Avoiding Plagiarism by Citing Sources*

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Plagiarism:

Plagiarism is the use or presentation of ideas, words, or work that is not one's own and that is not common knowledge, without granting credit to the originator.

Plagiarism may take many forms.

To avoid plagiarism, always cite the source of your information whether from print, electronic/online, or other materials. The guidelines of each individual discipline must be consulted for details specific to that discipline.

It is incumbent upon the student to learn and understand what plagiarism is and how to avoid it.

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Executive Summary

The purpose of this guideline is to assist students in the practice of citing sources in order to avoid plagiarism. Plagiarism is presenting someone else's ideas and/or words as your own work. It is acceptable practice to use someone else's ideas and/or words to strengthen your own argument, however, you must provide proper citation to the original source of the words and/or ideas. Plagiarism is a serious academic infraction and the goal of this guide is to assist you in avoiding the pitfalls and punishment associated with plagiarism.

Plagiarism

The School of Business, Public Administration and Information Sciences is committed to helping students avoid plagiarism in the course work they submit. Plagiarism means presenting someone else's ideas and/or words as if they were your own. If you paraphrased or summarized someone's ideas or words without documenting the source, you are misleading the reader into believing that another persons' words or ideas are your own. As teachers, we have no way of verifying what was intentional and what was accidental. Either way, you have committed plagiarism. Luckily, it is easy to avoid. Whenever you use an idea that you found somewhere, say where you found it. In other words, provide a citation to the original source.

Citing to Avoid Plagiarism

The purpose of this guide is not to teach students the proper citation methods. Different disciplines use different citation styles (such as APA or MLA) and different teachers demand different levels of rigor in following them. The styles themselves are revised from time to time and, in practice, you will probably use Endnote or Procite or some other software to perform the mechanical steps of preparing the documentation anyway. How you cite your source has nothing to do with plagiarism. Plagiarism deals with *whether* you cited your source.

Whenever you use an idea or words that you found somewhere, say where you found it. There are various ways to accomplish this—quoting the original source, paraphrasing the original source, or summarizing the original source. Each of these methods will be detailed below with examples from several disciplines. All of the examples will use the APA style, although other styles are appropriate as well.

Quoting. There are two kinds of quotes, exact quotes and edited quotes:

- (a) **Exact quotes**: If you use the author's exact words, all of them, exactly.
- (b) **Edited quotes**: If you change some of the author's words, or summarize them, you will use square brackets to indicate anything that you have added and an ellipsis (three dots in a row, from the Greek word for omission) to show where you have left something out. (MLA style, only, encloses the ellipsis in square brackets.)

In each case, regardless of whether the quote is exact or edited, you will enclose the words in quotation marks or set them off in an indented block if there are 40 words or more, and then you will specify the page on which you found those words.

Examples of Quoting

(a) **Exact Quotes**: Here is an example of a short quote (enclosed in quotation marks) and a longer one (in an indented block). These examples will use the APA style, although other styles will be appropriate in other courses.

Example 1

When thinking about this topic, remember that "organizational structure defines how job tasks are formally divided, grouped, and coordinated?" (Robbins, 2002, p. 178).

Example 2

In another pattern of response, a group may attempt to deal with its problems through what Bion calls *pairing*. This involves a fantasy in which members of the group come to believe that a messiah figure will emerge to deliver the group from its fear and anxiety. The group's dependence on the emergence of such a figure again paralyzes its ability to take effective action (Morgan, 1996, p. 232).

(b) **Edited Quotes**: Here is an example of an edited quote. Only a few words have been changed, so it is still a quote deserving of quotation marks or an indented block. However, because some words have been changed or summarized, those alterations are acknowledged. This example will not have a page number, because it comes from a Web page.

Example

Over time, the Protestant Reformation [suggested] that work was a profound moral obligation, a path to eternal salvation. The focus was on the current world

and materialism, not the next world and spirituality. The individual's obligation was self-discipline and systematic work. It should be clear that the factory . . . could never have flourished without the ideological underpinnings of the profound shift in philosophy exemplified by the Protestant Ethic (Wertheim, 2004).

