

PLAGIARISM

What is plagiarism?

Plagiarism is the use of other people's intellectual productions in your work without acknowledging the originators of such efforts. These can be:

- ideas, opinions or theories
- facts, graphs, statistics, drawings
- spoken or written words (from interviews, e-mails, lectures, discussions)

This can be described as 'academic theft' and is frowned upon seriously in academic circles. It can lead to suspension and even expulsion from university.

Types of plagiarism:

- Cut and paste - Putting together extracts from different authors to make up your own essay.
- Copying - Copying word for word from books, articles, interviews, e-mails, or another students' essay).
- Paraphrasing without referencing - Rewriting another author's ideas and presenting them as your own.

How do I avoid plagiarism?

The cardinal rule is to acknowledge or reference everything that is not your own. Keep the name of your source close to the material that you have used. Do not put the name(s) of the sources at the end of a paragraph which contains both the sourced and your own ideas. Here are some ways to avoid plagiarizing:

- If you use the exact words of your source, then place them in quotation marks. For example, Marks (2004: 23) writes, "The.....". Whatever is lifted directly from a source (be it a word, phrase, or sentence) needs to be placed in quotation marks.
- If you paraphrase or summarize make sure that you use your own words to express the ideas of your source. Use different sentence structures and synonyms to capture the same meaning put forward by the source. Be absolutely sure you have not changed the meaning expressed in the original. Use phrases like "According to Marks (2004)...", "Marks (2004) argues that ...", and "Marks (2004) found that ...", to differentiate your own words or 'voice' from that of your source.
- As far as possible avoid cutting and pasting from the internet as this a recipe for disaster.

References show that you have read around the topic and are aware of what other people have said about it. They are a way of showing that you are presenting an informed exposition on the topic.

When do I not reference?

You do not need to reference when you are presenting what is considered common knowledge in your area of study. It is sometimes tricky to know what is or is not common knowledge and if in doubt, refer to your lecturer.