



Plagiarism and Academic Integrity

A Brief Guide for New Students

Author: Associate Professor David Swain, Chairperson of the Student Discipline Committee

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Welcome

Welcome to the University of Waikato. You have made an important decision to study here and we want your time here to be successful, so here is some important information and advice that will help you. Please study and remember the information and advice in this document.

Studying at University

When you study at university you will be in an environment where the creation of knowledge is valued for itself and where you will be stimulated to become a **critical thinker**, and a productive and ethical citizen (*University of Waikato Charter*). You, and perhaps your families, are making a major investment in your study here because you want to achieve a university qualification of which you can be proud and which others will respect and that when you graduate you can be proud of your achievements and the University can be assured that it is all your own work.

The gaining of this qualification also includes learning things other than the subject matter of the discipline in which you will major. You will learn primarily to be an **independent thinker**, someone who is able to think about important questions and who tries to answer them; someone who is not afraid to ask these questions and to search for the answers. You will learn an extensive range of skills and tools to enable you to be an accomplished learner, thinker and researcher. All these factors require **academic integrity**, high standards of honesty and personal conduct underpinned by respect and trust between all members of the university community.

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity requires that all assessment items are your own work or are properly sourced. Therefore we have strict rules about “plagiarism”, the acknowledgement and referencing of the sources of the content of your assignments (**sources** such as books, articles, lectures, readings and the internet), and your use of other students' work. The information in this document should enable you to understand what the University expects and thus will enable you to do your work properly and hopefully achieve the well-respected qualification you seek. So here is what you need to know.

Plagiarism

It may be that your previous teachers and educational institutions did not expect you to reference all the material from other sources in your assignments. We do! If you fail to reference everything by other people and organisations in your assignments you may well find yourself facing a formal discipline process for plagiarism, which the University regards as a serious type of **misconduct**. It is irrelevant whether you intended to misrepresent the work of others as your own; if you do not reference everything by other people and organisations it is plagiarism¹ and that is misconduct!

Plagiarism is using somebody else's ideas, research or written work without indicating where it comes from. To use someone else's work as though it were your own is cheating.

¹ Clause 8.2 of the University's Assessment Regulations states that plagiarism is prohibited. Clause 3 defines plagiarism as: “presenting as one's own work the work of another, and includes the copying or paraphrasing of another person's work in an assessment item without acknowledging it as the other person's work through full and accurate referencing ... [and this] applies to assessment presented through a written, spoken, electronic, broadcasting, visual, performance or other medium” (*University of Waikato Calendar*).

All Your Own Work

To complete your qualification and graduate you must pass a set of courses. Your assignments, tests and examination scripts are assessed to determine the quality and grade of your work. The assignments you submit must be 100% your own work: they must represent your understanding of the subject, and your understanding of the work of others. A vital element of showing that you understand the work of others is your acknowledgement of their work. You do this through proper in-text citations and use of a reference list.

Sometimes you will quote the work of others directly, using quotation marks (“..”) around the quotation and giving the exact location of the words you have quoted. Sometimes you will paraphrase the work of others. Paraphrasing means summarising the work of others in your own words, emphasising what is especially relevant to your assignment, developing their work for your assignment. When you paraphrase you must still acknowledge the source by proper referencing of the relevant work with an intext citation of the author’s name and date of publication.

Sometimes you may work with other students in a group, discussing the topic and the material recommended by your teacher. It is acceptable to help each other understand the topic and the material you have to study as collaborating and supporting each other is a good way to learn. But it is not acceptable to copy each other’s assignments or to use other students’ ideas without thinking about the topic yourself. This is **collusion**. What you hand in must be 100% your own perspective, even though you have studied together and helped each other understand what you are studying. If you use another student’s ideas you must acknowledge his or her **contribution** with a proper reference. It is not acceptable to borrow or use other students’ assignments.

So, you must acknowledge (by proper referencing) the direct quotation (even if it is only a few words); the paraphrasing of the words of others; and the use of printed or electronic material to give you ideas, facts, understanding or inspiration. If your course includes group work, or you have formed an informal study group, you must acknowledge: **substantial** assistance by others with understanding material; ideas and views developed through group work; material developed by group work; and significant or **substantive** editing of your written work by others.

There are a number of different styles and ways of referencing all these sources. Good academic work requires that you use an appropriate style and way of referencing. Specific guidelines and requirements for referencing will often be stated in Departmental and/or School handbooks and the Library has information leaflets on various styles and ways of setting out references.

Further information can also be obtained from Student Learning or the Faculty of Management’s student learning group called Language and Learning. There is online and face to face support available and it is free. To understand how to acknowledge sources you need the **referencing style guide** appropriate to the course for which you are writing the assignment, you can get this from your Department or Faculty.

What to Avoid

What happens if you don’t follow this advice? When one of your teachers thinks one of your assignments has problems with acknowledgement and referencing, he or she has to decide whether to treat it as a mistake or as misconduct - i.e. plagiarism. If they decide it is a mistake they are likely to explain the mistake to you, so you don’t make it again, and they will give the assignment a mark which reflects among other things the poor acknowledgement and referencing. You are expected to learn how to acknowledge correctly by using the appropriate style of referencing, and you will be told all about this in your first classes and in hand-outs you will receive.

If they decide that you have had opportunities here at the University of Waikato to learn about acknowledgement and referencing but have failed to do so they are more likely to decide to treat your deficient acknowledgement and referencing as possible misconduct. This means your assignment will be referred to the University’s discipline system.

How is your teacher likely to make this decision? If your assignment includes some or most of the following, your teacher may decide to treat the problem as a mistake: the acknowledgement and referencing problems are relatively minor; it is early in your academic career at the University of Waikato (it is one of your first few assignments); and there has not yet been much opportunity to practice acknowledgement, referencing and plagiarism in your classes. If few or none of these apply, your teacher may decide to treat the problem as misconduct (plagiarism).

If your assignment is referred to the discipline system and it is your first referral for misconduct it is likely that you will be offered a summary jurisdiction hearing with the Chairperson of the Student Discipline Committee, who represents the Vice-Chancellor, the executive head of the University. The letter requesting that you attend this hearing will explain about summary jurisdiction and the alternative you have the right to choose, which is a formal Student Discipline Committee hearing. (If it is not your first referral for misconduct you are likely to be referred directly to the Student Discipline Committee).

If the teachers or staff supervising a test or examination think a student has cheated in the test or examination, they will be referred to the same discipline system for a summary jurisdiction or Student Discipline Committee hearing.

The University of Waikato and your teachers want you to be successful and to gain your chosen and respected qualification. So, please study the information and advice in this leaflet carefully, making sure that you understand the acknowledgement and referencing which is required in your work here (and at all New Zealand universities), and you should be able to avoid committing plagiarism and facing discipline proceedings, and you will be on the road to success!

Exercises

Note: Answer these questions **using your own words**, and indicate the paragraph(s) in the article where the answer can be found.

1. Why does the University have strict rules about plagiarism and acknowledgment of sources?
2. Why is it important to acknowledge other people's ideas?
3. Are students allowed to discuss assignments with each other? Explain.
4. How can you avoid plagiarism?
5. How can you find out the referencing styles for your major?
6. What is the difference between collaboration and collusion?
7. What are the consequences of plagiarism?
8. Why is it important to understand what plagiarism is?

Vocabulary

9. What is the difference between
 - **Quotation** and **plagiarism**?
 - **Mistake** and **misconduct**?
10. There are several words in **bold** in the article. **Using your own words**, explain the meaning of these words.

Want more information?

Go to the Student Discipline webpage <http://www.waikato.ac.nz/sasd/misconduct/>