



Student Guide to Academic Integrity

Don't ruin your career before it has begun...

You have all heard the old proverb: **cheats never prosper**. Everyone, at least once in their life, has been told that “you will only be cheating yourself” if you break the rules. Yet, at university, cheating does happen. Unfair practice (as is the professional term) happens in essays, exams and dissertations and it is not tolerated in any shape at Cardiff University.

Now, you might already be thinking that this does not apply to you. You are probably the sort of person who would not dream of committing an unfair practice. However, the vast majority of unfair practice is committed without the individual realising they have done anything wrong. You should however note that **your examiners will take action whether the unfair practice was accidental or deliberate**. You will be expected to sign at some point that you understand the regulations on unfair practice. It is the aim of this *leaflet* to make sure that you do understand these regulations and that you don't fall foul of the rules. It will also tell you how to footnote and reference, so by the end of reading this you will have perfect essay and exam technique and will already be well on the way to getting a good degree!

1. Cheating lifestyles of the rich and famous

(Just because you are rich and famous, don't think you can get away with cheating)

Before you read about the do's and don'ts of the academic world, you may be interested to know that it is not just at University where plagiarism happens. Over the last few years, a number of people in the public eye have been caught out while trying to pass work off as their own.

Robbie Williams

Yes, Stoke-on-Trent's most famous export was found to have committed an act of plagiarism. On his best-selling album, *I've Been Expecting You*, it emerged that his track 'Jesus in a Camper Van' was substantially copied from Loudon Wainwright III's track 'I Am The Way'. Robbie was ordered to remove the track for all future copies of the album at great expense and embarrassment.

[WWW] <URL http://www.mtv.com/news/articles/1434755/10022000/take_that.jhtml> [Accessed 28/07/04]

The Verve

The British group are best known for their multi-million selling album *Urban Hymns* and, more specifically, the 1997 string-based classic track 'Bitter Sweet Symphony'. The song was once voted song of the decade by listeners of Radio 1. However, ageing rockers the Rolling Stones were not as impressed as the majority of Britain's youth, quickly pointing out that The Verve had sampled an old Stones track. [WWW] <URL <http://www.anecdotage.com/index.php?aid=15891>>

[Accessed 28/07/04]

Both Richard Ashcroft's boys and Robbie got off comparatively lightly. Red faces and a substantial loss of earnings were their punishment. However, some were not so lucky.

Joe Biden

Never heard of him before? Unless you were very interested in the preliminary elections of the USA there is no reason why you should. However, you should always remember Mr Biden's case because his epitomises why you should not commit plagiarism. Joe (or Senator Biden of Delaware to use his formal title) was one of the favourites for the Democrat ticket to run against George W Bush in the 2004 presidential election. However, a public humiliation way back in 1987 ruined his chances. His speech went along the lines of *"I started thinking as I was coming over here, why is it that Joe Biden is the first in his family ever to go to university? Why is it that my wife... is the first in her family ever to go to college?"*. Unfortunately, in the early eighties, Neil Kinnock had already stated exactly the same thing very publicly.

Having watched rival John F. Kerry win the preliminary battle comprehensively, Joe was left to ponder why it was that he had missed his chance to become the most high profile figure in the world. Eventually, plagiarism will come back to haunt you, as Senator Biden will no doubt testify.

Having had a quick look at the celebrity world, it is back to the academic one. Ensure that you read the rest of the document in detail because it could mean the difference between a good degree result and a poor one. Unfair Practice could also end your chances of getting a degree ...

Student X

Perhaps student X was short of time. This is something we will never know. What we do know is that student X obtained a copy of a PhD thesis written by another student, and then submitted it as a new dissertation. The supervisor was however not convinced of its originality, and soon located the original source. This resulted in student X being found guilty of unfair practice. The marks for the dissertation were cancelled, and student X was disqualified from any future examinations. This was the end of student X's academic career. It can happen, and you will get caught.

2. Your Guide to Academic Integrity

What is Academic Integrity?

Although not the most interesting thing you will come across in your academic career, Academic Integrity is a very important concept. It is all about honesty and trust and requires us to maintain high moral and ethical standards. Therefore, it is our duty to give credit to others where it is due. Put simply, all work we do must be all our own. We must properly acknowledge the work and ideas of others where necessary. And we must never do the following:

Plagiarism – This occurs when work that is submitted for assessment contains the words or ideas of others without the original source being properly attributed or acknowledged. It includes attempts to pass off work that has been produced by fellow students as your own, or words or ideas that are found in textbooks, in articles, on the Web, or in any other format. It includes both work that is directly copied from another source and work that has been slightly changed or paraphrased to make it look like it is different from the original.

