6.9 Plagiarism

In order to write a Cambridge Research Report learners are expected to use and evaluate other people’s work. That is fine, as long as all such material is acknowledged. Plagiarism involves passing off someone else’s work or ideas as one’s own. This might happen in a number of different ways:

* failing to acknowledge quotations (or images/diagrams/data)
* using particular phrases or sentences from another author without giving them credit via inverted commas and a footnote
* writing something that is only very slightly different (e.g. a few words altered) to another author’s work (i.e. paraphrasing it)
* buying a project from an internet site and presenting it as one’s own
* downloading and pasting text or images from an internet site without acknowledgement
* getting somebody else to write all or part of the project.

The bibliography should include all sources from which learners have taken quotations etc. but it should also include all sources that they have read in their research which have helped them to form their opinions about the research question.

Large chunks of copied text will not be marked and if passed off as their own work learners will be in serious trouble. The least of this is that their project might not be accepted but plagiarism is a form of cheating and this may well affect their other examinations as well.

It is usually pretty easy to spot work that is plagiarised – the style and language are different from those used by the learner, and the learner may not be able to explain the content convincingly to their supervisor. If certain parts of a project are in doubt there are very effective search engines that can usually identify the original source. In addition learners need to be made aware that Cambridge uses plagiarism detection software to verify the learners’ work.