

What is Plagiarism?

Plagiarism means presenting someone else's work in any format as your own original work without appropriate acknowledgement of the author or its source. It can also be deliberate cheating or copying and pasting from sources without correct acknowledgement.

The need to acknowledge the work of another arises out of a set of rights provided for in the [Intellectual Property Policy](#) (PDF 119KB, 10 pages). These include the right to attribution and the right to object to derogatory treatment of the work. The **UTS: Library** has more information on [Copyright and UTS](#).

Plagiarism is a type of student misconduct and a breach of academic integrity. It can take many forms these days, but the university has systems in place to actively check and act upon any instances of plagiarism in students' work. UTS treats any form of plagiarism very seriously.

Penalties for plagiarism are harsh and can result in you:

- failing the assessment task;
- failing the subject; and/or
- being suspended or excluded from the university.

Forms of plagiarism

Some examples of plagiarism include, but are not limited to:

- copying out part(s) of any document, audio-visual material, computer-based material or artistic piece without acknowledging the source. This includes copying directly or indirectly from the original, for example, photocopying, faxing, emailing, or by any other means, including memorising
- using another person's concepts, results, processes or conclusions, and passing them off as your own
- paraphrasing and/or summarising another's work without acknowledging the source
- buying or acquiring an assignment written by someone else on your behalf

Other forms of behaviour that breach academic integrity and are regarded at UTS as student misconduct and cheating include, but are not limited to:

- submitting an assignment which is all or partly written or designed by someone else, including:
 - copying from someone you know
 - downloading or buying from an Internet site
- allowing another person to submit your work as his/her own
- working together with another student on an assignment intended for individual submission, and then submitting work which is similar in content and language
- placing a request and offering to pay someone to complete your assessment, and then submitting that assessment task as your own

How to avoid plagiarism?

Using what you read

Writing assignments involves bringing together two sources of ideas:

- the ideas of others (discovered in your reading); and
- your own ideas (formed through critical thinking).

There needs to be a balance between your own ideas and the ideas of the writers you have read.

When you use others' ideas, you can:

- **quote** (use the writer's actual words), which requires the least input from you;
- **paraphrase** (rewrite the writer's ideas in your own words), which requires more thinking on your part; or
- **summarise** (rewrite the writer's ideas in your own words in a shorter form), which achieves the best balance of your thinking and others' ideas.

You should summarise much more often than you quote or paraphrase because when you summarise, you show that you:

- understand others' ideas; and
- can synthesise and connect those ideas in order to support your argument.

Referencing

Correct referencing techniques require that you acknowledge the source of your information in two places:

- in the text of your assignment, at the point where you use someone else's ideas; this is known as **in-text referencing** or citation
- in a list at the end of your assignment; this is known as **a reference list**.

The purpose of referencing is:

- to avoid being accused of plagiarism by acknowledging the works of others you have used
- to enable your reader to locate the ideas used and items referred to in your writing.

There are many different referencing styles; those commonly used at UTS are:

- [Harvard UTS](#)
- [American Psychological Association \(APA\)](#)
- [Australian Guide to Legal Citation \(AGLC\)](#).

In-text referencing

Example of author-prominent citation:

Research by Jones and Xiao (2014) shows that significant analysis has been carried out relating to these specific human resource management initiatives.

Example of information-prominent citation:

There has been a significant amount of data which has shown that these human resource management initiatives have been thoroughly analysed for effectiveness (Jones & Xiao 2014).

Example of in-text referencing where a direct quotation is cited:

It can be stated that 'there has been a significant amount of investigation into the effectiveness of these HR initiatives' (Jones & Xiao 2014, p. 19) and therefore, it can be argued that...

Common knowledge

You don't need to provide a reference for common knowledge – that is, information shared by many people. It is sometimes difficult to know what is and what is not common knowledge in your field of study. If you read or hear the same information many times from different sources, it is probably common knowledge. Common knowledge usually includes major historical events, famous people and geographic areas that are known about by educated people throughout the world, not just in the country in which they occurred.

If the information is not common knowledge, you should provide a reference. This shows your reader that the idea is held by an expert in the field. It also demonstrates to your lecturer that you have been reading academic texts.

When in doubt, provide a reference.

To recap...**Quoting**

To quote correctly, be sure to:

- use quotation marks
- copy the exact words
- give reference details, including the page/paragraph number.

Paraphrasing

To paraphrase correctly, be sure to:

- keep the meaning
- change the word order
- change most of the words
- give reference details.

Summarising

To summarise correctly, be sure to:

- keep the author's main ideas
- avoid simply copying the author's words
- make it clear which ideas are yours, and which are the author's
- give reference details.

Referencing

To in-text reference correctly, be sure to:

- make it clear which ideas are yours, and which are the author's
- give the author's last name
- give the year of publication
- give the page/paragraph number (unless you are referring to ideas presented in the publication as a whole).

Am I Plagiarising?

It is quite acceptable to discuss your studies with other students and to ask other people for certain kinds of help. However, it isn't acceptable to ask other people to do your work for you. It is important to avoid any form of plagiarism and/or cheating.

Still not sure if you are doing the right thing? Here are some scenarios that may help you decide.

Examples of unacceptable student conduct

SCENARIO	RATIONALE
My flatmate and I write our assignments together, and, since we're in different tutorials, we can just hand in the same assignment and change the name on the cover sheet.	If it's an individual assignment, it should be your own individual work. If not, this is considered cheating.
I've seen notices around the university advertising help with assignment writing essays. If I pay what they ask, that's not plagiarism, is it? It's not like I'm stealing.	It's passing someone else's work off as your own. This is an example of cheating.
I have a really good memory. I remember most of what I read although I can't always remember where I read it. My essays are usually full of memorised passages. That's not plagiarism, is it?	If you are using someone else's words, you should put those words in quotation marks and provide reference details. If not, this is plagiarism.
This is my first year at university in Australia. My friend did this subject last year. I read his final report for the major assessment task and it was really good. I copied a few paragraphs because he explained the problem and solution so well. That's not really plagiarism, is it?	Copying from a friend's assignment is considered to be cheating.
I always do the research for my assignments and make notes on what should be in the answer, but I get my sister to write the final report because her English is much better than mine. That's acceptable, isn't it?	If someone else writes an assignment for you, it is their words not yours. You are passing off someone else's words as your own. This is considered cheating.
My boyfriend has had some family problems this semester and has had to make several trips home. Because of that he's had to work more	A student who assists another student beyond the boundaries of legitimate co-operation can

hours in his part-time job. To help him out, I wrote part of his assignment for him. I won't be in trouble, will I?	also be penalised. This is a form of collusion and is considered cheating.
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Examples of acceptable student conduct

SCENARIO	RATIONALE
My flatmate and I are doing the same subjects and so we talk about what we're reading and learning about in class.	Discussing your subject is a good way of consolidating your learning.
I'm not always sure if I've structured my assignment in the way required, so I sometimes make an appointment to see a HELPS Advisor to get some guidance.	If you're unsure about how to structure an assignment, it's a good idea to get some advice.
Sometimes I make careless spelling mistakes when I type my assignments. I can't always find them when I read my assignments because I'm usually concentrating on the meaning. It's OK to ask someone to proofread my assignment for typing mistakes, isn't it?	Asking a friend to proofread is not plagiarism or cheating. In fact, it's a good idea to ask someone else to check your writing for typing mistakes.

Avoiding plagiarism tutorial and quiz

To learn more about plagiarism and how to avoid it, attempt the online plagiarism tutorial and quiz:

<https://avoidingplagiarism.uts.edu.au/>

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