then they should receive a warning. If a student colluded with software, then any teacher feedback they receive is feedback on what the software produces and not what the student can produce. Students need to see the value in submitting their own writing so that they can get feedback and improve their skills.

If a student has been warned at the draft stage and this is repeated in the final submission, a cap of 50% will be applied. As a result, they may pass the PSE summer course, but they may not be able to progress onto the course of their choice.

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**SANCTIONS AND PENALTIES**

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<tr>
<th>Description of misconduct</th>
<th>Determined by</th>
<th>Consequences</th>
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9 | Page
| During regular teaching & learning / formative assessments | Teacher | - A meeting with the teacher, the course coordinator/module leader and another senior academic to ask the student to account for their behaviour and to impress upon them the possible serious implications of such behaviour  
- A formal written warning from the course coordinator/module leader and a note being added to their record for the rest of their studies with the ELC, ensuring that any future misconduct would be dealt with as a repeat offence  
- A requirement to complete additional remedial work or training to help address the cause of the issue if applicable  
- A requirement to resubmit an original draft and bear any late penalties that result from this, if applicable. |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Serious academic misconduct** with clear intent to deceive, e.g. blatant cheating on a class test, contract cheating for draft submission | Then confirmed with course coordinator/module leader and assessment team  
They may then decide on some or all of the consequences with regards to that particular situation. | |
| During summative assessment | Internal examiner / marker  
May confer with moderator or double-marker  
All consequences apply | - Mark penalty of up to 10% of the total mark available may be applied, as laid out in the marking scheme.  
- Clear feedback provided as to how to avoid this error or issue in the future.  
- Recommendation to undertake further training to improve understanding. |
| **Minor errors and poor academic practice** where there is no clear intent to deceive | Internal examiner / marker  
May confer with moderator or double-marker  
All consequences apply | - Report of investigation and first written warning issued to student, with a note added to their record for the rest of their studies at the ELC ensuring that future misconduct will be dealt with as a repeat offence  
- Assessment mark capped at minimum pass grade  
- Requirement for student to re-take academic integrity module |
| During summative assessment | Internal examiner / marker  
Moderator  
Assessment team representative  
All consequences apply | - 0% for the assessment  
- 0% for the module  
- Suspension or termination of studies  
- Report of investigation and written warning issued  
- A note added to the student’s academic record which may follow them onto other programmes of study in the future  
- Requirement for student to re-take academic integrity module |
| **Academic misconduct**, including plagiarism, copying, collusion or cheating, where intent to deceive cannot be established because the student has not received a prior written warning. | Internal examiner / marker  
Moderator  
Assessment team representative  
All consequences apply | - 0% for the assessment  
- 0% for the module  
- Suspension or termination of studies  
- Report of investigation and written warning issued  
- A note added to the student’s academic record which may follow them onto other programmes of study in the future  
- Requirement for student to re-take academic integrity module |
| During summative assessment | Internal examiner / marker  
Moderator  
Assessment team representative  
AIC and Exam Board to agree which consequence(s) to apply | - 0% for the assessment  
- 0% for the module  
- Suspension or termination of studies  
- Report of investigation and written warning issued  
- A note added to the student’s academic record which may follow them onto other programmes of study in the future  
- Requirement for student to re-take academic integrity module |
| **Serious academic malpractice** with a clear intent to deceive and gain unfair advantage, e.g. contract cheating, highly organised collusion  
**Academic misconduct** which is a proven **repeat offence** with a written warning issued to the student more than 7 calendar days prior. | Internal examiner / marker  
Moderator  
Assessment team representative  
AIC and Exam Board to agree which consequence(s) to apply | - 0% for the assessment  
- 0% for the module  
- Suspension or termination of studies  
- Report of investigation and written warning issued  
- A note added to the student’s academic record which may follow them onto other programmes of study in the future  
- Requirement for student to re-take academic integrity module |

APPENDICES
APPENDIX 1

DECLARATION OF ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

<table>
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<tr>
<th>NAME (Print)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>STUDENT NUMBER</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>MODULE TITLE/ CODE</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TITLE OF WORK</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

This form should be completed by the student and appended to any piece of work that is submitted for summative assessment. Submission of the form by electronic means by a student constitutes their confirmation of the terms of the declaration.

STUDENT DECLARATION

I confirm that I have completed the online Academic Integrity module as recommended.

I confirm that I have read and understood the information provided to me by the English Language Centre regarding academic integrity and good academic practice.

I confirm that I have acted honestly, ethically and professionally in preparing and submitting this assessment.

