CITY OF GLASGOW COLLEGE

Avoiding plagiarism

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Introduction

Copying someone else's work and presenting it as your own is cheating and is referred to in academic circles as **plagiarism**.

There are 4 types of copying. These are:

1. Copying from students on the same course or not contributing to group assignments
2. Copying from books, magazines, websites etc.
3. Getting someone else to do your work either as a favour or by paying them
4. Submitting the same piece of work twice (without permission) for different assignments

Copying from other students

If you copy another student's work with their permission you are both guilty of cheating. If you copy it without their permission, only the copier is guilty. This is very clear-cut and easy to detect.

Non-contribution to group assessments is easily detected by lecturers in post-submission discussions and causes resentment between the cheater and the rest of the group.

Copying from sources (books, Internet, etc)

It is permissible to quote extracts from sources as long as you clearly acknowledge the source and do not present the text as your own. Do so by placing the text within quotation marks ("……..") and cite the source. Then list all sources in full in your bibliography (resource list) at the end of your work. An example of how to do this properly is given below:

ESSAY TEXT: *It was a difficult period in Scottish history. "The final pacification of the Highlands which followed was a brutal, efficient and deliberate act of ethnic cleansing and*

cultural genocide" (Gauldie, 2001, p.15).

BIBLIOGRAPHY: *Gauldie, R., (2001). Globetrotter Scotland. London: New Holland Publishers.*

An example of plagiarism or straight copying would be as follows:

ESSAY TEXT: *It was a difficult period in Scottish history. The final pacification of the Highlands which followed was a brutal, efficient and deliberate act of ethnic cleansing and cultural genocide.*

The exact text from the source material has been copied and there is **no reference to the source**. Paraphrasing or changing the text or order of words is difficult to do without plagiarising. It is much better to *use your own words*.

Copying and paraphrasing text can be detected by running it through various software programs available to colleges. This only takes a few seconds. These programs can also detect work taken from essay banks and other cheating sources.

Multiple submissions of the same work

Submitting the same piece of work more than once without permission is cheating. Even where the work is your own, it is still cheating to submit it for assessment for different courses or parts of courses without first obtaining permission. This is referred to as "autoplagiarism".

Autoplagiarism is easily detected as colleges can store previous work submitted by students and check future submissions against it.

Conclusion

Copying is more trouble than it is worth. It can be detected and result in disciplinary action. Accusations of plagiarism can impact severely upon a person's reputation and it has been the ruin of many a glittering academic career.

Even where plagiarism has been detected many years after it occurred, it has still impacted upon the plagiariser and has resulted in qualifications being rescinded and careers brought to an abrupt end. [For example, see the cases of US Senator John Walsh (2014) and Johann Hari, British journalist (2012) – both were accused of plagiarism and had to deal with the serious consequences].

If you wish to avoid falling foul of this you should consult the Library's *How to cite references and create a bibliography* guide, which is available from the Library and on the Library website. You are also welcome to ask members of Library staff for advice.