

Plagiarism Guidance

August 2017

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is presenting someone else's work or ideas as your own, with or without their consent, by incorporating it into your work without full acknowledgement. All published and unpublished material, whether in manuscript, printed or electronic form, is covered under this definition. Plagiarism may be intentional or reckless, or unintentional. Under the regulations for examinations, intentional or reckless plagiarism is a disciplinary offence.

The necessity to acknowledge other work or ideas applies not only to text, but also to other media, such as computer code, illustrations graphics etc. It applies equally to published text and data, whether from colleagues, internet, books and journals. You must attribute text, data or other resources downloaded from websites.

The best way of avoiding plagiarism is to learn and employ the principles of good academic practise from the beginning of your apprenticeship. Avoiding plagiarism is not simply a matter of making sure your references are correct, it is about deploying your academic skills to make your work the best it can be.

Forms of Plagiarism

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.

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 grasp of the argument and will avoid the difficulty of paraphrasing without plagiarising

Collusion

This can involve unauthorised collaboration between students, failure to attribute assistance received, or failure to follow precisely regulations on group work projects. It is your responsibility to ensure that you are entirely clear about the extent of collaboration permitted, and which parts of the work must be your own.

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 (for example, Bradshaw, D. Title of Book, discussed in Wilson, E., Title of Book (London, 2004), p. 189).

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.

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, 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. ***Identical pieces of work submitted concurrently will also be considered to be auto-plagiarism.***

Why should you avoid plagiarism?

There are many reasons to avoid plagiarism. You embarked on your apprenticeship to learn to know and speak your own mind, not merely to reproduce the opinions of others - at least not without attribution. It is important that you learn to develop your own voice and opinions. You are not necessarily expected to become an original thinker, but you are expected to be an independent one - by learning to assess critically the work of others, weigh up differing arguments and draw your own conclusions. Plagiarism undermines the ethos of academic scholarship while avoiding an essential part of the learning process. You should avoid plagiarism because you aspire to produce work of the highest quality. Once you have grasped the principles of source use and citation, you should find it relatively straightforward to steer clear of plagiarism. Moreover, you will reap the additional benefits of improvements to both the lucidity and quality of your writing. It is important to appreciate that mastery of the techniques of academic writing is not merely a practical skill, but one that lends both credibility and authority to your work, and demonstrates your commitment to the principle of intellectual honesty in scholarship.

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