Collusion – This takes place when work that has been done with others is submitted and passed off as solely the work of one person. When working with others you must ensure that you are clear about what can be done in collaboration with others, and what must be solely your own efforts. Whilst it is a good idea to share and discuss ideas with your peers, you must make sure that work submitted for assessment meets the specified requirements.

Unfair Practice – This is defined in the Academic Regulations Handbook as "any act whereby a person might obtain for him/herself or for another, an unpermitted advantage leading to a higher mark or grade than his/her abilities would otherwise secure". This includes:

- the introduction into an examination room of unauthorised sources of information;
- the fabrication of results obtained either from research that did not take place, or that were falsified in an attempt to gain an advantage;
- the submission of the same and/or very similar work for more than one assessment;
- the impersonation of another student or allowing oneself to be impersonated for an examination.

Further examples are contained in the Academic Regulations Handbook.

It is ultimately your responsibility to ensure that you do not engage in any of the above practices. As already mentioned, you will be held responsible whether your unfair practice is accidental or deliberate. Make sure you read on to find out how to avoid both plagiarism and collusion. You will also find out what can happen to you if you do commit unfair practices.

3. How to help yourself

The best way to help yourself is to develop good study skills. If you get your essay technique to a good standard, you will stand a better chance of eliminating the risk of “accidental” plagiarism. In fact, the benefit of good study techniques also includes:

- You will get higher marks for work that is clearly original.
- You will find academic tasks easier to complete.
- You will develop skills that are valued by employers.
- You can get extra marks for correct citations and for proper referencing.

Advice on good study skills is available from a variety of different sources. Your school will also provide you with advice and guidance on how you can best demonstrate these skills in work submitted for assessment in your own subject area. This will include advice on ways to use quotes judiciously and appropriately, and guidance on the use of the full range of information sources now available. Other sources of advice include:

1. **Printed study skills guides** available in libraries, such as, Northedge A. (1990). *The good study guide*. Open University.
2. **Study skills workshops** run by the University’s Counselling Service. More details of these can be accessed from the Counselling Service’s website.
3. The **Cardiff Skills Bank**, a web-based resource and collection of learning materials designed to help improve employability skills (see <http://skillsbank.cf.ac.uk/default.asp>).
4. The **Information Services Directorate** guide to ‘Citing references’. This is available in libraries and online via the Information Services’ website.

As a student you should seek to:

- develop note-taking methods that make you use your own words;
- make sure you properly list all the sources in a bibliography;
- make sure you record the full address of World Wide Web pages that you access and the date on which you accessed these;
- try and prepare assignments in good time;
- try and utilise the range of information sources and advice that are available.

If you do have any doubts or questions, you can discuss these with academic staff. They will be happy to discuss any problems or concerns you may have in this area.

4. Guidelines for You

Your School will also provide specific examples based within your particular discipline.

The word **plagiarism** has been used a lot in this *booklet* but you may still be slightly unclear what it actually is. The following are fictional examples that have been put together to help you understand the difference between original work and work that has been plagiarised.

Example 1

Original text	Work submitted
"The writing of the Victorian period reflects a society struggling to adjust to the conditions of modern life. These are problems that retain their urgency and still await solution. Given this, it can be argued that the ideas of the Victorian writers remain relevant and interesting in the twentieth century." (Stokes and Northam, 1999, p.141)	The writing of the Victorian period mirrors a society struggling to adapt to the conditions of modern life. These are problems that still exist and have not yet been solved. Given this, it can be argued that the ideas of the Victorian writers remain relevant and interesting today.

Is this plagiarism? – YES. Why? – Whilst the above extract has been reworded so that it is in some places different from the original, the ideas contained in the original text have been repeated without any reference to the source. The revised text also contains a number of words and phrases taken directly from the original, which have not been placed in quotation marks. The parts that have been changed can also clearly be identified (e.g. "the twentieth century" – "today").

Example 2

Original text	Work submitted
"The writing of the Victorian period reflects a society struggling to adjust to the conditions of modern life. These are problems that retain their urgency and still await solution. Given this, it can be argued that the ideas of the Victorian writers remain relevant and interesting in the twentieth century." (Stokes and Northam, 1999, p.141)	Many have argued that the literature from the Victorian period remains relevant today. It describes a world that is changing rapidly, and reflects a society struggling to adjust to the conditions of modern life. (Stokes and Northam)

Is this plagiarism? – YES. Why? – It contains work taken from the original source that has not been placed in quotation marks. It contains only a partial reference, which does not contain sufficient detail to allow others to find the original source. The full reference should include not only the authors' names but also relevant details such as the date of publication and the page number(s). The reference must be accompanied by a full citation in the attached bibliography.

