

# **Academic Integrity at Curtin:**

## **Student guidelines for avoiding plagiarism**



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## 1. Why this booklet is important for you

This booklet provides the basic information that you will need to appropriately cite and reference your work at Curtin.

When you enrol at university, you are entering a community which is different in many respects from the everyday community. In the everyday community, politicians rarely write the speeches that they deliver, and most people consider this to be acceptable. If, in the course of your studies, you get someone else to write the text for an assessed oral presentation, and you simply memorise and present it as if you had written it, you are plagiarising. This would incur a penalty. Similarly, journalists often ‘recycle’ their stories and few in the wider community appear concerned, but if a student does the same with their assessment work, they will probably be accused of plagiarism. At university, both academic staff and students are bound by the values and expected behaviours of an academic community. Behaviour that is acceptable elsewhere cannot be used to defend its use in the academic community.

A Curtin degree has prestige in the wider community because of the values the Curtin academic community upholds. In order for this degree to continue to retain its worth, you will need to help maintain these values. You are asked to accept these values when admitted to your course of study.

## 2. What is academic integrity?

Academic integrity is essential to the foundation and ongoing work of any academic community, including those who manage, research, teach or study in that community.

It encompasses values held by those in that community and which serve to guide that community in its work. In particular, academic integrity involves a commitment to such fundamental values as honesty, trust, fairness,

respect and responsibility within all academic activities (*Centre for Academic Integrity*).

**Honesty:** Academic honesty underpins respect for, and the development of, knowledge. Academic staff must be honest in their research and in their dealings with other staff and with students. Students must be honest with themselves and with others, in their personal ambition, study and in their involvement in the assessment process.

**Trust:** Trust follows academic honesty. Society trusts an academic institution which, through its mission, public work and in how it deals with its employees and students, demonstrates commitment to academic integrity. Staff trust the institution to uphold honest scholarly enterprise. Students trust their lecturers to guide their learning and to uphold the values to which the institution aspires. Academic staff trust students to work honestly and with effort to achieve their personal goals.

**Fairness:** Everyone in an academic community expects to be treated fairly. Fairness is expressed in the institution’s standards, practices and procedures, and in all interactions between the institution, its staff and its students. Judgements about the work of staff must be fair and accountable. Assessment of the work and learning of students must be fair and accountable.

**Respect:** Respect comes from meeting high and honourable expectations. Society has respect for an academic institution that is seen to uphold high standards of conduct in learning, teaching and research. Respect among those in an academic community means interacting with civility and justice, and with value for others’ worth and work. Respect for oneself comes from active and honest involvement in the academic or learning process.

**Responsibility:** Those in an academic community have the right to expect that the principles of academic integrity and scholarship will be upheld. But with rights come responsibilities. Responsibility for academic integrity and scholarship thus rests with every member of the community; every member accepts and upholds the integrity of scholarship and learning.

## *2.1 Breaching academic integrity*

There are a number of ways in which students may breach academic integrity—including cheating, by interfering with the learning of others and by plagiarising. This booklet is about plagiarism—what it is, how to learn to build on the knowledge of others without plagiarising their work and what you can expect to happen if you do plagiarise. Plagiarism is a breach of academic integrity. Deliberately using plagiarism to cheat is a form of academic misconduct.

### 3. What is plagiarism?

Plagiarism means presenting the work or property of another person as one's own, without appropriate acknowledgement or referencing.

<b>Plagiarism includes:</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
Copying of sentences, paragraphs or creative products which are the work of other persons (including books, articles, theses, unpublished works, working papers, seminar and conference papers, internal reports, lecture notes or tapes) without due acknowledgment	This does not mean that you cannot copy others' work—rather that you must clearly and correctly indicate work that is not yours. This demonstrates respect for other authors, who publish their work trusting that others will respect its authorship. You must also be aware of breach of copyright regulations.
Too closely paraphrasing sentences, paragraphs or themes	See section 5 on paraphrasing.
Using another person's work/s (including words, music, computer source code, creative or visual artefacts, designs or ideas) or research data without due acknowledgment	Honesty means that we acknowledge that creative work or research data take time and effort to generate, and belong to those who have done the original work.
Submitting work which has been produced by someone else (e.g. allowing or contracting another person to do the work for which you claim authorship)	It is dishonest to ask, arrange for or pay someone to do some work for you that you will later claim or present as your own.
Copying or submitting computer files, code or website content in whole or in part without indicating their origin	You may copy material from anywhere (provided that it does not breach copyright regulations) but you may not then use it unfairly or dishonestly.
Submitting previously assessed or published work for assessment or publication elsewhere, without permission or acknowledgement (self-plagiarism)	Once you have submitted academic work for assessment or credit, it is considered dishonest to then submit the same work for further credit elsewhere. This is called self-plagiarism and will be discussed in section 9.
In the case of group projects, falsely representing the individual contributions of the collaborating partners.	In the same way that false representation about your work is dishonest, false representation about the work of others with whom you work is dishonest and may be treated as plagiarism. This can happen when working in groups. See section 7.3.

