

Plagiarism and How to Avoid it

What is it?

How is it detected?

Contents of this handout:

1. About this Session
 2. Learning Outcomes
 3. What's all the fuss about?
 4. Definitions of Plagiarism
 5. Why do students plagiarise?
 6. What is 'Academic Integrity'?
 7. UU Code of Practice for Professional Integrity in the Conduct of Research
 8. The range of cheating behaviours (academic offences)
 9. When do I cite?
 10. Useful habits to cultivate to help you to avoid plagiarism
 11. Your responsibility in making sure you avoid the trap of plagiarism
 12. What you can reasonably expect from your supervisor/lecturer in helping you to avoid plagiarism
 13. How is plagiarism detected?
 14. How do I evaluate and reference web-based resources?
 15. Differentiating cheating behaviours
 16. Where do you draw the line
- List of References

1. About this Session

The session looks at some research on the area, asking why students do it. The sessions will seek to differentiate between the cheating behaviours of collusion, plagiarism and collaboration, and copyright infringement. The session also offers the opportunity to self test knowledge and understanding of when something has been plagiarised, and when referencing and citation has been appropriate.

2. Proposed learning outcomes

By the end of the session, you will be able to:

- distinguish between copyright, cheating, collusion, collaboration and plagiarism;
- have considered the issue of intentionality in acts of plagiarism;
- have had opportunity to observe electronic software in process, detecting plagiarism and or collusion;
- have gained experience in understanding when something is plagiarised, and when it has been correctly referenced;
- have considered the dangers of paraphrasing;
- have had practice in working through various examples to test your knowledge and understanding of plagiarism, and how to avoid it.

3. What's all the fuss about?

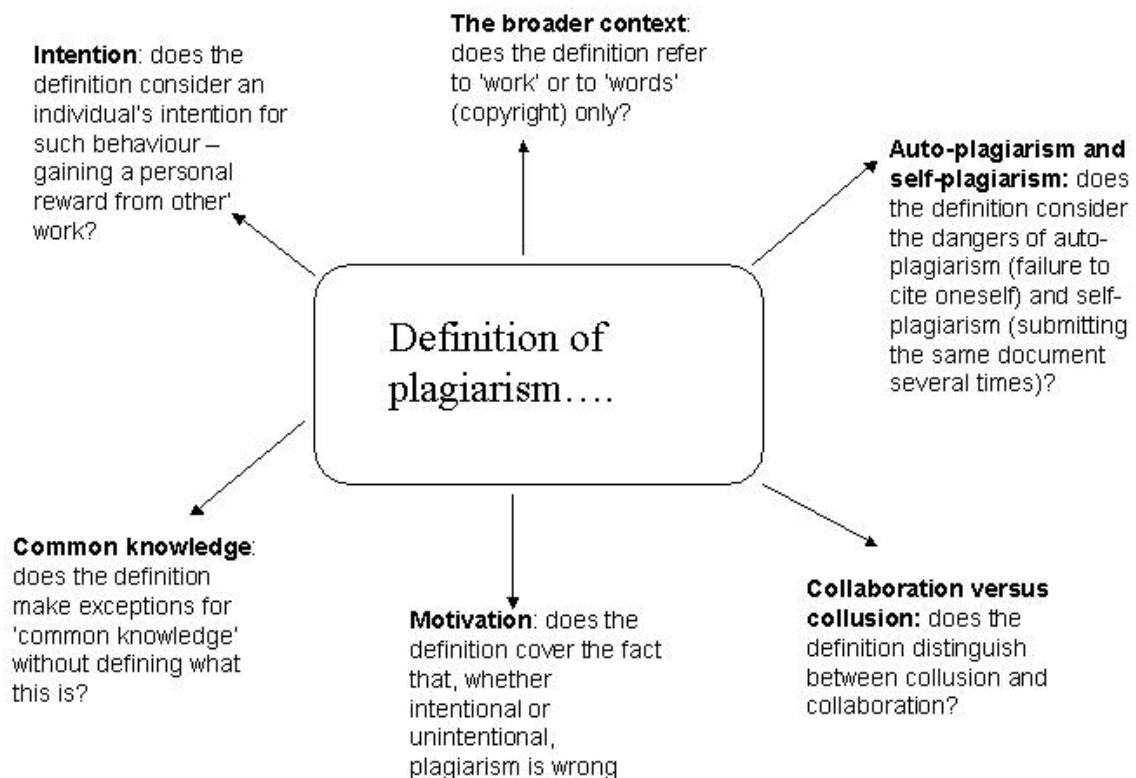
In 2004 one of the most important cases of UK plagiarism came to public attention when [Michael Gunn](#)ⁱ argued that his institution (the University of Kent at Canterbury) had failed to point out to him that plagiarism is an offence. He freely admitted that he had plagiarised. The case, finally settled out of court, has led many institutions to tighten its regulations on plagiarism, and to provide better guidance to its students. Plagiarism continues to be an [important topic in the news](#)ⁱⁱ. For information on 'cheat sites' look at University of Coastal Carolina's '[Cheating 101](#)' siteⁱⁱⁱ One of the more famous sites in the UK is run by a former academic [Elizabeth Hall](#)^{iv} and her associates. In 2002, L. Major (Cited in Carroll 2002:17.) quotes an email from her in which she said (to a prospective student client):

