

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is one of the most serious academic offenses that students can commit. Sometimes students plagiarize deliberately because they believe that the assignment is too difficult, because they have not left enough time to do the assignment, or because they are lazy. Often, however, students plagiarize because they do not completely understand what plagiarism is.

What Is Plagiarism?

Plagiarism is the act of submitting as your own work the words, ideas, or conclusions of someone else. Plagiarism consists of any one of these:

1. Failure to indicate quoted material
2. Failure to credit the source of quoted material
3. Failure to credit the source of paraphrased material
4. Failure to use your own language when paraphrasing
5. Use of another's ideas as your own
6. Duplication, in part or whole, of another writer's essays or projects

All work handed in under your name should meet all of these conditions:

1. You have cited the author and source for any quoted material.
2. You have cited the author and source for any paraphrased or summarized material.
3. The organizational pattern, the sentence, structure, and the choice of words is your own.

The Penalties for Plagiarism

The penalty for plagiarism can be severe. At the discretion of the professor, it may be any one or all of these:

1. A rejection of the plagiarized work—which means that you would have to do the paper again
2. A failing grade on the plagiarized paper
3. A failing grade in the course

In the case of extreme or repeated acts of plagiarism, following the recommendation of the professor and the concurrence of the Department Head and upon completion of the appeal process for academic honesty, one of the following recommendations may be made to the Dean of Student affairs:

1. Dismissal from the course
2. Disciplinary probation by the Dean
3. Academic suspension

The Proper Use of Undocumented Information

Undocumented information contained in your work will not be considered plagiarism if it meets one of these conditions.

1. It is common knowledge, or it does not come from any particular source (example: “The Declaration of Independence was signed in 1776.”)
2. It is first-hand knowledge, or it represents your own ideas (example: “My father moved to Illinois in 1971.”)

In addition, the information must be written entirely in your own words.

A Final Word on Plagiarism

If you have any doubts about whether an act or practice represents plagiarism, you have the responsibility to ask your instructor to clarify the matter for you. He or she will be happy to help you avoid accidental plagiarism.