### 3.1 What if I did not mean to plagiarise?

If you have used the words, themes or works of someone else in an assessment in such a way that the assessor gets the impression that these words, themes or works are yours, then you have plagiarised. The fact that you didn't mean to do it *does not prevent it from being plagiarism*. Plagiarism involves deception: if a reader is deceived into thinking that what you have written is your own work, you have plagiarised. If that reader is giving you credit for that work (i.e. assessing your work), any deception results in the assessment process being compromised. Throughout your coursework you will be judged on your knowledge and understanding of your discipline area. You will be encouraged to build your ideas and your knowledge on the work of others, but in ways that demonstrate respect for the work of those others and which demonstrate fairness for other students trying to do the same.

### 3.2 Why not plagiarise if I can get away with it?

Deliberate plagiarism is cheating, which violates honesty, fairness and responsibility and leads to reduced trust and respect. Unfortunately, once started, cheating becomes easier, increasing your chances of getting caught and penalised. Cheating also deprives you of learning opportunities and as a consequence, you will struggle with work that should be based on earlier learning. It is a cycle that can be hard to break and leads to lowered self-esteem. Academic integrity means that you are expected to resist the temptation to cheat and to help create an atmosphere where cheating will not be tolerated.

If you let others get away with cheating you are really helping to devalue your own degree. This is not fair to honest students.

### 3.3 Definitions and terms

Many of the terms used in this booklet need explanation. Do you *really* know the meaning of the coloured words in the following passage?

The definition and examples of plagiarism indicate that **closely paraphrasing** sentences, paragraphs or **themes** is considered plagiarism. You will need to learn how to **paraphrase** well and remember that even if you have paraphrased, you will still need to **acknowledge** the **source**. The use of other people's ideas without **appropriate acknowledgement** is considered to be plagiarism. In order to **acknowledge** the work appropriately you need to know how to **use in-text citations** and a **referencing style** suitable for your discipline. Some of you will need to spend some time learning **scholarly** writing skills, particularly in **citing**, **referencing** and **paraphrasing**, that will not necessarily be addressed in your course work. Some of you will have very good writing skills but will still need to learn about the referencing style you are required to use. Whichever category you feel you belong to, you should continue to read this booklet.

The glossary on page 17 explains these and other terms. In reading the following, make sure you know what the highlighted words mean. If not, ask a tutor for assistance.

## 4. Referencing

### 4.1 Why do I have to reference?

Referencing provides the reader of your work with the information required to be able to check on the **sources** you have used. The reader may agree with your interpretation of the ideas or may choose to disagree with you, but either way it is necessary that you provide them with the means to make their own judgements. It allows your tutor/lecturer to determine where you have taken your ideas from, how widely you have read about the topic and to decide how well you have understood the resources and been able to incorporate different ideas into your own understanding. If your work contains exceptionally well-written text and innovative ideas but with no **citations** or **references**, your tutor may well question its authenticity. Remember, your tutor is familiar with the topic and has read widely so has probably encountered these references before. He/she will usually recognise the words and ideas of other authors in the field.

### 4.2 How do I do in-text citations and referencing?

This will depend on your discipline area and the **style of referencing** required. The Curtin Library and Information Service provides guide sheets on standard referencing styles:

- American Psychological Association (APA)
- Harvard
- Vancouver Referencing Guide,
- Modern Language Association (MLA) Guide, or
- Footnotes (Chicago Style).

*[www.library.curtin.edu.au/referencing/](http://www.library.curtin.edu.au/referencing/)*

Information about which referencing style to use should be in your Course Guide or unit outlines. Each referencing style guide has examples of how to insert the **citation** into the body of the work and how to format the references at the end. Pay particular attention to the position of commas, full stops etc, and any indentations or brackets. Also think carefully about how to insert the citations within the text of your assignment. It is best to work with the referencing guide beside you and ask your tutor/lecturer for help if you are experiencing difficulties. Getting the referencing right can take almost as much time as doing the assignment. You need to be aware of this and plan your time accordingly.

### 4.3 Referencing software

The Curtin StartUp CD ROM and the library website's Referencing Resources link has information about EndNote, which is software that can help you manage your reference library, make it easier to automatically insert citations into your work and generate a reference list at the end. It can take a while to learn how to use Endnote, but it can save you a considerable amount of time when writing the longer assignments required in higher years. It also allows you to automatically reformat an assignment or a paper from one referencing style to another, which can save many hours of work particularly if you have to use more than one referencing style. The library runs EndNote workshops and has self-help guides and online tutorials. For further information see:

*[www.library.curtin.edu.au/referencing/endnote.html](http://www.library.curtin.edu.au/referencing/endnote.html)*

## 4.4 Examples of in-text citations and styles of referencing

If using APA, Harvard or MLA styles of referencing, you may write about an author's idea without mentioning their name in the sentence. In this case, the citation will contain the name of the author and the date of the publication in brackets. Alternatively, you may include the author's name in the sentence, in which case you will only include the year of the publication of the article in brackets, after the author's name. Other reference styles, such as Vancouver Referencing System and Footnotes use a numbering system where references are linked to the order in which they appear in your work. The numbers are written into the text in brackets or as a superscript. In most cases, the article will need to be fully referenced at the end of your own work or, in the case of the Footnote system, at the bottom of the page on which the citation occurs.

Examples of five referencing systems are given below. In each case, the citation is the same but there are different ways of formatting the in-text citations and reference lists. Please note that the styles shown may vary or change, so always check with your school for the preferred version.