“ you need not worry that the authorities would discover the work is not your own. In some cases I can if felt necessary that the work I am writing might seem as above the grade that could be attained by the student, actually build in material which I know is incorrect...”

4. Definitions of Plagiarism

The 'plagiarism' comes from the Greek work '*plagion*' which means to kidnap. In a sense, taking ideas and work from others unlawfully, is akin to kidnapping their ideas and work.

- Plagiarism is passing off someone else's work, whether intentionally or unintentionally, as your own for your own benefit (Carroll:2002:9).
- In an instructional setting, plagiarism occurs when a writer deliberately uses someone else's language, ideas, or other original (not common-knowledge) material without acknowledging its source. (Council of [Writing Programme Administrators](#)^v (WPA)
- Plagiarism is representing someone else's ideas, writing or other intellectual property as your own. This includes: presenting all or part of someone else's published work as something you have written; paraphrasing someone else's writing without acknowledgement; or representing someone else's artistic or technical work or creation as your own. Any use of the work of others, whether published, unpublished or posted electronically (e.g., on web sites), attributed or anonymous, must include proper acknowledgement. [York University](#)^{vi} (Canada)
- plagiarism - defined as the use of any source, published or unpublished, without proper acknowledgment.. [Princeton](#)^{vii}



Taken from Davidson (2005) *Further policy and practice development at the University of Nottingham* Unpublished report.

5. Why do students plagiarise?

The [JISC advisory](#)^{viii} service (Plagiarism Detection and Prevention 2001) has provided a list of possible reasons why students plagiarise, which is summarised below). The list does not distinguish between plagiarism from external sources (like journals and the web) and peer-plagiarism (or collusion with other students).

Look at the list below, and rank the statements according to what you think students guilty of plagiarism might say in their defence...

1. "I got desperate at the last moment"
2. "I could not keep up with the work"
3. "The tutor doesn't care, so why should I?"
4. "I have to succeed. Everyone expects me succeed and I expect it too"
5. "I don't understand what I'm expected to do to avoid plagiarism"
6. "I can't do this! I'll have to copy"
7. "I want to see if I can get away with it"

8. "I don't want to learn this, I just need to pass it"
9. "But you said 'work together!'"
10. "But paraphrasing would be disrespectful"

Is it only students who plagiarise?

The problem of plagiarism, or accusations of it, are not confined to students. Vice Chancellor [Professor David Robinson](#)^{ix} at Monash University in Australia, is a case in point.

Is it only text that is plagiarised?

Obviously plagiarism is not restricted to text (plagiarism about 'work' not about words). We are also aware of sites such as [kasamba.com](#)^x, [computersciencetutoring.com](#)^{xi}, [rentacoder.com](#)^{xii}, and [elance.com](#)^{xiii}, which offer to provide solutions to computer coding or programming assignments.

