

IGNOU Project Plagiarism & Originality Guide

(Compliance-focused, examiner-oriented)

This guide explains **plagiarism rules, originality expectations, and best practices** for IGNOU project work across programmes (MBA, MCOM, MSW, MAEDU, MAPC, MSCENV, DNHE, MSCDFSM, BCA/MCA, etc.). Always defer to your **programme handbook and current IGNOU notifications**.

1. What IGNOU Means by Plagiarism

Plagiarism is presenting **someone else's work, ideas, data, or words as your own**, intentionally or unintentionally, without proper acknowledgment.

This includes:

- Copy–paste from books, journals, websites
- Reusing senior/student projects
- Submitting purchased or downloaded projects
- Self-plagiarism (reusing your earlier submitted IGNOU work)

2. Types of Plagiarism Relevant to IGNOU Projects

A. Direct Plagiarism

- Word-for-word copying without quotation marks and citation

B. Mosaic / Patchwork Plagiarism

- Mixing copied sentences with minor word changes

C. Paraphrasing Without Citation

- Rewriting ideas without crediting the source

D. Data Plagiarism

- Fabricating, manipulating, or reusing data from other studies

E. Contract Cheating

- Projects written by agencies or third parties

3. Similarity Percentage – What Is “Safe”?

IGNOU does **not publish a single uniform percentage** applicable to all programmes. However, based on evaluation practice:

- < 10–15%: Generally acceptable
- 15–25%: Borderline; risk of clarification or revision
- > 25–30%: High risk of rejection

Similarity from **references, common terminology, and questionnaire items** is usually excluded, but this depends on the tool and evaluator.

4. Consequences of High Plagiarism

Depending on severity:

- Project rejection
- Requirement to resubmit in next cycle
- Delay in results or degree award
- Disciplinary action under IGNOU examination rules

5. How IGNOU Evaluators Check Originality

- Plagiarism detection software (institutional or third-party)
- Manual comparison with past IGNOU projects
- Cross-checking data consistency and writing style
- Viva-voce questioning to verify authorship

6. How to Ensure Originality (Practical Steps)

A. Write in Your Own Academic Voice

- Read → understand → write from memory
- Avoid drafting while looking at the source text

B. Cite Every Source Properly

Use consistent style (APA/Harvard as prescribed):

- In-text citation for ideas, definitions, data
- Full reference in bibliography

C. Paraphrase Correctly

Wrong: Changing a few words

Correct: Changing structure + wording + citation

D. Use Quotations Sparingly

- Only for definitions or key statements
- Always use quotation marks and citation

E. Original Data Is Your Strongest Shield

- Collect primary data (questionnaires/interviews)
- Perform your own analysis
- Interpret results independently

7. High-Risk Sections for Plagiarism

- Literature Review
- Introduction / Background
- Definitions and theoretical concepts

Low-risk (if genuinely done):

- Methodology
- Data analysis
- Findings and conclusions

8. Plagiarism Declaration & Certificates

Most programmes require:

- Student originality declaration
- Supervisor certification of authenticity

Ensure:

- Exact wording as prescribed
- Signatures and dates included

9. Before Submission – Final Originality Checklist

- Checked similarity using reliable software (Turnitin-type)
- Similarity within acceptable range
- All tables/figures sourced or self-created
- Citations match references list
- No copied projects or templates submitted as final work
- Ready to defend content in viva

10. During Viva – Originality Red Flags

Examiners may ask:

- “Why did you use this model?”
- “Explain this paragraph in your own words”
- “How did you collect this data?”

If you cannot explain → originality is questioned.

11. Ethical Best Practices (Highly Valued)

- Acknowledge all sources honestly
- Report limitations openly
- Do not manipulate data to fit conclusions

Key Takeaway

IGNOU values **understanding and effort over perfect language**. A simply written, **genuine project** is always preferred to a polished but copied one.