### Formatted using the "Harvard" referencing style

Included in the body of the work:

The pedagogical curriculum comes closest to the philosophy recommended for educating young adolescents (Beane, 1993, Beane, 1998, Hargreaves et al., 1996) although it is often perceived to consist of what Young (1971) calls low-status knowledge.

Included in the reference section at the end of the paper:

Beane, J. A. (1993) *Journal of the New England League of Middle Schools*, Fall, 2-4.

Beane, J. A. (1998) *Educational Leadership*, 56, 8-12.

Hargreaves, A., Earl, L. and Ryan, J. (1996) *Schooling for change: Reinventing education for early adolescents*, Falmer Press, London.

Young, M. F. D. (1971). In *Knowledge and control: New directions for the sociology of education* (Ed, Young, M. F. D.) Collier-Macmillan, London, pp. 19-46.

### Formatted using "APA" guidelines

Included in the body of the work:

The pedagogical curriculum comes closest to the philosophy recommended for educating young adolescents (Beane, 1993, 1998; Hargreaves, Earl & Ryan, 1996) although it is often perceived to consist of what Young (1971) calls "low-status knowledge".

Included in the reference section at the end of the paper:

Beane, J. A. (1993). What is an integrative curriculum? *Journal of the New England League of Middle Schools*, Fall, 2-4.

Beane, J. A. (1998). Reclaiming a democratic purpose for education. *Educational Leadership*, 56(2), 8-12.

Hargreaves, A., Earl, L. & Ryan, J. (1996). *Schooling for change: Reinventing education for early adolescents*. London: Falmer Press.

Young, M. F. D. (1971). An approach to the study of curricula as socially organized knowledge. In M. F. D. Young (Ed.), *Knowledge and control: New directions for the sociology of education* (pp. 19-46). London: Collier-Macmillan.

## Formatted using the “Numbered” referencing style

Included in the body of the work:

The pedagogical curriculum comes closest to the philosophy recommended for educating young adolescents [1-3] although it is often perceived to consist of what Young [4] calls “low-status knowledge”.

Included in the reference section at the end of the paper:

1. Beane, J.A., *What is an integrative curriculum?* Journal of the New England League of Middle Schools, 1993. Fall: p. 2-4.
2. Beane, J.A., *Reclaiming a democratic purpose for education.* Educational Leadership, 1998. 56(2): p. 8-12.
3. Hargreaves, A., L. Earl, and J. Ryan, *Schooling for change: Reinventing education for early adolescents.* 1996, London: Falmer Press. 218.
4. Young, M.F.D., *An approach to the study of curricula as socially organized knowledge, in Knowledge and control: New directions for the sociology of education*, M.F.D. Young, Editor. 1971, Collier-Macmillan: London. p. 19-46.

## Formatted using the “Author-Date” referencing style

Included in the body of the work:

The pedagogical curriculum comes closest to the philosophy recommended for educating young adolescents (Beane 1993; Hargreaves, Earl et al. 1996; Beane 1998) although it is often perceived to consist of what Young (1971) calls “low-status knowledge”.

Included in the reference section at the end of the paper:

- Beane, J. A. (1993). “What is an integrative curriculum?” Journal of the New England League of Middle Schools Fall: 2-4.
- Beane, J. A. (1998). “Reclaiming a democratic purpose for education.” Educational Leadership 56(2): 8-12.
- Hargreaves, A., L. Earl, et al. (1996). *Schooling for change: Reinventing education for early adolescents.* London, Falmer Press.
- Young, M. F. D. (1971). *An approach to the study of curricula as socially organized knowledge. Knowledge and control: New directions for the sociology of education.* M. F. D. Young, London, Collier-Macmillan: 19-46.

## Formatted using the “MLA” referencing style.

Included in the body of the work:

The pedagogical curriculum comes closest to the philosophy recommended for educating young adolescents (Beane, “What Is an Integrative Curriculum?”; Beane, “Reclaiming a Democratic Purpose for Education”; Hargreaves, Earl and Ryan) although it is often perceived to consist of what Young (1971) calls “low-status knowledge”.

Included in the reference section at the end of the paper:

- Beane, James A. “Reclaiming a Democratic Purpose for Education.” Educational Leadership 56.2 (1998): 8-12.
- . “What Is an Integrative Curriculum?” Journal of the New England League of Middle Schools Fall (1993): 2-4.
- Hargreaves, Andy, Lorna Earl, and Jim Ryan. *Schooling for Change: Reinventing Education for Early Adolescents.* London: Falmer Press, 1996.
- Young, Michael F.D. “An Approach to the Study of Curricula as Socially Organized Knowledge.” *Knowledge and Control: New Directions for the Sociology of Education.* Ed. Michael F.D. Young. London: Collier-Macmillan, 1971. 19-46.

## 5. What is quoting? What is paraphrasing?

A great sentence can be successfully incorporated into your work by direct **quotation** but for more than one sentence, it is usually better to **paraphrase**. Paraphrasing means putting the meaning of the paragraph into your own words, without copying either the words or the structure of the paragraph. Paraphrasing demonstrates that you have understood the ideas and are able to use them successfully in your own thinking, but it can be difficult to do well and needs practice. Try thinking about what you would write if you were attempting to explain the ideas to a friend. Paraphrase if you want to include ideas from other authors to support your own ideas or if you are able to condense the paragraph into fewer words that convey the idea equally well. If you cannot fairly paraphrase, it is better to **quote** the author verbatim (exactly as written in the original) and acknowledge this appropriately.

