# Plagiarism – and how to avoid it.

## Plagiarism statements and penalties

When submitting an assignment, Turnitin will ask you to confirm that the work you are submitting is your own. This means that it must be ‘original’, in other words, not copied from other sources or from any content generated by AI software. It is essential that you understand what plagiarism is and how not to plagiarise – whether deliberately or inadvertently. Ignorance is not a defence.

## What is plagiarism?

Plagiarism is a form of academic misconduct - **cheating**. There are several types of plagiarism. The following are the most common forms:

1. The most obvious – submitting someone else’s work in your own name or getting someone else to write the work for you (whether or not you pay for it).
2. Including short phrases from another writer’s work because ‘it is written better than you could’ in your submission without attribution.
3. ‘Patchwork’ plagiarism, where you weave another writer’s work in to your own submission – even if you use your own words.
4. Over-use of sources or over-reliance on a single source. Even if you cite the sources used, if there is little of your own voice in your work, it isn’t really original. Use sources to support your points – not to make your points for you.
5. Failing to paraphrase adequately (changing some words and grammar but leaving most of the original source’s text and structure the same) – even if you cite your sources.
6. Self-plagiarism. If you use any content that you have previously written and submitted, you must self-reference
7. Collusion: working too closely with a friend or colleague and sharing content. Don’t be ‘nice’ and share your assignment with a struggling friend. You will both get into trouble.
8. Inappropriate use of AI. Generative AI is a tool which you can use to ‘help’ you as long as you maintain control. Remember – the work you submit must be your own.
9. Poor referencing:

* Forgetting to cite all the source material you have used.
* Failing to identify secondary sources.
* Unclear delineation. For example, only including a citation at the end of a paragraph; is the whole paragraph from the source, or just the last point being made?
* Failing to identify or use direct quotes correctly.

Most plagiarism is accidental, but it is up to you to learn how to avoid plagiarising. Some of the above examples might be considered simply as ‘poor academic practice’ (PAP). However, it is good to develop good habits as soon as possible, as PAP can quickly veer towards plagiarism if you are not fully familiar with appropriate conventions for using source material to write your assignments

If you are unsure, seek advice – especially in advance of submitting an assignment, and book an appointment with a Skills for Academic Success adviser.

## How is plagiarism detected?

1. **Lecturers** – Teaching staff are specialists in their disciplines and can tell when a student has either included words or ideas from an unacknowledged source, or produced work that does not appear to be entirely their own (for example, where AI has been used inappropriately).
2. **Turnitin (operated via Moodle)** – The University of Kent uses a software which matches students’ work against a database of previously submitted work from institutions worldwide, current and archived internet pages, and databases of journals and periodicals.

## As incorrect referencing is often the problem which leads to accusations of plagiarism, it is important to learn what it is and how to implement it.

## What is referencing?

* Referencing is the method for acknowledging sources. Different disciplines use different referencing systems or conventions, so it is important to find out which referencing system you are expected to follow. You may hear different words used to describe referencing, for example ‘acknowledgement’ or ‘citation’.
* To reference a source means stating who and where ideas and information have come from, both in order to distinguish your ideas from others in your assignment, and also to make clear to the reader/viewer the different sources that you have referred to in your work.

The following link will take you to ‘Cite Them Right’ which will provide you with clear referencing guidance and models to help you reference accurately:

[Cite Them Right - Home](https://www-citethemrightonline-com.chain.kent.ac.uk/)

## Why is referencing so important?

Apart from helping you to avoid plagiarism, referencing also:

* Demonstrates how widely you have read for your assignment.
* Demonstrates what you have based your arguments on.
* Demonstrates that you can adhere to good academic practice.
* Helps you document your sources for future research.

## Always reference, regardless of how you use your sources

There are three ways you may incorporate research into your own work. Understanding them provides an additional safeguard against plagiarism:

* **Quoting -** Quoting is when you use someone’s exact words as they were written or spoken. We describe this as a quotation, and you need to put these into **‘**quotation marks**’** in your work. You must acknowledge (reference)the source.
* **Paraphrasing** - Paraphrasing is when you completely re-phrase someone’s words and ideas. We describe this as a paraphrase. Paraphrasing is usually used for short pieces of content – probably no more than a sentence or two. The length of a paraphrase is usually the same as the original. You must reference the source.
* **Summarising** –Summarising is when you provide an overview of the main points, themes, arguments or issues discussed in a piece of work. It will be considerably shorter than the original source and must be in your own words. You must reference thesource**.**

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