

Plagiarism Resources

About plagiarism

Federation University Australia provides various resources to support your academic development, including in the area of academic integrity. Central to this is ensuring that your work acknowledges that of others through the appropriate use of referencing and citation. This document summarises the educational services you can access to improve your skills in constructing and presenting academic work.

What is plagiarism?

If you use someone else's ideas, information or words without acknowledging them, then you are plagiarising. Most students don't aim to be dishonest in their academic writing, but even accidental plagiarism can trigger academic penalties for improper conduct. Apart from the penalties, the act of plagiarism is wrong on a number of levels. It is:

- dishonest, as it equates to theft
- unfair to other students
- disrespectful to your lecturer, teacher or tutor
- harmful to your reputation and that of the University.

Being aware of different forms of plagiarism may help you to avoid it. These include:

- **Collusion:** working with other students on an assessment and then claiming it as your own.
- **Verbatim copying:** copying material exactly or cutting and pasting, and presenting it as your own without citing the source.
- **Sham paraphrasing:** copying material word-for-word, or cutting and pasting it, and presenting it as a paraphrase rather than a direct quote.
- **Illicit paraphrasing:** using material that is closely paraphrased or summarised, without using direct quotes or citing the source.
- **Self-plagiarism or recycling:** submitting an old assignment, or parts of it, as new work without permission from the Course Coordinator.
- **Ghost writing:** using work written by another person and presenting it as your own, including text produced for free or at a cost.
- **Bullying:** taking and using work written by another and, even if edited, presenting it as your own; and where material was obtained inappropriately such as through emotional, social or physical pressure.

(Walker, 1998)

How to avoid plagiarism

Referring to work that has been undertaken in your field of study is a positive part of learning. It demonstrates that you have sourced expert material to inform your work. It also provides signposts for your reader, should they wish to follow up on your research. The key to avoiding plagiarism is developing good study habits and applying them to your written assessment tasks. Try these three strategies:

1. Acknowledge your sources

Sources can take many forms, such as: books, journals, presentations, exhibitions, magazine and newspaper articles, programs aired on television and radio, computer-stored data, DVDs, and internet sites. Sources do not need to be cited for commonly-known facts or arguments.

Referencing, or citing, is the way you identify the source of information within your written work. This includes where you do any of the following:

- Paraphrase or summarise an idea, argument or analysis
- Quote exact words
- Copy or adapted a graph, image, diagram or table
- Copy a procedure or method
- Present factual information, data or results

First, familiarise yourself with the referencing system used by your School. The most commonly-used styles at our University are APA, Australian Harvard, IEEE, MLA and Chicago/Turabian. Know which style you are required to use before you start work, as the use and presentation varies.

Next, record the identifying details of each and every resource you use in researching your topic so that you could locate it again. This includes who wrote/created it, the title, when it was published or made available, and the URL if an online source.

Then, the act of referencing is to identify each source at the point you use it in your writing. You

then include further details at the end of your paper. This information appears in a particular way depending on the citation style.

2. Avoid copying

Avoid copying large amounts of information by another author, even where you correctly acknowledge the source. Your lecturer is interested to see how you interpret key concepts and apply them to your course material, as demonstrated in your writing.

There are three methods of incorporating ideas into your own writing: direct quoting, paraphrasing or summarising. All three methods require you to reference the original source.

Direct quotes: Insert quotation marks around a sentence, or part of it, that you have copied exactly. Use a direct quote only when the author's exact words will enhance your argument. Use quotations sparingly in any assignment.

Paraphrasing: Rewriting the author's text in your words shows that you've understood what you have read. It can be used to change the order of ideas to suit your writing purpose, and is a useful way to help your reader understand complex concepts. A good paraphrase is more concise than the original.

Summarising: This is a useful way to highlight main points from a chapter, a whole study, or a collection of related research. Use it to outline someone else's argument in your own words, without details or examples, and using fewer words than the original. Also use it to give brief examples of differing points of view on a topic.

Examples

- **Direct quote:** According to Parker (2014), Batman is "the best superhero, because he didn't need to get bitten or thrown in acid to be great. He was just naturally awesome all on his own".
- **Paraphrase:** According to Parker (2014), Batman was superior to all other superheroes due to his natural ability and the fact that he was not gifted with superpowers.
- **Summary:** According to Parker (2014), Batman lacked any superpowers.

3. Seek help

You are not expected to know the intricacies of academic writing conventions prior to commencing university study. However, your lecturers, teachers and tutors will expect you to build on your skills.

Support is free and available on every campus or online. We offer help to improve your academic writing, time management and much more, through helpsheets, workshops and individual assistance.

Resources and Support

The ability to manage your time and study needs effectively is vital to achieving your study goals.

In the first instance, ask your lecturer, teacher or tutor to clarify the requirements of your assessment. Student Academic Leaders (SALs) and Learning Skills Advisors can help you to develop effective writing skills. Get in touch at:

- the **ASK Desk** on your campus
- the **Writing Space** on your campus
- email ask.sal@federation.edu.au
- federation.edu.au/sass

Studiosity is a free online service that offers 24/7 feedback on your writing. Ask for access via email: sass@federation.edu.au

Library staff also offer advice, workshops and software to help with referencing. Visit or go to:

- federation.edu.au/library/fedcite
- federation.edu.au/library/guides/study-skills-and-writing-guides
- federation.edu.au/current-students/learning-and-study/online-help-with/referencing

Staff in the Student Advisory Service can help you with university concerns, including charges of plagiarism made against you. Go to federation.edu.au/studentadviser or email studentadviser@federation.edu.au

How Turnitin software can help

Turnitin is an internet-based software program that compares your document with text in millions of books, journals, internet pages and submitted student assignments to determine similarities. An originality report links any matching text with its source. Course Coordinators may use the similarity percentage provided in the originality report to identify potential plagiarism. Check your work in Turnitin via Moodle prior to submitting your assignment. In Moodle, select **Turnitin** from the Study Help menu, then click 'Enrol me'.

Reference: Walker, J. (1998). Student plagiarism in universities: What are we doing about it? *Higher Education Research and Development*, 17(1), 89-106. doi:10.1080/0729436980170105