### 5.1 Tips to help with quoting

Use quotes if you can't express the idea in a shorter form or if you particularly want to draw attention to an author's comments that support your own position or argue against it. Particularly powerful phrases or well-constructed sentences may need to be quoted. Short sentences can be included with quotation marks around them but still need an **in-text citation** and need to be properly referenced at the end. Longer passages (more than 30 words for example) are generally placed in block quotes where there is no use of quotation marks but the entire passage is indented. The actual formatting for this will vary depending on the referencing style you are using but you will still need to include an in-text citation and a correctly formatted reference.

- Write words that are explicit or unique to the passage in quotation marks.
- Don't quote words considered to be general knowledge or in general usage; if unsure however, put them in quotation marks.

### 5.2 Tips to help with paraphrasing

In general, you should use your own words and your own writing style in your work. It is not easy to paraphrase well; even those with exceptional writing skills will have times when they can't seem to write fluently. However, it gets easier with practice.

The following are suggestions based on ideas from The Writing Centre (2004):

- Read a written passage several times for understanding.

#### ***Is this plagiarism – you be the judge***

Two second-year students, Amy and Carin, handed in substantial assignments (worth 30%) that were practically identical. When the tutor questioned them, she found that Amy had finished the assignment early and had then given it to Carin to help her get started. Unbeknown to Amy, Carin then copied most of it and submitted the assignment under her own name.

- Did Carin plagiarise?
- If so, what level of plagiarism is it and what penalty might be imposed?

Turn over for the verdict ⇨

### ***And the verdict is...***

This is Level III plagiarism (see p 15). Carin knowingly copied Amy's assignment and submitted it as her own. The penalty is likely to be loss of all marks for the assignment or worse, especially as she is a second-year student who should have been aware of the seriousness of her actions. Amy might also be penalised under Statute 10 for assisting Carin to commit an offence. Although it appears Amy did not intend Carin to copy it, some would argue that, by her actions, she assisted Carin to commit plagiarism.

- To paraphrase, put the passage away and write as if you are explaining the idea to a friend.
- If writing notes, try to record key words only or use a thesaurus and put alternative words down that will not later trap you into replicating the style of the original author.
- If you are stuck, try to change the order in which the ideas are presented. You don't need to include everything, just the ideas you need for your work.
- Try to integrate the paraphrase with your own work.
- Remember, even though you have paraphrased you will still need to include an in-text citation and a correctly formatted reference.

## ***5.3 Examples of paraphrasing***

The following examples of paraphrasing may help with your understanding of how to do this well. The original article is a paragraph on page 15 of "A Handbook for Detering Plagiarism in Higher Education" written by Carroll in 2002 and published by The Oxford Centre for Staff and Learning Development, Oxford. This is exactly how it appears in the original.

First, read the paragraph several times and try to paraphrase it yourself. Then compare what you have written with the three paraphrased examples that follow.

"Mirow and Shore (1997) argue that digitalising text *per se*, regardless of its origins, changes the relationship between author and reader and makes plagiarism more likely. They argue that moveable type made authors see their work as valuable and therefore worth defending from the wider readership's use, thus triggering copyright laws. However, digitalising text means anyone can use it, manipulate it and seem to 'own' it so that students become 'word brokers'. Once they detach blocks of texts from their original authors (often losing the attribution information through 'inattentive research practices' (p.42), they then treat the captured blocks as their own." (Carroll, 2002, p.15)

### ***5.3.1 Paraphrase One***

Plagiarism is more likely if the text is digitalised because the relationship between the author and the reader is changed. Copyright laws have been triggered from the use of moveable type that has made authors see their work as valuable and worth defending.

Text loses ownership with the use of digitalisation and the student is able to change it, manipulate it and cut and paste without a sense of obligation to the author. In a sense, students become word brokers. Poor research practices also allow blocks of information

to be saved without the citations to the original authors thus increasing the likelihood that these blocks of text will be used as their own.

### **Verdict**

*This is plagiarism. The paragraph is ‘too closely paraphrased’. Chunks of text are reproduced e.g. “plagiarism is more likely”, “moveable type”, “made authors see their work as valuable and worth defending”, “students become word brokers”, “blocks ... as their own”, “manipulate it” are used without any citations or quotation marks. In the original paragraph ownership of certain words is shown with quotation marks and a citation. These ideas belong to other authors, Mirow and Shore, and have been accurately cited by Carroll (note the reference to Mirow and Shore at the beginning of the paragraph with the date of the publication in brackets.) However, in the paraphrased version there is no acknowledgement of any of the authors, Mirow and Shore or Carroll. In addition, the original structure of the text has been retained.*

### 5.3.2 Paraphrase Two

Mirow and Shore (1997) argue that text once digitalised changes the relationship between author and reader making it more likely that plagiarism will occur. In the days of moveable type authors saw their work as valuable and copyright was developed to protect their work. Once digitalised, text loses its ownership and makes it easier for the student to cut and paste and use blocks of text as if it originated from themselves. Sloppy research practices also contribute to the lack of attribution of ownership to blocks of text that are then used as the student’s own work.

