



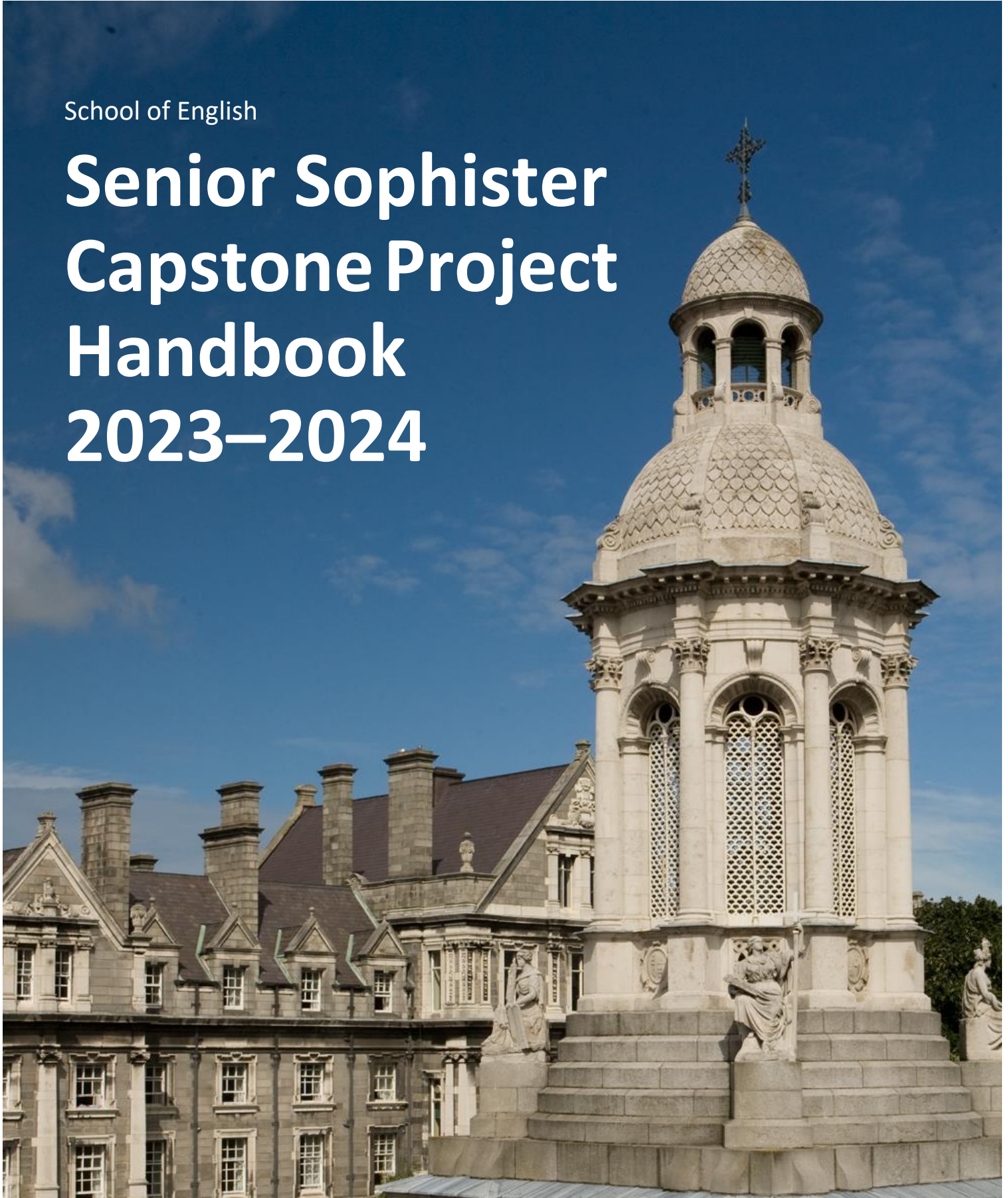
Trinity College Dublin

Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath

The University of Dublin

School of English

Senior Sophister Capstone Project Handbook 2023–2024



Contents

1. Compulsory SS Year Capstone Projects General Information (2023-24)	3
2. Creative Writing Model	5
3. Open Collections Model	7
4. Dissertation Model	10
5. Presentation	12
6. Plagiarism	13

1. Compulsory SS Year (Capstone) Projects General Information 2023-24

From September 2017, *all* Senior Sophisters are required to take a 20-credit module of independent research, referred to in the Trinity Education Project's nomenclature as a *capstone project*. This constitutes one third of the final year's work; the remaining 40 credits will consist of Sophister options, as has traditionally been the case in the School.