6. What is 'Academic Integrity'?

"The intellectual challenge you face in your academic work is to go beyond what you learn in your textbooks, in lectures, and in the library - - to evaluate, rethink, synthesize, and make your own the information, data, and concepts you find in your sources. The greatest satisfaction of academic work comes from making something original, genuine, and new out of the material you have learned in your courses and discovered in your research. Doing original work is the most demanding, but also the most rewarding" (ref [Princeton University](#)^{xiv})

Academic integrity is a fundamental value of learning, teaching and scholarship. The [Centre for Academic Integrity](#)^{xv} (CAI), a consortium of more than 200 colleges and universities based at Duke University in the USA, has produced a document known as the '**Fundamental Values of Academic Integrity**' which examines the core values of academic integrity in detail.

"commitment, even in the face of adversity, to five fundamental values: honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. From these values flow principles of behaviour that enable academic communities to translate ideals into action."

According to the CAI, an academic community of integrity

- **advances the quest for truth and knowledge** by enquiring intellectual and personal honesty in learning, teaching, research, and service.
- **fosters a climate of mutual trust**, encourages the free exchange of ideas, and enables all to reach their highest potential.

- **establishes clear standards**, practices, and procedures and expects fairness in the interactions of students, faculty, and administrators.
- **recognises the participatory nature of the learning process** and honours and respects a wide range of opinions and ideas.
- **upholds personal accountability** and depends upon action in the face of wrongdoing.

In your own time:

Watch the [Plagiarism and Academic Integrity Simulation](#)^{xvi} at Rutgers University.

Take the Academic Integrity Tutorial at:
http://www.yorku.ca/tutorial/academic_integrity/

7. Nottingham's policy on academic misconduct

Nottingham's [Academic Offences Policy and Procedure](#)^{xvii} defines academic misconduct by saying "It is an academic offence to attempt to gain for oneself or another person an unpermitted advantage in an assessment.". It lists the following as academic offences: plagiarism, cheating in examinations and fabrication as academic offences. It defines Research misconduct within its [Research Code of Conduct](#)^{xviii} in the following extract:

"Research misconduct means fabrication, falsification, plagiarism or deception in proposing, carrying out or reporting results of research and deliberate, dangerous or negligent deviations from accepted practice in carrying out research and from this Code of Practice. It includes failure to follow established protocols if this failure results in unreasonable risk or harm to humans, other vertebrates or the environment. It also includes assisting in misconduct by other researchers by collusion in, or concealment of, any of the actions listed above.

It does not include honest error or honest differences in the design, execution, interpretation or judgement in evaluating research methods or results or misconduct (including gross misconduct) unrelated to the research process."

8. The Range of Cheating Behaviours^{xix}:

The following is taken and adapted from the University of Kent's site on Academic Integrity.

1. False citation
2. Plagiarism
3. Using unauthorised sources or notes in examinations or tests.
4. Dishonestly obtaining materials or information prior to examinations.
5. Copying from other students.
6. Permitting other students to copy your work.
7. Soliciting work from others (e.g. individuals, 'editors' or essay banks etc).
8. Submitting your own previously assessed work without acknowledgement (auto plagiarism).

Unauthorised Collaboration, or collusion occurs where:

1. Collaboration became collusion
2. The work submitted has resulted from collaboration with others whose contribution has not been acknowledged.

Fabrication may take various forms but is essentially concerned with manufacturing aspects of the work produced. For example, the insertion of made-up information, data, sources, quotes, anecdotes or analysis would all amount to fabrication.

Recycling or unauthorised, multiple submissions It is normally expected that work submitted will be prepared specifically for that purpose unless the course materials or tutor explicitly state otherwise. Examples of unacceptable recycling include:

1. Submitting work that has previously been assessed and marked in the same course, module or programme.
2. Submitting work that has previously been assessed and marked in a different course, module or programme.

