

## **Guidelines for Avoiding Plagiarism**

### **Rationale**

As an academic institution, The University of Akron encourages students to learn from and build upon the work of others. However, when a student creates a work that incorporates the words or ideas of another, he or she must properly acknowledge the source of that information. Failure to do so constitutes plagiarism and is prohibited by [University Rule 3359-42-01](#).

Under [University Rule 3359-41-02](#), plagiarism constitutes a type of student misconduct that is punishable by formal disciplinary probation, suspension, or dismissal from the University. It is the responsibility of all University of Akron students to know what plagiarism is and how to avoid it.

### **Policy Statement**

It is the policy of The University of Akron, as promulgated at [University Rule 3359-42-01](#), that all University students refrain from the commission of plagiarism and from aiding or abetting another student in the commission of plagiarism.

The following general guidelines are provided to assist students in their efforts to comply with this policy.

### **Definition of Plagiarism**

Plagiarism is the intentional or unintentional use of the words or ideas of another without acknowledging their source.

### **Why is Plagiarism Wrong?**

- Plagiarism deprives the original creator of the recognition he or she deserves.
- Plagiarism improperly allows the plagiarizer to take credit for words or ideas that he or she did not develop.
- Plagiarism is unfair to other students who diligently exert their own efforts to create a quality piece of work, which may be compared with the scholarly, yet plagiarized work of another.
- Plagiarism prevents the plagiarizer from learning and developing his or her own ideas.
- Plagiarism is not accepted in other fields such as business, science, etc.
- Plagiarism may have serious repercussions as discussed below.

### **General Guidelines for Avoiding Plagiarism**

#### **Do Not:**

- Do not use any of the following pieces of information without properly acknowledging the source of the information (whether the source is oral or written):
  - The actual words or ideas of another,
  - A paraphrase of the words or ideas of another,
  - Illustrative material created by another; or
  - Facts, statistics, or any other information that is not common knowledge.
- Do not rearrange words, phrases, or sentences without properly acknowledging the source of the original information.
- Do not take words or phrases from a source verbatim without placing them in quotation marks, even if the source of the information is otherwise acknowledged.
- Do not substitute synonyms for words used in another work without acknowledging the source and quoting material taken directly from the source.
- Do not “paraphrase” information in a way that changes its meaning.
- Do not summarize another work without properly acknowledging the source.
- Do not use the same organizational structure as another source without properly acknowledging the source.
- Do not cite sources that were not used.
- Do not purchase a paper from a website or another person and submit it as your own.
- Do not use one source so extensively that you lose sight of your own ideas.
- Do not merely add information to the original source with the belief that doing so will eliminate the need to acknowledge the original source.

**Do:**

- Do properly acknowledge the source of any quotations, paraphrases, summaries, or other information that is not common knowledge.
- Do place quotation marks around any information taken from a source verbatim.
- Do assure that any paraphrased information is accurate.
- Do note the sources of information when taking notes.
- Do differentiate between direct quotes and paraphrases when taking notes.
- Do develop your own writing style.
- Do indicate that the source was “quoted in...” if you do not have the original source that was referred to in another source.
- Do learn how to detect and prevent plagiarism.
- Do remember that plagiarism is not only an academic offense, but may also be a legal offense. (See <http://www.rbs2.com/plag.htm>)

**Common Knowledge**

If a piece of information falls into any of the following categories, it is likely to be considered “common knowledge” and, therefore, does not require a citation:

- Information that your audience likely already knows;

- Information that is readily available in general reference materials; and
- Information that is frequently found in other sources without a corresponding citation.

If it is doubtful whether a piece of information is “common knowledge,” cite it.

Disputed facts should always be cited.

See [http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/research/r\\_plagiar.html](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/research/r_plagiar.html)

### **Proper Acknowledgement**

If a writer chooses to use the words or ideas of another, he or she must properly acknowledge the source of that information.

Proper acknowledgement is necessary so that the true creator of the words or ideas is given credit for them and so that the reader can verify the statement by referring to the original source of information.

Acknowledgement may take several different forms. For example, footnotes, endnotes, or in-text notes may be used to properly acknowledge a source of information. The format and style of citation varies among professors and disciplines. Check with your instructor for details about proper citation format and style. The following websites may be helpful:

- <http://www.nwu.edu/uacc/plagiar.html>
- <http://www3.uakron.edu/english/resource2.html>
- <http://owl.english.purdue.edu>
- <http://library.concordia.ca/help/howto/citations.html>
- [http://www.bcm.edu/immuno/igr\\_homeric.html](http://www.bcm.edu/immuno/igr_homeric.html)
- <http://www.rbs0.com/tw.htm>
- <http://www.dartmouth.edu/~sources/>

### **Detecting Plagiarism**

The following are warning signs of possible plagiarism:

- Formatting that does not meet the requirements of the assignment;
- Headers and footers containing website information;
- Sophisticated vocabulary or writing style that is beyond the level of the student;
- Reference to many sources that are not available in the university’s library;
- Inconsistent writing styles within the same document; and
- Student’s inability to discuss the content of the paper intelligibly when asked about it.

See <http://alexia.lis.uiuc.edu/~janicke/plagiary.htm>. This website also provides tips on how to confirm potential plagiarism by locating the original source of information.

Some resources to help professors detect and prevent plagiarism:

- <http://www.andromeda.rutgers.edu/~ehrllich/plagiarism598.html>
- <http://csmonitor.com/durable/1997/10/27/feat/learning.3.html>
- <http://www.fno.org/may98/cov98may.html>

### **Relationship Between Plagiarism and Copyright**

One may obtain a copyright for “original works of authorship fixed in any tangible medium of expression” (17 U.S.C. § 102). Copyright protection begins at the time of fixation, and formal registration is not required. One who violates the exclusive rights of a copyright owner (See 17 U.S.C. § 106) commits copyright infringement.