A capstone is a project 'that provides students with an opportunity to integrate the knowledge, skills and competencies which they have acquired during their undergraduate studies, and to demonstrate these in a form appropriate to the discipline'.

For 2023-24 the School of English is offering three models for this 20-credit capstone to its Senior Sophister students. These models are the **dissertation model**; a **creative writing model**; and an **open collections model**, founded on a project based in College archives or special collections in conjunction with the Library.

The three models, outlined below, aim to provide a variety of methods of approach and assessment in the final year project.

The chosen capstone model must be clearly distinct from the other 40 credits being undertaken in your Senior Sophister year and from the modules you took in your Junior Sophister year. You must be careful not to repeat material. So, while you might propose a capstone in an area where you've already done some study in a Sophister option, you must make sure that you're working in a different way with texts, or working on different texts from ones that you worked with in your options.

Capstone Project Contacts:

Capstone Project	Name	Email
Dissertation model capstones (and Open Collections in MT)	Dr Ema Vyroubalova (Capstone Co-Ordinator)	vyroubae@tcd.ie
Creative Writing	Dr Kevin Power	powerk9@tcd.ie
Open Collections	Dr Ema Vyroubalova	vyroubae@tcd.ie

Accessibility and Support:

In the School of English, we are committed to providing and maintaining an inclusive learning environment for all our students. One of the ways we do this is through working closely with the Trinity Disability Service. If you have a disability, a mental health condition, or an ongoing illness or medical condition, the Disability Service is there to support you.

Through registering with the Disability Service, you will be able to discuss your experience of and needs in College, including accommodations in learning and exams. The Disability Service can then tell us, while respecting your confidentiality at all times, whether there are changes we can make to teaching and assessment which will support you.

For more information on the Disability Service and how to register, visit www.tcd.ie/disability, and you can also contact your Tutor, who can advise and assist you.

Dr Seán Hewitt (SHEWITT@tcd.ie) is the Liaison Officer in the School of English and the point of contact between the School and the Disability Service: you are also welcome to contact him if you have any queries or concerns.

2. Creative Writing Model

The purpose of the creative project is to allow students to work on a long writing project, which can be a novel, a novella, or stories, or any other form of creative writing for which we can offer supervision in the School. The project will be an original portfolio of either short fiction, or an excerpt from a longer work of fiction, or short stories, or a piece of narrative non-fiction. The project should be viewed as preparation for a first collection of stories, or as the foundation of a novel.

The portfolio may be:

1. FICTION:

10,000-12,000 words of fiction which can take the shape of several short stories, or an excerpt from a longer work-in-progress.

2. NARRATIVE NON-FICTION: 10,000-12,000 words such as memoir, life-writing.

Supervisors:

Please note, Capstones are supervised by Mr Eoin McNamee, Dr Kevin Power, Dr Seán Hewitt, Dr Carlo Gebler and Ms Deirdre Madden. As with the other two models of capstones, students cannot choose who their supervisor will be and each project will be assigned to one of the available supervisors.

Assessment:

Assessment (100% assessed):

A portfolio of creative writing, word counts as above.

Assessment/grading

Each element will be read, evaluated, and given an agreed mark by your supervisor and one other member of staff. Creative Writing capstones will also be made available for the External Examiners at the School Examination Board.

Timeline:

Week 13 2023: students should contact their supervisors to initiate their individual research plans. Over the summer you should begin to work on your research materials, as advised by your supervisor.

2023-24 Senior Sophister year MT: you will begin submitting work on your portfolio.

The creative writing supervisors may organize a webinar or another group activity for the students doing this capstone model. You will be informed about this by email.

Each student will agree with the supervisor a timeline for production of the portfolio. This should include:

(a) the drafting of a preliminary outline

(b) specific deadlines for the completion of individual sections over the course of Michaelmas and Hilary Terms. The number sections will vary from portfolio to portfolio.

(c) The portfolio must be submitted by all students no later than noon on Friday of Week 9 of Hilary Term 2024 via Blackboard.