Paraphrasing and Summarizing

A paraphrase describes a specific section of the author's work, generally in fewer words. A summary describes a large section of an author's work in a general way.

In either case, the words are your own but the ideas are those of the author. When you paraphrase or summarize an author's ideas, you will cite the source without enclosing the words in quotation marks or creating and indented block, and you will not specify the page on which you found those ideas.

Examples of Paraphrasing

Often, in writing a paper, you will present the line of argument mentioned in a book (including your textbook) or in some other source, without actually quoting its author's words. When you use someone else's ideas, but do not quote them exactly, you do not use the quotation marks and do not specify the page number from which you got the ideas. These examples will use the APA style, although other styles will be appropriate in other courses.

Example

The new salary survey by the Society for Human Resource Management ("Salary and Job Satisfaction Survey," 2004) suggests that job satisfaction is much less correlated with salary than we might have expected.

Examples of Summarizing

Sometimes, you will briefly summarize the main ideas from an author's whole chapter or book. When you use someone else's ideas, but do not quote them exactly, you do not use the quotation marks and do not specify the page number from which you got the ideas. These examples will use the APA style, although other styles will be appropriate in other courses.

Example

Using the familiar hierarchy of needs theory (Maslow, 1954), we can characterize top managers as eager to satisfy their esteem needs, while their workers are often

more concerned with issues of security. This can generate suspicion and misunderstanding.

How you deal with quotes, edited quotes, paraphrasing and summarizing is a technical matter related to the mechanics of documenting your sources. It has nothing to do with plagiarism and the principle remains the same. Whenever you use an idea that you found somewhere, say where you found it.

Other Plagiarism Issues

Property. Downloading images or content from the Web or other sources without permission may violate copyright law and could lead to legal action and other remedies, but it has nothing to do with plagiarism. Plagiarism refers to ideas (intellectual property) and not things (property). Stealing copyrighted Web images is a form of theft; passing off others' ideas as your own is a form of fraud. Whenever you use an idea that you found somewhere, say where you found it. As long as you cite the source of the ideas you are using, you are not committing plagiarism.

Adding No Original Content. A paper which consists of nothing but quotes from sources, welded together to make up the entirety of your argument, will rarely be sufficient for academic credit. You could easily earn a grade of zero with a paper that includes no intellectual contribution from you. However, as long as you cite the source of the ideas you are mentioning, you are not committing plagiarism. You are instead, adding nothing of academic value to the argument that you are proposing.

Punishment. The academic community's response to incidents of plagiarism is guided by the current student bulletins (graduate or undergraduate bulletin, as appropriate). This will be revised from time to time by the Faculty Senate, which makes decisions and sets policy on academic matters. Of course the teacher is in the classroom and is most familiar with the personalities and circumstances involved, as well as the academic material in the field. Hence, students should pay special attention to their particular teachers and their personal instructions regarding plagiarism. Naturally, the student bulletin also provides remedies for students who feel that there has been a misunderstanding or an error and who wish to initiate an appeal.

Self-plagiarism / Citation to Previous Work. Some teachers in some disciplines consider it an academic crime to hand in two papers based largely on the same research work. These teachers feel that students should have to make a new effort each time they want additional credit. In general, rather than rewarding you for effort, business schools often celebrate the practical wisdom of using synergy. Thus many business teachers find it acceptable to do projects for more than one class which are based on the same fundamental research. However, to be sure, it is wise to seek the approval of the teacher before using the same ideas for credit in two different courses.

Additional Resources

You can find another helpful resource about avoiding plagiarism at the Brooklyn Campus library and its Web site:

http://www.brooklyn.liu.edu/library/services/refservices/AntiPlagiarism.htm

Reference librarians also are available. Appointments must be made in advance. Jane Suda, Assistant Professor, Business School Librarian, (718) 488-1036 Paul Tremblay, Assistant Professor, (718) 488-6382

References

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