I confirm that:

- I have not copied material from another source
- I have not committed plagiarism
- I have not colluded with another person
- I have not used a professional writing service, third party or software to write or significantly alter this assessment

I confirm that the work submitted for assessment is my own work.

I understand that academic malpractice may result in penalties, including failing the assessment or the course of studies.

SIGNATURE...........................................................................................................................................

DATE..................................................................................................................................................
NOTIFICATION OF AN INVESTIGATION UNDER THE ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME (Print)</th>
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<tr>
<td>STUDENT NUMBER</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MODULE TITLE/CODE</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To be completed by the Assessment Officer

It has been reported to me, as Assessment Officer, that you are suspected of having committed *(delete as appropriate)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plagiarism</th>
<th>Copying</th>
<th>Collusion</th>
<th>Dishonest use of data</th>
<th>Unfair and/or dishonest academic practice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

in the preparation of the following assessment:

........................................................................................................................................

The attached document contains details of the alleged offence.

The University’s procedures require me to investigate this matter and to make a report to the Exam Board, including a recommendation on the penalty to be imposed. You now have an opportunity to provide an explanation of the alleged offence and to make any representations you wish to. If you wish to provide me with a written explanation of the alleged offence, you must let me have this by [date].

If the allegation is that you have committed unfair and/or dishonest academic practice, then you may make a written request to me by [date] for a meeting. If you request a meeting, or if I invite you to one, *[name of examiner]* who reported the alleged offence to me may also be present and you will be entitled to be accompanied by another member of the University, e.g. a fellow student or a representative of the Liverpool Guild of Students. The Guild Advice Service ([guildadvice@liv.ac.uk](mailto:guildadvice@liv.ac.uk)) can also provide you with independent advice and support with this process.

NAME OF ASSESSMENT OFFICER...........................................................................................................

DEPARTMENT........................................................................................................................................

DATE....................................................................................................................................................

APPENDIX 3

WRITTEN WARNING
The investigation recently conducted by me, as Assessment Officer, into the allegation of your academic misconduct found evidence to suggest that (indicate as applicable):

Plagiarism    Copying    Collusion    Dishonest use of data

had taken place and exceeded poor academic practice; I have indicated on the returned assessment where the affected material is.

Definitions of these terms can be found in the English Language Centre’s Academic Integrity Policy, and the University of Liverpool’s Code of Practice on Assessment Appendix L and in the Student and Staff Guidelines on the Academic Integrity Policy.

The ELC and the University view all academic misconduct seriously. On this occasion to avoid any future similar allegation and potential penalties, I am issuing you with this written warning about the need to observe the Academic Integrity Policy. A copy of this warning will be placed on your records.

You are very strongly advised to complete the on-line Academic Integrity module which can be found at https://vital.liv.ac.uk/webapps/portal/frameset.jsp?url=%2Fwebapps%2Fportal%2Fframeset.jsp%3Furl%3D%252fwebapps%252fblackboard%252fcontent%252fcontent.jsp%253fcontent_id%253d_860044_1%2526course_id%253d_860044_1%2526mode%253dreset

Completion of this module does not in itself constitute an admission of guilt of academic misconduct. Failure to complete the module however could put you at risk of a second or subsequent allegation being automatically investigated and penalised more severely. Your completion of the module will be electronically registered.

I am recommending a penalty of ________________________________ to your Exam Board.

NAME OF ASSESSMENT OFFICER.................................................................

DEPARTMENT............................................................................................

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**APPENDIX 4**

**Email template for communicating minor errors or poor academic practice to student**

Dear ____________

Following your recent essay submission on the __20-week__ (change as applicable) Pre-sessional, I am writing to inform you that you have received a penalty to the mark for Task Achievement due to ... e.g. copy-and-paste plagiarism and/ or poor paraphrasing (patchwriting).
The assessment requirement is for you to incorporate ideas from the source texts into your writing using paraphrasing. However, your work showed high levels of similarity with the published source texts provided on the course. As your tutors have highlighted, this is not acceptable academic practice and on your academic Master’s programme (change for individual student) this is taken extremely seriously and could result in a penalty being applied to your work.

Since the Pre-sessional course is a preparatory course, we will be not taking any further action. There was sufficient language of your own for us to be able to make a judgement on your level of writing. Please use this as a learning experience, and be careful not to make the same mistake again in the final submission at the end of the course.

It would be advisable to review the materials on note-taking, using sources in writing and paraphrasing before you submit your next piece of written work. This is a difficult skill to master, and so if you are still facing difficulties with paraphrasing (change as applicable) please speak to your tutors for further advice.

Yours sincerely,