One who uses the words or ideas of another without proper acknowledgement commits plagiarism. Note that plagiarism, unlike copyright, encompasses the words of another even if they are not “fixed in any tangible medium of expression.” One may also commit plagiarism by using the ideas of another – something that is not protectable by copyright. Therefore, one may commit plagiarism even if the original source is not copyrighted.

See <http://english.ttu.edu/kairos/3.1/reviews/marsh/plagcopyright.html>. See also [Guidelines for Copyright Compliance for Members of The University of Akron Community](#) for more on copyrights.

### **Plagiarism and the Internet**

The plagiarism problem has been exacerbated by the widespread availability of information on the Internet, including the sale of papers to students. Although the Internet facilitates the commission of plagiarism, it may also facilitate the detection of plagiarism. There are Internet resources available for professors to check their students’ work and for students to check their own work for occurrences of plagiarism. See, for example,

- <http://www.plagiarism.com>
- <http://www.turnitin.com>
- [http://www.ncusd203.org/central/html/where/plagiarism\\_stoppers.html](http://www.ncusd203.org/central/html/where/plagiarism_stoppers.html)
- <http://alexia.lis.uiuc.edu/~janicke/plagiary.htm>
- <http://www.csmonitor.com/durable/1997/10/27/feat/learning.1.html>
- <http://plagiarism.phys.virginia.edu/>
- <http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?file=/chronicle/archive/1997/11/25/BU51780.DTL>
- [http://asee.org/prism/december/html/student\\_plagiarism\\_in\\_an\\_onlin.htm](http://asee.org/prism/december/html/student_plagiarism_in_an_onlin.htm)
- [http://www.cnn.com/TECH/computing/9911/21/plagerism\\_detective/index.html](http://www.cnn.com/TECH/computing/9911/21/plagerism_detective/index.html)
- <http://www.wired.com/news/culture/0,1284,33021,00.html>

Reprinted from The University of Akron Office of General Counsel website at <http://www.uakron.edu/ogc/PreventiveLaw/plagiarism.pdf>.

- <http://sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?file=/chronicle/archive/1999/11/09/DD86912.DTL>
- <http://www.canexus.com/eve/>

### **Repercussions from Failure to Provide Appropriate Attribution**

- A professor was terminated from his position after it was discovered that he had plagiarized significant portions of his work and research results. See Matikas v. U. of Dayton, 152 Ohio App. 3d 514 (2nd Dist. 2003).
- A senior college official made national headlines in 2004 after it was discovered that he plagiarized heavily in an op-ed piece he wrote for a local paper. The faculty supported retaining the official despite the related media scrutiny, however, the individual ultimately resigned his position.
- A professor was disciplined for scholarly misconduct after it was discovered that he plagiarized the state's governor in an opinion column he wrote for a local newspaper.
- A college lost its accreditation in late 2004 after it was discovered that it had plagiarized from another college when it prepared its report for its reaccreditation review.
- Forty-eight students were dismissed from their university and three graduates had their degrees revoked for plagiarizing part or all of their term papers in an introductory physics class.
- A prominent historian withdrew from the judging panel for the Pulitzer Prize after it was discovered that more than a dozen years earlier she had included plagiarized passages in one of her best-selling books. The historian also ceased to act as a commentator for a nationally known news program and had a previously issued invitation to speak at a university withdrawn after the controversy erupted.
- The Iowa Supreme Court suspended the law license of an attorney who plagiarized an argument included in a brief he submitted in federal court. See Iowa Sup. Ct. Bd. of Prof. Ethics and Conduct v. Lane, 642 N.W.2d 296 (Iowa 2002).
- Professional students who fail to provide proper attribution may be denied licensure by the appropriate licensing board.
- University students who fail to provide proper attribution may be prohibited from completing their degree requirements.
- Universities that learn of a former student's plagiarism could revoke the former student's degree after it's been awarded. See Crook v. Baker, 813 F.2d 88 (6th Cir. 1987).
- The world wide web makes it far easier to discover past incidents of failure to provide appropriate attribution and makes such incidents much longer lasting and more embarrassing.

### **References**

- [http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/print/research/r\\_plagiar.html](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/print/research/r_plagiar.html)
- [http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/research/r\\_plagiar.html](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/research/r_plagiar.html)

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- <http://www.rbs2.com/plag.htm>
- <http://alexia.lis.uiuc.edu/~janicke/plagiary.htm>
- <http://www.purdue.edu/odos/administration/integrity.htm>
- <http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/wts/plagiarism.html>
- <http://www.hamilton.edu/academic/Resource/WC/AvoidingPlagiarism.html>
- <http://sja.ucdavis.edu/avoid.htm>
- <http://www.utoronto.ca/writing/plagsep.html>
- [http://www.education-world.com/a\\_curr/TM/curr390\\_guide.shtml](http://www.education-world.com/a_curr/TM/curr390_guide.shtml)
- <http://english.ttu.edu/kairos/3.1/reviews/marsh/plagcopyright.html>
- <http://www.nwu.edu/uacc/plagiar.html>
- <http://science.widener.edu/svb/essay/plagiar.html>
- <http://www.dartmouth.edu/~sources/about/what.html>
- <http://www.yale.edu/ycpo/undregs/pages/appendF.html>
- <http://www.dartmouth.edu/~sources/>
- <http://juno.concordia.ca/services/users/faculty/plagiarism.html>
- <http://www.ip-lawyers.com/MICHAUDF.PDF>

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