### **Verdict**

*This is also plagiarism. Some of the work is attributed to Mirow and Shore by adding in their names and the citation (1997). The full reference would be found in the reference section. This, however, has been directly lifted from Jude Carroll’s work as if the writer has only read the Mirow and Shore reference. The basic structure of Carroll’s paragraph has been retained but no acknowledgement has been given to her work. Sections of the text are copied from the original without quotation marks or acknowledgement.*

#### **Is this plagiarism – you be the judge**

Felix handed in a first-year mathematics calculation assignment in which some calculations were complete and others not attempted. When a tutor asked him to explain several solutions to the class, he couldn’t. Felix then admitted that he and another student, Ben, had worked together on a set of answers, and then each had used this to write out the solutions to hand in. Felix and Ben’s work was basically identical, with the same questions omitted. Although the lecturer in this class encouraged students to “work together and discuss their ideas”, they were also told that the work they hand in must be their own.

- Did Felix and Ben plagiarise?
- If so, what level of plagiarism is it and what penalty might be imposed?

Turn over for the verdict ⇨

### 5.3.3 Paraphrase Three

Mirow and Shore (cited in Carroll 2002) emphasise that the advent of the computer, allowing ease of manipulation of text, has contributed to the large-scale problem of loss of ownership of written works for many authors. The ownership of a piece of work, cut and pasted from digitalised text, can be easily lost through sloppy note-taking when doing the initial research. Hence, the advent of the computer, where text 'floats in cyberspace' with no apparent ownership, has contributed to an escalation in plagiarism.

#### **And the verdict is...**

This is a common situation, and one for which there is no easy answer. Felix and Ben collaboratively produced the answers to the assignment. Since Felix could not explain several solutions, it appears that Ben might have contributed more than Felix. Whose work is the tutor assessing? If the tutor is led to believe that it is the work of only one student, he/she has been deceived about the 'ownership' of the work, and may argue that this is plagiarism. In this case the tutor is not able to fairly assess the work of either student. Each student could be given nil marks for the assignment.

Students frequently work together and it is often suggested that they discuss their ideas for assignments. Explaining ideas to each other helps both students to learn. However, discussing ideas and collaboratively writing out full solutions to assignment questions are not the same thing; the latter is Level II plagiarism (See p. 15).

#### **Verdict**

*This is acceptable. The Carroll reference would be found in the reference list. Jude Carroll has been acknowledged for her work and Mirow and Shore have also been acknowledged. The acknowledgement shows that the Mirow and Shore work has been taken directly from the Carroll article and the original has not been referred to. (Alternatively, the Mirow and Shore article could have been accessed and used as a direct reference instead of citing it through Carroll's book.) The paraphrase does not retain the original structure of the text and introduces a slightly different way of viewing the problem.*

## 6. Where can I get help?

Your lecturers should help you with the correct conventions of communication within your discipline but ultimately the responsibility to learn how not to plagiarise is yours.

### 6.1 Courses and resources

If you are unsure of your writing and paraphrasing skills you can enrol for the Curtin [StudyPlus Program](#), which has a workshop on referencing, including paraphrasing. For more information see: [www.learningsupport.curtin.edu.au/studyplus.html](http://www.learningsupport.curtin.edu.au/studyplus.html). Alternatively, there are books available in the Curtin University Bookshop that can be used to enhance your writing skills. The Writing Construction Manual is required if you plan to enrol in the [PowerPlus Writing Program](#) also offered by Student Learning Support Centre at the website [www.learningsupport.curtin.edu.au](http://www.learningsupport.curtin.edu.au). Whether your writing skills are good or poor, attending some of these courses will help you to prepare for writing your assignments.

Book Name	Author	Contents
The Writing Construction Manual	J. Dawson	Introduction: How to use the Writing Construction Manual; Sentence Structure; Punctuation; Grammar and Syntax
In Writing	J. Samson & A. Radloff	Writing as a Problem to be Solved; Getting Started; Pre-planning; Planning; Composing; Reviewing; Evaluating; Some Final Considerations
The Essay: A Guide to Writing Essays and Reports in Education	J. Samson, A. Radloff & B. de la Harpe	Written to assist tertiary students with their essay writing and presentation skills. Includes information on how to plan an essay; structure ideas; write an introduction, main body and conclusion; and avoid plagiarising when using authors' exact words or paraphrasing authors' ideas.

You can also get advice from your [StartUp CD ROM](#), which you can also access on the Curtin website at [www.startup.curtin.edu.au](http://www.startup.curtin.edu.au). Look at items such as StudyTrek tutorials, Writing skills, EndNote, Assignment guidelines and InfoTrek tutorials. The [Library](#) runs courses on EndNote which do not take very long but could ultimately save you a lot of time and hassle.

#### **Is this plagiarism – you be the judge**

Harry was having a lot of difficulty writing essays. On a first-year, semester two, assignment essay, feedback from his lecturer was:

*“Your essay is poorly constructed and consists of a series of mostly unconnected paragraphs. This is what happens when you copy too much material from other sources without summarising and interconnecting the ideas and presenting them in your own words. Although you have included many quotations with in-text citations, some sentences are obviously copied without any acknowledgement at all. Finally, your references at the end have not been formatted strictly according to the guidelines provided. You have put commas and full stops in all the wrong places. Please see me.”*

- Did Harry plagiarise?
- If so, what level of plagiarism is it and what penalty might be imposed?