Aims:

The main purposes of this module are:

- to enable students to acquire a deep knowledge of their chosen art form and the work of its most notable practitioners
- to develop their practical and creative skills in a specific genre and to encourage them to take risks in their creative practice
- to enable students to undertake independent research relating to their project

Learning Outcomes:

By the end of their project students will be able to demonstrate a practical and critical knowledge of their chosen field in terms of subject, form, genre, language, narrative, appropriate research, synthesis of materials, and the management and delivery of a substantial, coherent, and original piece of work.

3. Open Collections Model

The open collections model invites students to engage with College's archival and print collections. Lecturers in the School have identified materials in Early Printed Books (EPB) and the Manuscripts & Archive Research Library (M&ARL) on which they would like to work with students – details are below. This model of capstone project has a threefold approach, resulting in three assessed pieces: an analytical essay of c. 5,000 words, an account written by students reflecting on their learning process, and a public-facing digital element such as an online exhibition, podcast, blog, or mapping project.

Assessment

1. Analytical essay (5,000 w): students will be required to complete this aspect of the project first. It will take the form of an essay, in which students must articulate why this research project matters and apply appropriate theoretical readings. It is not necessary for the essay to include any consideration of digital humanities. (40%; submit on Friday in week 1 HT 2024);
2. Reflective account of process (no strict word count): students will keep a (physical or digital) project notebook, in which they reflect on their learning process, the technical and intellectual demands of the project, such as copyright or paleography, and will identify the target user(s) of the public-facing digital element. Students will submit entries to their supervisor on 3 occasions (see Timeline below), and the journal will be given an overall mark at the end of the capstone process. (20%; submit by week 8 HT 2024);
3. Public-facing digital element that will translate the ideas and findings of the essay into a more accessible register and visual format such as online exhibitions; podcasts; blogs; mapping projects, etc. (40%; submit in week 9 HT 2024).

Please note you must also submit an electronic copy to the Sophister office at the same time to maddocke@tcd.ie.

Platform

The platform to be used for these projects is [WordPress](#). Each supervisor will direct the student toward helpful YouTube tutorials for designing WordPress sites, and will flag a number of excellent WordPress / blog sites that the student (and markers) can keep in mind as models. Here are some such sites:

- <https://rylandscollections.wordpress.com/2016/09/08/mapping-the-friends-and-collaborators-of-jeff-nuttall/>
- <https://www.bl.uk/20th-century-literature/articles/among-friends-little-magazines-friendship-and-networks>
- <https://rylandscollections.wordpress.com/>
- <http://blogs.bl.uk/digitisedmanuscripts/>
- <https://readingmedievalbooks.wordpress.com/>
- Eighteenth-Century Ireland Society: <https://www.ecis.ie/blog/>
- Irish Gothic Journal blog: <https://irishgothichorror.wordpress.com/issues/>
- Horace Walpole at 300: <https://campuspress.yale.edu/walpole300/>

Grading scheme

The analytical essay and reflective journal will be marked following the marking guidelines in the Sophister handbook. We will also follow these guidelines for the public-facing digital element, with these additional considerations:

1. The student will be assessed on how successfully the digital element translates some of the scholarship, research and ideas of the analytical essay into a more accessible register and visual format
2. In the reflective journal, the student will indicate the target user(s) for the digital element – this will be taken into account by the markers

Assessment/grading

Each element will be read, evaluated, and given an agreed mark by your supervisor and one other member of staff. Open Collection capstones will also be made available for the External Examiners at the School Examination Board.

Copyright considerations

The digital element of all projects will be designed to be public-facing. However, we require that all WordPress sites are password-protected while they are works-in-progress, until they have been marked. Students will reflect on copyright issues as part of their projects, so all projects will ideally become freely available once they are marked, but the password-protection may need to be retained if a finished WordPress site infringes copyright.

Images / Library

Students will identify any photographs or scans of material from EPB or M&ARL to be included in their WordPress sites in good time, and will liaise with the library team to arrange suitable images. Supervisors will encourage students to consider using images that have already been digitised by DRIS (Digital Resources and Imaging Services), and should also ensure that the student knows how to fill in a request form for photographs/scans and assist students as they liaise with the library team to arrange images, but it will be the student's responsibility to complete and submit any such requests.

