PLAGIARISM NUTSHELL GUIDE

Plagiarism is a form of cheating and is an academic offense. It arises where work submitted by a student is not their own and has been taken from another source. The original material is then hidden either by not referencing it properly or by not mentioning it at all, which is a breach of academic integrity[1]. Bear in mind that it is possible to plagiarise unintentionally, so read this guide to make sure that you avoid it.

What is considered plagiarism?

• turning in someone else's work as your own

• copying words or ideas from someone else without giving credit

• failing to put a quotation in quotation marks

• giving incorrect information about the source of a quotation

• changing words but copying the sentence structure of a source without giving credit

• copying so many words or ideas from a source that it makes up the majority of your work, whether you give credit or not

Believe it or not, changing the words of an original source is not sufficient to prevent plagiarism. If you have retained the essential idea of an original source, and have not cited it, then no matter how drastically you may have altered its context or presentation, you have still plagiarized.

Most cases of plagiarism can be avoided, however, by citing sources. Simply acknowledging that certain material has been borrowed, and providing your audience with the information necessary to find that source, is usually enough to prevent plagiarism[2].

---

[1] Vicinus, M. & Eisner, C. 2009; 2008; *Originality, Imitation, and Plagiarism: Teaching Writing in the Digital Age,* U OF M DIGT CULT BOOKS, Ann Arbor.
[2] Anon, Harvard Guide to Using Sources. *Harvard Guide to Using Sources*. Available at: http://usingsources.fas.harvard.edu/ [Accessed March 21, 2017].

The most common forms of plagiarism are[3]:

• cut/copy and pasted material from the Web

• copying the work of another student (past or present) including essay material, laboratory data or computer source code

• copying course material or lecture notes

• copying material out of a textbook or journal

Common methods of plagiarism and how to deal with each[4]:

• *Verbatim (word for word) quotation without clear acknowledgement*

    Quotations must always be identified as such by the use of either quotation marks or indentation, and with full referencing of the sources cited. It must always be apparent to the reader which parts are your own independent work and where you have drawn on someone else's ideas and language.

• *Cutting and pasting from the Internet without clear acknowledgement*

    Information derived from the Internet must be adequately referenced and included in the bibliography. It is important to evaluate carefully all material found on the Internet, as it is less likely to have been through the same process of scholarly peer review as published sources.

• *Auto-plagiarism*

    You must not submit work for assessment that you have already submitted (partially or in full), either for your current course or for another qualification of this, or any other, university, unless this is specifically provided for in the special regulations for your course. Where earlier work by you is citable, i.e. it has already been published, you must reference it clearly.

• *Paraphrasing*

    Paraphrasing the work of others by altering a few words and changing their order, or by closely following the structure of their argument, is plagiarism if you do not give due acknowledgement to the author whose work you are using.

    A passing reference to the original author in your own text may not be enough; you must ensure that you do not create the misleading impression that the paraphrased wording or the sequence of ideas are entirely your own. It is better to write a brief summary of the author's overall argument in your own words, indicating that you are doing so, than to paraphrase particular sections of his or her writing. This will ensure you have a genuine

---

[3] Anon, Subject Guides: Referencing, Citing, and Structuring Bibliographies: Plagiarism. Plagiarism - Referencing, Citing, and Structuring Bibliographies - Subject Guides at Royal Holloway. Available at: http://libguides.rhul.ac.uk/referencing/Referencingguide_plagiarism [Accessed March 21, 2017].

[4] Anon, Plagiarism. *University of Oxford*. Available at: https://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/applying-to-oxford/university-policies/plagiarism?wssl=1 [Accessed March 21, 2017].

grasp of the argument and will avoid the difficulty of paraphrasing without plagiarizing. You must also properly attribute all material you derive from lectures.

• *Inaccurate citation*

It is important to cite correctly, according to the conventions of your discipline. As well as listing your sources (i.e. in a bibliography), you must indicate, using a footnote or an in-text reference, where a quoted passage comes from. Additionally, you should not include anything in your references or bibliography that you have not actually consulted. If you cannot gain access to a primary source you must make it clear in your citation that your knowledge of the work has been derived from a secondary text.

• *Failure to acknowledge assistance*

You must clearly acknowledge all assistance which has contributed to the production of your work, such as advice from fellow students, laboratory technicians, and other external sources. This need not apply to the assistance provided by your tutor or supervisor, or to ordinary proofreading, but it is necessary to acknowledge other guidance which leads to substantive changes of content or approach.

• *Use of material written by professional agencies or other persons*

You should neither make use of professional agencies in the production of your work nor submit material which has been written for you even with the consent of the person who has written it. It is vital to your intellectual training and development that you should undertake the research process unaided.

The consequences of plagiarism can be extremely serious[5].

• Plagiarism can get you expelled from your course

• Plagiarism can result in your work being destroyed

• Plagiarism can result in expulsion from your academic institution

• Plagiarism can result in legal action.