Turn over for the verdict ⇨

## 6.2 *If English is not my first language...*

In Australia, essays usually begin with a sentence that summarises the main topic, followed by a linear argument that supports the initial statement. In many other cultures or academic traditions, essays are constructed differently. Some skirt around the topic and some present information that joins together, not necessarily in a linear fashion, but in support of the main topic. Other styles consist of much re-statement and over emphasis to support the topic (McLoughlin, 1995). In Australia, your lecturer will probably expect you to adhere to the acceptable methods of writing essays in this country, and judge the quality of your writing accordingly. It is, therefore, important for international students to undertake to learn how to write essays for this culture. It may be confusing at first but Student Learning Support Centre can offer assistance with this.

### ***And the verdict is...***

Harry has certainly plagiarised the work of others. However, he has problems and needs help to develop his writing skills (he should know this by now!). He also appears to have carelessly ignored the referencing guidelines. These are the rules of the discipline or profession and the lecturer is obliged to be strict in requiring students to learn to format references correctly. Harry would probably be told that his work is an example of Level I plagiarism, or Level II if he was a more experienced student. (see p. 15). In all likelihood, he would be asked to re-do some of it. More importantly, he would probably be told to attend a writing skills course because he is struggling to produce work of a level expected.

## **7. *What else should I know about plagiarism?***

### ***7.1 Staff have multiple ways of detecting plagiarism***

Some departments in the University use electronic plagiarism detection software. Other departments employ a variety of techniques for detecting copied work, including the use of advanced and/or scholarly Internet search engines and intra-university search mechanisms. Staff also make use of various cross-marking strategies and protocols, and other ways of sharing information about students' work. You can expect them to identify plagiarised material.

### ***7.2 Assignment coversheets***

You will find that many of your assignments must be returned with a coversheet that requires you to sign a declaration that the work is all your own and that you have not used unauthorised material. You should take this seriously. When you sign, you are stating that you have not plagiarised. Make sure this is correct.

### ***7.3 Working in groups***

The ability to work effectively in groups or teams is highly valued in employment and you may be expected to develop these skills throughout your course. In some instances, these skills will be assessed, and in others, you will be required to collaboratively produce reports or papers for assessment. If your individual contribution to the group work is to be assessed separately, make sure you know how this is to be done, and then do it honestly. It

is considered plagiarism to falsely represent the relative contributions of individuals to a group assignment.

## 7.4 What could happen if I am accused of plagiarism?

You will be given the opportunity to explain your actions and possibly advised to undertake a short course on academic writing skills. Depending on your response and the extent of the plagiarism, you could be given a warning only, or a penalty could be imposed.

The University identifies three levels of plagiarism, Levels I, II and III:

### Level I plagiarism

Plagiarism at this level is usually due to a student's inexperience or a lack of knowledge of conventions used for referencing. This is not usually considered to be academic misconduct, but is still considered unacceptable. Your work would display poorer than expected writing skills, such as poor use of paraphrasing, inadequate attempts to reference satisfactorily or the inclusion of small amounts of material that should have been cited. Sloppy or careless referencing might be excused as Level I plagiarism very early in a course but it will be viewed more seriously in later semesters.

Your tutor or lecturer will provide help with the correct conventions required and, where possible, give you the opportunity to practise these conventions by correcting and resubmitting your work. You may also be asked to attend a short course on academic writing or offered some other form of remedial advice. A record of the advice given to you will be kept for a period of not more than 12 months.

### Level II plagiarism

If you do not take active steps to learn the conventions of your discipline area with regard to correct communication practices, you may be accused of more serious plagiarism. Level II plagiarism will attract penalties because it is considered to be too serious to provide simple remedial advice alone. For level II plagiarism your work would demonstrate:

- a few copied paragraphs of work, very poor attempts at paraphrasing or misuse of a small amount of computer source codes etc, without reasonable attempts to acknowledge the source, even though much of your original work is included; or
- that you have tried to take short cuts by cheating, such as by cutting and pasting small sections of work from other authors and not acknowledging
- their work, or copying small sections of work from other students.

### **Is this plagiarism – you be the judge**

Kellie, Lu and Mary (third-years) formed a group that was required to undertake a research project and then submit a report. The students were also required to estimate the relative contribution of each to the final product. They were given a process for doing this. Mary had done almost no work on the project because of illness, but was close friends with Lu who did a lot of extra work. Lu wanted the group to claim 'equal' contribution because Mary could not help being sick, and knew that she would have done the work if she was well. Kellie was not happy about this but felt pressured to agree to it. They completed and each signed the form to claim equal contribution but later, Kellie complained to the lecturer about being coerced into it.

- Did these students plagiarise?
- If so, what level of plagiarism is it and what penalty might be imposed?

Turn over for the verdict ➡

### ***And the verdict is...***

All three students (Kellie included) have misrepresented to the assessor the work that is their own or others, and would probably be accused of plagiarism (Level II). They might be asked to attend an interview with the Head of School to explain their decision to submit a claim for equal contribution. Depending on the role each played, they might be given different penalties—which would probably be a reduction in marks.