Timeline

- Week 13 HT 2023: students should contact their supervisors to initiate their individual research plans. Over the summer you should begin to work on your research materials, as advised by your supervisor.
- Students undertaking the open collections model will be required to complete the analytical essay first – they will commence this essay over the summer of 2023.
- Week 1 (Friday) HT 2024 students will be required to submit the 5,000-word analytical essay (40%).
- Week 8 HT 2024: students will complete the reflective project notebook in 3 phases and will show their supervisors each of the 3 parts during meetings throughout the year but the notebook is also to be submitted as one document for a final overall mark (20%).
- Week 9 HT 2024: completion and submission of public-facing element (40%). **Please note you must submit an electronic copy via Blackboard.**

Learning Outcomes

This module equips students to:

- Conduct original archival research
- Work both as independent scholars and in a collaborative research group
- Create public-facing digital outputs
- Engage in critical thinking
- Build on skills acquired in traditional assessment models throughout the degree
- Develop transferable archival and digital skills
- Communicate academic insights to the general public

4. Dissertation Model

The Senior Sophister dissertation is **an extended piece of writing of 10,000-12,000 words (broken into 2-4 chapters), based on supervised research.**

The usual margin allowing the upper limit of the wordcount to be exceeded by up to 10% applies to the dissertations too. This means that the dissertation (including footnotes/endnotes, title, chapter headings, etc. but excluding the bibliography) can be up to 13,200 words long before the penalty for exceeding the wordcount is applied. There is no penalty for a wordcount that is too low but dissertations that are significantly below the 10,000-12,000 word range are not likely to be long enough to provide the amount of detail and depth of analysis expected of this type of project.

It will normally involve the critical analysis of primary texts, the evaluation of critical or historical context, the application of a critical or theoretical methodology, a literature review or account of sources, and the presentation of a research bibliography. In order to prepare the dissertation, you will work on your own, under the supervision of a member of staff, from the end of your JS year to the submission date in Hilary Term of your Senior Sophister year.

Students choosing the dissertation model meet their supervisor regularly, based on the timeline agreed with the supervisor, building up to **submission of the completed dissertation on Friday of Week 9 of Hilary Term in the Senior Sophister year.**

They should also maintain e-mail contact, as directed by the supervisor. The dissertation option has no taught element, but students choosing this model are required to attend a training session early in the Michaelmas term of their Senior Sophister year, the date for which will be announced by email in Michaelmas term.

The nature of the dissertation and allocation of supervisors:

The dissertation is your own piece of work. The role of the supervisor is to advise on research skills, help refine your ideas, and give feedback on drafts, but the supervisor does not teach you the topic.

All lecturing staff in the School are qualified to provide undergraduate supervision and you may be assigned a supervisor who is not a specialist in the precise topic you have chosen.

Assessment/grading

Each dissertation will be read, evaluated, and given an agreed mark by your supervisor and one other member of staff. Senior Sophister dissertations will also be made available for the External Examiners at the School Examination Board.

Timeline

Week 13 HT 2023: students should contact their supervisors to initiate their individual research plans. Over the summer you should begin to work on your research materials, as advised by your supervisor.

2023-24 Senior Sophister year MT: you will begin submitting drafts of your dissertation.

Weeks 3-5: There will also be one COMPULSORY online webinar for the dissertation model and one COMPULSORY webinar on using the library e-resources for dissertations.

Students will agree with their supervisors a timeline for production of the dissertation. This should include:

- (a) the drafting of a preliminary outline and a working bibliography of primary and secondary sources early in Michaelmas Term of the Senior Sophister year, as well as an agreed -upon critical approach or methodology for the dissertation
- (b) specific deadlines for the completion of individual sections or chapters in the dissertation over the course of Michaelmas and Hilary Terms. The number of chapters or sections will vary from dissertation to dissertation.
- (c) The dissertation must be submitted by all students no later than noon on Friday of Week 9 of Hilary Term 2024 to Blackboard.**

Be aware that most staff have multiple students to supervise and will not be able to read drafts from all of them in the weeks immediately before the deadline. **The latest you should expect to submit writing for detailed feedback is Week 7 of Hilary Term.**

Each student should arrange to meet in person or online with the supervisor at least twice per term. However, it is likely that more frequent meetings will be necessary.