The expression of original ideas is considered intellectual property, and is protected by copyright laws, just like original inventions. Almost all forms of expression fall under copyright protection as long as they are recorded in some way (such as a book or a computer file)[6].

Did you know[7]?

• It doesn't matter if you intend to plagiarize or not! In the eyes of the law, and most publishers and academic institutions, any form of plagiarism is an offense that demands punitive action. Ignorance is never an excuse.

---

[5] Evering, L.C. and Moorman, G., 2012. Rethinking plagiarism in the digital age. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, *56*(1), pp.35-44.
[6] Anon, Cite Sources. *Plagiarism.org - Best Practices for Ensuring Originality in Written Work*. Available at: http://www.plagiarism.org/citing-sources/cite-sources/ [Accessed March 21, 2017].
[7] Anon, Current Students. *Plagiarism*. Available at: http://www.ucl.ac.uk/current-students/guidelines/plagiarism [Accessed March 21, 2017].

- It is even possible to plagiarize from yourself, if you are citing a work you submitted elsewhere. In most Universities this will result in a failing grade for the work, and possibly for the course!

- Plagiarism is almost always a symptom of other educational problems.

A student's responsibilities:

Every submitted work must comply with two important prerequisites:

1. A level of independent thought, grounded in the tutoring and reading material provided;

2. Referencing of all sources used, both as a citation within the body of the text and within a bibliography of sources used at the end of the paper[8].

As a student you CAN'T do the following:

1. Cut and paste from electronic journals, websites or other sources to create a piece of work.

2. Use someone else's work as your own.

3. Recycle essays or practical work of other people or your own (this is self-plagiarism).

4. Employ a professional "ghost-writing firm"[9] or anyone else to produce work for you.

5. Produce a piece of work based on someone else's ideas without citing them.

So what CAN you do?

1. You can quote from sources providing you use quotation marks and cite the source (this includes websites).

2. You can paraphrase (take information from a piece of work and rewrite it in a new form) but you must still mention the source.

3. In the case of joint practical, project work or group projects individuals can use the same data, but the interpretation and conclusions derived from that data must be their own[10].

What isn't plagiarism?

It is not necessary to give references for facts that are common knowledge in your discipline. If you are unsure as to whether something is considered to be common knowledge or not, it is safer to cite it anyway. Keep in mind that you always need to cite

[8] Anon, Cite Sources. *Plagiarism.org - Best Practices for Ensuring Originality in Written Work*. Available at: http://www.plagiarism.org/citing-sources/cite-sources/ [Accessed March 21, 2017].

[9] Molinari, J., 2014. Academic ghostwriting: to what extent is it haunting higher education? *The Guardian*. Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/higher-education-network/blog/2014/apr/03/academic-proofreading-write-essays-universities-students-ethics [Accessed March 21, 2017].

[10] Anon, Current Students. *Plagiarism*. Available at: http://www.ucl.ac.uk/current-students/guidelines/plagiarism [Accessed March 21, 2017].

facts that are not generally known and ideas that are interpretations of facts[11].

Bibliography

Vicinus, M. & Eisner, C. 2009; 2008; Originality, Imitation, and Plagiarism: Teaching Writing in the Digital Age, U OF M DIGT CULT BOOKS, Ann Arbor.

Evering, L.C. and Moorman, G., 2012. Rethinking plagiarism in the digital age. Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy, 56(1), pp.35-44.

Molinari, J., 2014. Academic ghostwriting: to what extent is it haunting higher education? The Guardian. Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/higher-education-network/blog/2014/apr/03/academic-proofreading-write-essays-universities-students-ethics [Accessed March 21, 2017].

Anon, Harvard Guide to Using Sources. Harvard Guide to Using Sources. Available at: http://usingsources.fas.harvard.edu/ [Accessed March 21, 2017].

Anon, Subject Guides: Referencing, Citing, and Structuring Bibliographies: Plagiarism. Plagiarism - Referencing, Citing, and Structuring Bibliographies - Subject Guides at Royal Holloway. Available at: http://libguides.rhul.ac.uk/referencing/Referencingguide_plagiarism [Accessed March 21, 2017].

Anon, Plagiarism. University of Oxford. Available at: https://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/applying-to-oxford/university-policies/plagiarism?wssl=1 [Accessed March 21, 2017].

Anon, Cite Sources. Plagiarism.org - Best Practices for Ensuring Originality in Written Work. Available at: http://www.plagiarism.org/citing-sources/cite-sources/ [Accessed March 21, 2017].

Anon, Current Students. Plagiarism. Available at: http://www.ucl.ac.uk/current-students/guidelines/plagiarism [Accessed March 21, 2017].

Anon, Academic Integrity at MIT. What is Common Knowledge? | Academic Integrity at MIT. Available at: https://integrity.mit.edu/handbook/citing-your-sources/what-common-knowledge [Accessed March 21, 2017].

---

[11] Anon, Academic Integrity at MIT. *What is Common Knowledge? | Academic Integrity at MIT*. Available at: https://integrity.mit.edu/handbook/citing-your-sources/what-common-knowledge [Accessed March 21, 2017].