You may be asked to attend a meeting with the Head of School to discuss the allegations or provide a written report explaining your actions. A final decision about the level of seriousness of the plagiarism will be made and you will be advised of the consequences in writing. Penalties imposed can consist of:

- Repeat the assessment (but with reduced maximum mark)
- Nil mark for the part of the assessment that is affected
- Nil mark for the assessment
- Nil mark for all assessments in the unit
- Suspension of the rights and privileges of enrolment for a period of time

A record of the decision will be kept.

### ***Level III plagiarism***

An accusation of Level III plagiarism is very serious and will be dealt with at the Divisional or University level. If more than 10% of your assignment is copied, you might find yourself accused of Level III plagiarism. Your tutor may have discovered that the work you submitted for assessment has been taken from a website. Alternatively, you may have copied a fellow student's assignment or submitted work presented by a student in previous years as if it were your own work.

The evidence will be collated and given to the Head of School (or Department). You may be required to attend an interview with the Head of School. If the Head of School judges that the seriousness of the plagiarism is Level III, you will be advised in writing and may be asked to appear before a Divisional Hearing organised by the Executive Dean, or before a Board of Discipline.

The penalties for Level III plagiarism can be severe, and include the following:

- Nil mark for the assessment or for all assessments in the unit
- ANN (annulled) grade for the unit
- Suspension of the rights and privileges of enrolment for a period of time
- Exclusion from the University for a period up to one year
- Refusal to re-enrol
- Expulsion from the university.

A record of the decision will be kept.

## 7.5 Can I appeal?

If you feel that you have been unjustly accused of plagiarism, you may appeal the decision or the penalty but must follow the correct procedure. If you need advice or help in lodging an appeal, see University Counselling or the Student Guild.

A notification of Level I plagiarism is not an accusation of academic misconduct and therefore should not need to be appealed. You must take note of the help that has been offered or advised and demonstrate that you have attempted to incorporate the advice into your work. If you do this appropriately, you will not receive any further notification. A record of the guidance given to you and an indication of your acceptance of the guidance will be kept with the School/Department for a short period.

Level II and III plagiarism are considered academic misconduct because of the seriousness of the breach of academic integrity, and the formal appeal process can lengthy. Before considering a formal appeal, first discuss the decision with your Head of School or the Division's Dean of Teaching and Learning. It is possible that the situation may be satisfactorily resolved without the need for a formal appeal. If not, you need to follow the Student Appeals Policy. A Level II plagiarism finding or penalty can be appealed by lodging a letter with the Executive Dean within ten (10) working days of the date of the notification of the outcome of the alleged offence. An appeal against a Level III plagiarism finding or penalty requires a letter to be lodged with the Director, Student Services, within ten (10) working days of the date of notification of the outcome of the alleged offence.

## A glossary of common terms

This section contains common terms about the use of 'in-text citations' and referencing. It is important that you understand what these terms mean in relation to academic work. Many parts of this booklet assume that you understand these terms.

**Acknowledge** (recognise, attribute) means that you give credit to the person/s from whom you have taken and used a particular idea, fact, figure, computer source code or diagram to support your argument in your assignment. The author/s must be recognised regardless of whether the article you took it from is published or not. This recognition shows that you have considered other authors' ideas and applied them to your own thinking. This does not mean the more citations you have the better.

You need to discriminate between authors and ideas and use limited numbers of, but significant, references.

### *Is this plagiarism – you be the judge*

Students in a second year unit were required to write up, in a formal assessed journal, specific details of each of eight visits to different work sites. When marking their work, a tutor noticed that for four of the visits, two students, Tran and Paul, had identical journal entries. On questioning them, Tran and Paul complained that they had heavy workload commitments and were having difficulty attending all visits. After four visits, they decided that Tran would visit the next two sites and produce reports, and then Paul would visit the last two sites and produce reports. They then copied each other's reports for their respective journals.

- Did Tran and Paul plagiarise?
- If so, what level of plagiarism is it and what penalty might be imposed?

Turn over for the verdict ⇨

***And the verdict is...***

The collusion between Tran and Paul, where they agreed to share the load of visiting sites and writing reports, has resulted in each plagiarising the work of the other. See “collusion” in the Glossary. They would both be accused of Level II plagiarism and probably penalised more marks than the worth of just two journal reports—possibly all marks for that assessment component. As second year students, they would be expected to know that their actions were wrong.

**Appropriate** (suitable, fitting, apt, proper, right, correct) in this context applies to the way you acknowledge the author(s) work. Different disciplines have different formatting guidelines for referencing, and you must use the guidelines suitable for your discipline. Pay particular attention to the correct setting out and punctuation when referring to the author/s in the body of the text (in-text citation) and in the reference list at the end of your work or the footnotes at the bottom of the page.

**Bibliography** is a list of reference materials and articles about a topic, provided at the end of an article or paper or book, which the reader can look at for additional information. These materials have not necessarily been used in the body of the article.

**Citation** (reference) is a reference to an author or authors whose ideas you are using in your own work. There are different ways of doing this according to the referencing guide you are using. Generally, the citation is inserted into the text where reference to the author is made. The reference list (at the end of your work) needs to include the source for every in-text citation you have used.

**Collaboration** means working with a number of other students to accomplish a task. Lecturers often want you to work together to build on each other’s ideas, to learn more effectively and hopefully produce a better end result than you could have achieved alone. You may be required to provide details of your contribution to a group process. In this case, you should be informed of how you should work together and how you should report on the process and your contribution. If this has not been made clear enough, you must clarify it with your tutor or lecturer at the commencement of the work.

