

All My Own Work?

Workshop Slides for use in conjunction with the Plagiarism Awareness Pack



University of Brighton

Centre for Learning & Teaching



Activity 1: Why does it matter?

Take a few minutes to decide what you think about each of these situations, and then discuss with other students:

- A medical researcher falsifies the results of a new anti-cancer drug to make his discovery seem more important.
- A writer submits an idea for a series to a television company, who turn it down. A few months later, they broadcast an almost identical programme. She never receives any acknowledgment or payment.
- A historian publishes a book claiming that the Holocaust never took place. He makes lots of detailed assertions backed up by anonymous quotations but does not give any sources for this information.
- A minority of students at a particular university are acquiring essays via the Internet, and the university authorities have failed to stop the practice. This has led to a decline in the University's reputation and all their graduates (even genuinely first-class students) are now finding it hard to get a job.
- A design student loses the portfolio containing all her sketches for her final project, and has to start again from scratch. At the final degree show, she finds that many of her original ideas have been used in another student's work.

Activity 2: Where do you cross the line?

Here are six ways to use sources. Example number one is plagiarism; example six is not. Where do you cross the line?

1. Copying a paragraph word for word from a source without acknowledgement.
2. Copying a paragraph and making small changes - e.g. replacing a few verbs, replacing an adjective with a synonym; acknowledgement in the bibliography.
3. Cutting and pasting a paragraph by using sentences of the original but omitting one or two and putting one or two in a different order, no quotation marks; with an in-text acknowledgement plus bibliography.
4. Composing a paragraph by taking short phrases from a number of sources and putting them together using words of your own to make a coherent whole with an in-text acknowledgement plus bibliography.
5. Paraphrasing a paragraph by rewriting with substantial changes in language and organisation; the new version will also have changes in the amount of detail used and the examples cited; citing in bibliography.
6. Quoting a paragraph by placing it in block format with the source cited in text and bibliography.

Based on an exercise in Swales and Feale (1993), cited by Jude Carroll (2001).



Activity 3: Other kinds of ‘borrowing’

Look at the following examples. Which do you think is the most serious? Why?

- Mary pays £100 for an outline for an essay from a commercial supplier and uses it as the basis of her own coursework.
- Nazeem and Daniel work together on a piece of coursework and submit very similar answers, claiming in each case that it is their own work.
- Su, a first year student, finds a discarded copy in the print room of an answer done by a student who appears to be studying a similar course. The ideas are so good that she uses them for her work – they clearly cannot be improved upon. She does not know whose they are.

Activity 4: What are the penalties?

1. How do you think each of the examples in Activities 2 and 3 would be dealt with by the University?

Now look at the enclosed extract from the University's General Examination and Assessment Regulations (GEAR) - students are responsible for familiarising themselves with these in full.

2. Which of the examples in activities 2 and 3 do you think would be considered 'minor' offences, and which 'major'?
3. What would happen a) for a first offence and b) for a subsequent offence?
4. What other kinds of behaviour are included in 'academic misconduct'?

Information for References

For most referencing systems, you should normally include the following information:

- Author (Surname and Initial)
- Date (Year published)
- Title (Book, Journal or Article Title)
- Edition Number (for books)
OR Volume and Issue Number (for journals)
- Place of Publication
- Publisher's Name



(For more detailed information, check the specific referencing guidelines for your course – normally in your handbook)

- Why might the reader want to know all this?

If in doubt....ASK!

- As Hugh Pyper (2000) wrote:

“ .. if you are clear, careful and honest there should be no problem. Don't let the fear of plagiarism keep you from using to the full the amazing resources in other people's writings.

*Learning how to make proper and responsible use of other people's work in developing your own understanding of a subject is the heart of academic life. Reading good scholarly work should also give you useful examples and models of good practice and you should actively look out for ways in which these may help you improve your own writing. **If in doubt, ASK!**”*



Sources of advice

- Your course tutors
- Your course handbook
- ASK Study Guide (you'll find the link on the homepage of studentcentral); it includes:
 - Writing Essays
 - Effective Reading and Notemaking
 - Avoiding plagiarism
 - ...and lots more!

