



Plagiarism: A Guide for Students

Dear Student,

Feedback from UWL students has indicated that are not fully aware of what Plagiarism is. To help you out, we have developed this guide which provides a definition of Plagiarism and explains the importance of compliance when producing work for submission. Please refer to [Study Support](#) for further support.

What is plagiarism?

“...passing off someone else’s work, either intentionally or unintentionally, as your own, for your own benefit.”⁽¹⁾

Any source other than your own. This could be **books or journals, lectures or presentations, TV or radio programmes or any work by another author.**

Ignorance is no excuse! - It’s worth spending time familiarising yourself with the **concept of plagiarism** and how to **write and reference properly.**

You will have to use other people’s work in your essays and assessments. This is a normal part of **academic writing.** The key is knowing how to do it correctly.

Please note that repeating work that you have previously submitted – at the University of West London or at another institution - without properly referencing yourself (known as ‘self-plagiarism’)

Plagiarism can take three forms:

“Copying”

If you copy a passage from another source, you must put it in **quotation marks (“”)** and provide a **reference**, acknowledging the author(s).

“Paraphrasing”

Even if you don’t copy another source word for word, using the **same words and phrases** from another source means you need to **provide a reference** (but not quotation marks).

“Collusion”

Unless an assessment is clearly defined as “group work”, **sharing research, ideas and writing with your peers is collusion** – a form of plagiarism.

What can happen?

- Plagiarism is an “**academic offence**”. The University has a duty to the academic community to prevent Plagiarism, and **it will be taken seriously.** It has to apply the rules fairly to all students so **even if it is the first time you have committed the offence,** you will face **consequences.** It can lead to being **failed for the assignment,** the module, the semester and even expulsion from the course and removal of any credits you have already earned. This **does** happen to students every year.

“My tutors can’t have read and remembered every book and journal - how will the University find out?”

- The University uses “**Turnitin**”. This is a database used by Universities across the world. It automatically compares what you have submitted to a database of published resources and works out how much of your assignment could be from other sources.
- Some of your writing will always be the same as other author’s work.** Quotes and paraphrases of existing work is essential in good critical discussion, but, your marking tutor will be automatically alerted if your report **contains too much text which is recognised by the system** and will look for whether or not you have **referenced this correctly.**

Why do people commit plagiarism?

- They are unaware of the rules** - The rules about plagiarism differ from country to country. You must familiarise yourself with the UK definition of plagiarism.
- They feel under too much pressure** - University can be stressful and there can be pressure to complete reports in a short timescale. It is never worth plagiarising other work in order to meet a deadline. The consequences of plagiarism can be much worse than the consequences of asking for support or requesting an extended deadline. To look at the support available, please refer to [Advice to students on plagiarism.](#)

How to avoid plagiarism

- We cannot present a comprehensive guide to writing and referencing on this one page! Attend the **Academic Skills Workshops,** engage with the ‘**Improving Academic Writing**’ paper and improve your writing skills.

Don’t go through your degree being scared/confused about Plagiarism. Take time to familiarise yourself with how to avoid plagiarism and how to reference other authors correctly. Once you know how, you can write confidently and positively.

References: 1. Carroll, J & Appleton, J. “*Plagiarism: A Good Practice Guide*” 2002, JISC/Oxford Brookes University

If you need any help, ask your Lecturer or Personal Tutor. If you have any questions or need study support, please email: Study.Support@uwl.ac.uk or visit our Study Support hub