**Collusion** means an agreement with another person to deceive others. In academic work, it can occur if you work together with others on an assignment that is meant to be individual work (also referred to as ‘collaborating too closely’). It can also occur if you assist another student to complete an assignment contrary to instructions. The result may be that each of you hands in a very similar piece of work without admitting to the collaboration. It is acceptable to get help from or provide help to others, and to discuss ideas and strategies, but you should only take notes and then independently complete your assignment. This will prevent too many similarities in your work and reduce the possibility of being accused of cheating.

**Copyright** (exclusive rights, patent) legally protects an idea, work or product from being taken and used by others for their own gain. Copyright offers protection from the misuse of work by others and requires the person seeking to use the work or idea to get written approval from the owner of the work. The textbooks and journals you will use as references are protected by copyright. Many of the websites you will visit for sources of information are also protected by copyright. This means that you need to appropriately acknowledge the author/s of works (including websites) you have used in your own work. You must not reproduce large sections of the work, including using too many long quotations or copying and pasting pages from a website. To avoid the issue of copyright (and plagiarism) you will need to practise effective paraphrasing. There are monetary fines for significant copyright breaches.

**Format** (arrangement, design) refers to the setting out of text. The referencing style or guide will show how to format the citation of authors in your work (in-text citations) and reference list. It consists of rules of punctuation, abbreviations, and use of italics, bolded or capital letters, that give consistency and uniformity to your citations and reference list. Referencing guides can be obtained at the library or from the library website. You will need to check with your lecturer as to which guide you should be using.

**Origin** (source, starting point, basis, foundation), for the purpose of this booklet refers to where the ideas you are using in your work first started. The authors of these ideas must be acknowledged in your work. The authors that you use may not be the originators of the ideas or works but may have carried on the work of others. You do not need to go back to the original source; it is usually sufficient to simply acknowledge the authors of the work you have read. Sometimes it is useful to get the original article, particularly if you want to check the accuracy of the reference in the work you are reading, but often the original article is no longer available or may be printed in a different language.

**Paraphrase** (rephrase, reword, interpret, restate) is the rephrasing of the ideas of an author into your own words. It is not good enough to change a few words only—this is “too closely paraphrasing”. The aim is to work the author’s ideas into your own understandings, being sure to acknowledge that these ideas belong to another person. If you can’t rephrase the paragraph and it is important to your argument, include it in full as a quotation. You must, however, be careful not to include too many direct quotations in your work. (See the section 5 on paraphrasing for more information.)

***Is this plagiarism – you be the judge***

A first year student, Romy, handed in a laboratory report in which she had included four illustrative graphics, none of which was cited or referenced. She did not use the original graphics, but had carefully re-drawn each one. Because they were then not ‘original’, Romy did not think that she had to cite or reference them.

- Did Romy plagiarise?
- If so, what level of plagiarism is it and what penalty might be imposed?

Turn over for the verdict ⇨

**And the verdict is...**

This may be plagiarism, but it would depend on the nature of the graphics. If they were common representations such as rough graphs, commonly used illustrations or very general diagrams not clearly 'owned' by another, then Romy need not have referenced them. If they were original and creative works, such as a unique representation of an idea or a cartoon or a well-constructed graph for example, they do need to be referenced. This is a situation where it would have been beneficial for Romy to ask for advice. When in doubt, it is better to acknowledge than not.

**Quotation** (extract, excerpt) is the exact phrase that someone else has written that you want to include in your work. There must be quotation marks around it and the author must be referred to in the work, with the page number on which the quote is to be found. The complete reference is included in the reference list. There are different ways of formatting direct quotes depending on length of the quote and the referencing style used, but the words must be written exactly as they appear in the original, including spelling mistakes.

**Reference List** is a list at the end of your work, of the resources used in writing the text of your assignment, giving all the details required by the appropriate referencing guide. Only resources directly referred to in your written work are included in this list.

**Referencing guide** refers to the guidelines that describe correct reference formatting, i.e. the correct use of capital or bolded letters, italics, punctuation etc., and the appearance of in-text citations and reference lists. You must check with your lecturer as to which guide you should be using and then obtain the guidelines either directly from the library or from the library website under "referencing resources".

**Remedial** (corrective) refers to the type of help you will be provided with if your tutor/lecturer feels that you need to improve your use of in-text citations and formatting your reference lists or with paraphrasing. It is considered to be remedial because there is an assumption that you already have some ideas about how to do this. Any help offered to you is aimed at helping you to develop your skills and avoid making similar mistakes in the future.

**Self-plagiarism** (or auto-plagiarism) means submitting the same work or large sections of previous assessments or publications of your own, for different assessments or publications. It may be possible to do this appropriately if it is acknowledged and permission is granted.

**Source** (basis, foundation) refers to the originator of the ideas or works that you have used in your assignments. The source you consult may not necessarily be the first recorded instance of the idea or work but it provides the foundation for your own work. As the source of your work, it must be correctly cited and referenced. Sometimes you would be advised to try to go back to the very original source of work, at other times this would not be necessary. If in doubt about what you should do, ask your tutor/lecturer.