Example 3

Original text	Work submitted
"The writing of the Victorian period reflects a society struggling to adjust to the conditions of modern life. These are problems that retain their urgency and still await solution. Given this, it can be argued that the ideas of the Victorian writers remain relevant and interesting in the twentieth century." (Stokes and Northam, 1999, p.141)	In their book, Stokes and Northam argue that "The writing of the Victorian period reflects a society struggling to adjust to the conditions of modern life. These are problems that retain their urgency and still await solution. Given this, it can be argued that the ideas of the Victorian writers remain relevant and interesting." (1999, p.141)

Is this plagiarism? – NO. Why? – The extract taken from the original is clearly indicated by quotation marks. The original authors have also been given due acknowledgement, both in the reference to their names within the text, and in the accompanying footnote.

Example 4

Original text	Work submitted
"The writing of the Victorian period reflects a society struggling to adjust to the conditions of modern life. These are problems that retain their urgency and still await solution. Given this, it can be argued that the ideas of the Victorian writers remain relevant and interesting in the twentieth century." (Stokes and Northam, 1999, p.141)	As Stokes and Northam argue, the ideas contained in Victorian literature remain relevant now. The way in which writers sought to reflect a changing world and the difficulties such changes can bring could be equally applied to modern life. (Stokes and Northam 1999, p.141)

Is this plagiarism? – NO. Why? – The original source has been significantly paraphrased and correctly acknowledged. The revised text accurately summarises the argument made in the original. The source of the argument has been correctly cited.

5. Listing references

This section is probably the most important of the entire document. It will tell you how to write your footnotes and bibliography. Once you have mastered this skill, the marks you get in your coursework will improve significantly.

Whatever information you use in your assignments (be it books, articles, Websites, emails, newspapers and/or other sources), you **MUST** include full details of these in your footnotes and bibliography. Your school will provide you with information on particular styles of referencing. However, the following is offered as general advice on how to reference:

For a book:	For a journal article:
Author(s) or editor(s) Title Edition (unless the first edition) Volume number (if any)	Author(s) Title of article Title of journal Volume no. (or otherwise issue number or date)

Place of publication Publisher Year of publication	Year of publication First and last page numbers of article
<i>For a contribution in a collected work:</i> Author(s) Title of contribution, followed by 'In:' Editor(s) of the collected work Title Edition (unless the first edition) Volume number (if any) Place of publication Publisher Year of publication First and last page numbers of contribution, or section or chapter number	<i>For a conference paper:</i> Author(s) Title of paper, followed by 'In:' Editor(s) of the published proceedings (if any) Title of the published proceedings or title of the conference and series number (if any) Place of publication Publisher Year of publication First and last page numbers of paper
<i>For a thesis or dissertation:</i> Author Title Degree (e.g. 'Ph.D.') followed by 'thesis' or 'dissertation' (US) Name of university Year	<i>For an electronic reference (inc. websites):</i> Author Title Date of publication Medium or format of source Location Date accessed

NB: When quoting directly from another source, make sure you use quotation marks (""). If you don't, you may find yourself accused of plagiarism.

[Taken from: Cardiff University, Information Services (2003) *Citing References*. Reproduced with thanks]

6. Collusion

Collusion can be very easy to avoid. Unless you are specifically informed by staff to collaborate, always work alone. However, even if you are permitted to collaborate, you still need to ensure that the work you submit reflects your own work. To give you an idea of what you need to avoid, here are some examples:

Examples:

1. A pair, or larger group of students, study a problem. One of the students formally writes up the results, the other members of the group copy the results, and each individual submits the work as her/his own.
2. A pair, or larger group of students, work on a series of problems or tasks. Each student completes a portion of the problem set or task, the students combine their work, and each student submits the entire problem set or task as his/her own.
3. A tutor assigns a task or problem to be completed outside of class and explicitly instructs students not to discuss the task or problem with one another. A pair, or larger group of students, discuss or work together on the task or problem, and each individual submits the results as his/her own.

Always remember that if a fellow student takes your results and submits them, you will BOTH be accused of unfair practice. It is your responsibility to ensure others do not have access to your work.