A possible schedule of work might be as follows (note that this is only an example and not intended to be prescriptive):

MT Week 1 - meet supervisor, discuss work done over summer, agree plan of work
MT Week 4 - submit initial draft of writing (introduction, detailed plan or other work, as agreed)

MT Week 11 - submit draft of first full chapter (c. 4000 words)

HT Week 1 - submit draft of a second piece of work/chapter for discussion/feedback

HT Week 5 - submit redraft/work for discussion in week 6

HT Week 7 - submit full draft of dissertation to supervisor

HT Weeks 7-9 – revise and redraft final version following supervisor feedback

HT week 9 – submit final dissertation

Learning Outcomes

This module equips students to:

- Complete a substantial dissertation based on independent, largely self -directed research
- Work effectively under the guidance of a research supervisor
- Determine the scope and structure of a research project and establish a viable research plan
- Define and articulate their research questions

- Identify and engage with the relevant primary evidence
- Demonstrate independence of thought in evaluating and engaging with secondary literature
- Construct an appropriate and coherent argument
- Present the results of their research in a cogent, scholarly manner.

5. Presentation

- The basic compulsory format for the dissertation is as follows:

Cover sheet

Title page

Table of contents, including page numbers

chapters (each with a chapter title)

bibliography or list of works cited

- Optional extras include: a dedication or acknowledgements (which would be inserted on a separate page before the table of contents)
- appendices at the end (if, for instance, you are referring to illustrations or other visual printed material)
- the dissertation should follow referencing conventions outlined in the School of English stylesheet and found here: <https://www.tcd.ie/English/assets/pdf/style-sheet-update-2018-19.pdf>
- the dissertation should be double-line-spaced and presented in a size 12 traditional font such as Calibri, Cambria, or Garamond
- dissertations have traditionally been submitted in professionally bound hardcopy to the sophister office. However, since 2020, the submission is electronically via Blackboard.
- information on how your dissertation will be uploaded as an electronic copy to Blackboard, will follow nearer to the date of submission.

6. Plagiarism

All capstone students must complete the online tutorial on avoiding plagiarism 'Ready, Steady, Write', located at:

<http://tcd-ie.libguides.com/plagiarism/ready-steady-write>.

Please also view <http://tcd-ie.libguides.com/plagiarism>.

University regulations on plagiarism:

It is clearly understood that all members of the academic community use and build on the work and ideas of others. It is commonly accepted also, however, that we build on the work and ideas of others in an open and explicit manner, and with due acknowledgement.

Plagiarism is the act of presenting the work or ideas of others as one's own, without due acknowledgement.

Plagiarism can arise from deliberate actions and also through careless thinking and/or methodology. The offence lies not in the attitude or intention of the perpetrator, but in the action and in its consequences.

It is the responsibility of the author of any work to ensure that he/she does not commit plagiarism.

Plagiarism is considered to be academically fraudulent, and an offence against academic integrity that is subject to the disciplinary procedures of the University.

83 Examples of Plagiarism

Plagiarism can arise from actions such as:

- (a) copying another student's work;
- (b) enlisting another person or persons to complete an assignment on the student's behalf;
- (c) procuring, whether with payment or otherwise, the work or ideas of another;
- (d) quoting directly, without acknowledgement, from books, articles or other sources, either in printed, recorded or electronic format, including websites and social media;
- (e) paraphrasing, without acknowledgement, the writings of other authors.

Examples (d) and (e) in particular can arise through careless thinking and/or methodology where students:

- (i) fail to distinguish between their own ideas and those of others;
- (ii) fail to take proper notes during preliminary research and therefore lose track of the sources from which the notes were drawn;
- (iii) fail to distinguish between information which needs no acknowledgement because it is firmly in the public domain, and information which might be widely known, but which nevertheless requires some sort of acknowledgement;

(iv) come across a distinctive methodology or idea and fail to record its source. All the above serve only as examples and are not exhaustive.

84 Plagiarism in the context of group work

Students should normally submit work done in co-operation with other students only when it is done with the full knowledge and permission of the lecturer concerned. Without this, submitting work which is the product of collaboration with other students may be considered to be plagiarism.

When work is submitted as the result of a group project, it is the responsibility of all students in the group to ensure, so far as is possible, that no work submitted by the group is plagiarised. In order to avoid plagiarism in the context of collaboration and groupwork, it is particularly important to ensure that each student appropriately attributes work that is not their own.

85 Self plagiarism

No work can normally be submitted for more than one assessment for credit. Resubmitting the same work for more than one assessment for credit is normally considered self-plagiarism.

86 Avoiding plagiarism

Students should ensure the integrity of their work by seeking advice from their lecturers, tutor or supervisor on avoiding plagiarism. All schools and departments must include, in their handbooks or other literature given to students, guidelines on the appropriate methodology for the kind of work that students will be expected to undertake. In addition, a general set of guidelines for students on avoiding plagiarism is available on <http://tcd-ie.libguides.com/plagiarism>.

87 If plagiarism as referred to in §82 above is suspected, in the first instance, the Director of Teaching and Learning (Undergraduate), or their designate, will write to the student, and the student's tutor advising them of the concerns raised. The student and tutor (as an alternative to the tutor, students may nominate a representative from the [Students' Union](#)) will be invited to attend an informal meeting with the Director of Teaching and Learning (Undergraduate), or their designate, and the lecturer concerned, in order to put their suspicions to the student and give the student the opportunity to respond. The student will be requested to respond in writing stating his/her agreement to attend such a meeting and confirming on which of the suggested dates and times it will be possible for them to attend. If the student does not in this manner agree to attend such a meeting, the Director of Teaching and Learning (Undergraduate), or designate, may refer the case directly to the Junior Dean, who will interview the student and may implement the procedures as referred to under CONDUCT AND COLLEGE REGULATIONS §2.

88 If the Director of Teaching and Learning (Undergraduate), or designate, forms the view that plagiarism has taken place, he/she must decide if the offence can be dealt with under the summary procedure set out below. In order for this summary procedure to be followed, all parties attending the informal meeting as noted in §87 above must state their agreement in writing to the Director of Teaching and Learning (Undergraduate), or designate. If one of the parties to the informal meeting withholds his/her written agreement to the application

of the summary procedure, or if the facts of the case are in dispute, or if the Director of Teaching and Learning (Undergraduate), or designate, feels that the penalties provided for under the summary procedure below are inappropriate given the circumstances of the case, he/she will refer the case directly to the Junior Dean, who will interview the student and may implement the procedures as referred to under CONDUCT AND COLLEGE REGULATIONS §2.

89 If the offence can be dealt with under the summary procedure, the Director of Teaching and Learning (Undergraduate), or designate, will recommend one of the following penalties:

- (a) Level 1: Student receives an informal verbal warning. The piece of work in question is inadmissible. The student is required to rephrase and correctly reference all plagiarised elements. Other content should not be altered. The resubmitted work will be assessed and marked without penalty;
- (b) Level 2: Student receives a formal written warning. The piece of work in question is inadmissible. The student is required to rephrase and correctly reference all plagiarised elements. Other content should not be altered. The resubmitted work will receive a reduced or capped mark depending on the seriousness/extent of plagiarism;
- (c) Level 3: Student receives a formal written warning. The piece of work in question is inadmissible. There is no opportunity for resubmission with corrections. Instead, the student is required to submit a new piece of work as a supplemental assessment during the next available session. Provided the work is of a passing standard, both the assessment mark and the overall module mark will be capped at the pass mark. Discretion lies with the Senior Lecturer in cases where there is no standard opportunity for a supplemental assessment under applicable course regulations.

90 Provided that the appropriate procedure has been followed and all parties in §87 above are in agreement with the proposed penalty, the Director of Teaching and Learning (Undergraduate) should in the case of a Level 1 offence, inform the course director and where appropriate the course office. In the case of a Level 2 or Level 3 offence, the Senior Lecturer must be notified and requested to approve the recommended penalty. The Senior Lecturer may approve, reject, or vary the recommended penalty, or seek further information before making a decision. If the Senior Lecturer considers that the penalties provided for under the summary procedure are inappropriate given the circumstances of the case, he/she may also refer the matter directly to the Junior Dean who will interview the student and may implement the procedures as referred to under CONDUCT AND COLLEGE REGULATIONS §2. Notwithstanding his/her decision, the Senior Lecturer will inform the Junior Dean of all notified cases of Level 2 and Level 3 offences accordingly. The Junior Dean may nevertheless implement the procedures as referred to under CONDUCT AND COLLEGE REGULATIONS §2.

91 If the case cannot normally be dealt with under the summary procedures, it is deemed to be a Level 4 offence and will be referred directly to the Junior Dean. Nothing provided for under the summary procedure diminishes or prejudices the disciplinary powers of the Junior Dean under the 2010 Consolidated Statutes.