Whatever the task, whether essay, lab report, or group project, it remains YOUR responsibility to ensure that any work submitted for assessment is entirely your own, and that the opportunities for peers to use and/or copy your work are effectively minimised.

(Adapted from State University of New York at Fredonia. Academic Integrity Policy [WWW] <URL: http://www.fredonia.edu/ed/documents/Academic_Integrity_Policy.pdf > [Accessed 3 February 2004])

7. *Temptations and Risks*

- “But I’m short of time ... ”
- “But X has lent me the notes ... ”
- “But I really need a good mark in this assessment ... ”
- “But everybody does it ... ”

There may be times when it becomes tempting to cheat, but is it worth the risk? The answer is always **NO**, the reasons being that you can get caught and punished and, as mentioned throughout this *booklet*, you could be damaging your career irreparably by doing so. Here is why...

1. If you haven’t learned or understood the material this may come back to haunt you in the examinations, or in other tasks that require you to draw upon this knowledge. It’s no good getting a good mark in an essay that’s worth 30% of your module if you don’t have the knowledge to do well in an exam that is worth 70%.
2. Your actions might tempt others to engage in similar behaviour. How would this make you feel? **If everybody cheats, what impact might this have on the reputation of your degree?** To give you an example of a similar situation, you need look no further than the 100 metres sprint events at international athletics events. Whenever any records are broken these days the first thing the majority of the public watching assume is that the winner is using performance-enhancing drugs. This is solely down to the number of athletes who have been caught cheating. It used to be the blue riband event of athletics, now it is a bit of a joke. **Is that how you want people to regard your degree?**
3. You **will** feel guilty. If it would upset you to learn that a fellow student has ‘got away with it’, you might like to consider what others will think of you. “Cheating destroys self-esteem and integrity; leaving the cheater ashamed, guilty, and afraid of getting caught ... Honesty is the ONLY policy that works”. [1]
4. Probably and most importantly, you may gain a degree by cheating but, ultimately, it won’t be worth the paper it’s written on. Graduation, the pinnacle of everyone’s university career, will mean nothing and you will have wasted a lot of time and even more money.

If you feel under pressure to get a piece of work done, you can go and seek help from your tutors or from the Students Union. They will be able to help you cope. There is never an excuse to cheat.

1. The University of California, Davis, Student Judicial Affairs. Why Integrity Matters [WWW] <URL: <http://sja.ucdavis.edu/integ1.htm> > [Accessed 15 December 2003]

8. *What will happen if you are caught?*

The University is aware that the overwhelming majority of students do not seek to gain an unfair advantage. However, not all plagiarism or other unfair practices are the result of a deliberate attempt to deceive, and a significant proportion of alleged cases appear to be 'accidental', often a consequence of poor and/or underdeveloped study skills. In all cases intent is very difficult to establish. It is for this reason, and to reflect the **trust** that the University has in its students, that the Unfair Practice procedure emphasises remedial action through which students can improve their study skills.

You should make sure you are familiar with the University's Unfair Practice regulations, and that you take advantage of opportunities to develop the right skills. You should also be aware that work put in for assessment may be submitted to a database that will check for plagiarism and collusion. Finally, you should remember that the penalties for repeat offenders and for serious or clearly intentional plagiarism are serious.

9. *Help and Advice*

If you have any questions about anything related to academic integrity you should first see either your academic tutor and/or your personal tutor. They will be able to help and advise you.

A number of other universities provide advice and guidance to students in this area. Here is a selection:

- Cornell University. Code of Academic Integrity [WWW] <URL: <http://cuinfo.cornell.edu/Academic/AIC.html>> [Accessed 28/07/04]
- Purdue University Online Writing Lab. Avoiding Plagiarism [WWW] <URL: http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/print/research/r_plagiar.html> [Accessed 28/07/04]
- State University of New York at Fredonia. Academic Integrity Policy [WWW] <URL: http://www.fredonia.edu/ed/documents/Academic_Integrity_Policy.pdf> [Accessed 28/07/04]
- The University of Bradford, Academic Standards and Support Unit. Statement on Academic Integrity [WWW] <URL: http://www.brad.ac.uk/admin/acsec/assu/statement_on_academic_integrity.htm> [Accessed 28/07/04]
- The University of California, Davis, Student Judicial Affairs. Why Integrity Matters [WWW] <URL: <http://sja.ucdavis.edu/integ1.htm>> [Accessed 28/07/04]

Before you submit ... check