9. When do I cite?

.Here is a list of what needs to be credited (taken from [The Owl Resource Avoiding Plagiarism^{xx}](#))

- Words or ideas presented in a magazine, book, newspaper, song, TV program, movie, Web page, computer program, letter, advertisement, or any other medium
- Information you gain through interviewing or conversing with another person, face to face, over the phone, or in writing
- When you copy the exact words or a unique phrase
- When you reprint any diagrams, illustrations, charts, pictures, or other visual materials

- When you reuse or repost any electronically-available media, including images, audio, video, or other media

Bottom line, document any words, ideas, or other productions that originate somewhere outside of you.

There are, of course, certain things that do not need documentation or credit, including:

- Writing your own lived experiences, your own observations and insights, your own thoughts, and your own conclusions about a subject
- When you are writing up your own results obtained through lab or field experiments
- When you use your own artwork, digital photographs, video, audio, etc.
- When you are using "common knowledge," things like folklore, common sense observations, myths, urban legends, and historical events (but **not** historical documents)
- When you are using generally-accepted facts, e.g., pollution is bad for the environment, including facts that are accepted within particular discourse communities, e.g., in the field of composition studies, "writing is a process" is a generally-accepted fact.

Which citation methods?

[Information Services](#)^{xxi} at Nottingham has a useful resource for learning how to cite and how to provide accurate references. There is also a useful set of links provided by [Leeds University Library](#)^{xxii} pointing to sites covering the [Harvard](#)^{xxiii}, [Numeric](#)^{xxiv}, [Modern Language Association](#)^{xxv} (MLA) and [American Psychological Association](#)^{xxvi} (APA) referencing systems. The site also covers [electronic sources](#)^{xxvii}.

Test your knowledge of Plagiarism

ACTIVITY : Your tutor will either encourage you to work through the ten-item test at <http://education.indiana.edu/~frick/plagiarism/item1.html>, or alternatively, this is something you can do in your own time.

10. Useful Habits to Cultivate to help you avoid Plagiarism:
(Taken from the University of Princeton [useful habits \(that work\)](#)^{xxviii})

When preparing written assignments:

1. Take complete and careful notes.

2. Keep all of your notes
3. Be scrupulous in drafting and checking your papers.
4. If you do all of your work -- from note-taking to drafts to final version -- on a computer, be especially careful.
5. Understand the difference between primary and secondary sources, but know that you must cite quotations, ideas, and information from both.
6. Do not rely on a single secondary source when doing a research paper.
7. Whenever possible, show all of your work in problems sets that require calculation.
8. Be sure you understand the instructor's expectations and guidelines for collaborating
9. Be extra careful to verify the accuracy or validity of information obtained from electronic sources..
10. If you are unsure whether or not to cite a source, ask your instructor. If that is not possible, follow the basic rule: when in doubt, cite.
11. Be your own hardest critic.
12. Be sure you understand your instructor's expectations for your work.
13. Be cautious about using notes belonging to other students
14. If you do not understand an assignment or need additional time to complete it, ask your instructor..
15. This last piece of advice is the hardest of all to follow: give yourself enough time to do your work well and carefully.

Here are several good reasons for being careful to cite your sources: This is provided by [Princeton University](#)^{xxix.}:

- **To acknowledge your dependence on** another person's ideas or words, and to distinguish clearly your own work from that of your sources.
- **To receive credit for the research** you have done on a project, whether or not you directly quote or borrow from your sources.
- **To establish the credibility and authority** of your knowledge and ideas.
- **To place your own ideas in context**, locating your work in the larger intellectual conversation about your topic.
- **To permit your reader to pursue your topic further** by reading more about it.
- **To permit your reader to check** on your use of the source material.

11. Your responsibility in making sure you avoid the trap of plagiarism is:

- To identify analyse and interpret a set of sources you believe are relevant to the topic of field you are studying, researching or critiquing
- To acknowledge clearly and accurately when and how you are making use of the se sources, and from whom the ideas or work originates
- To learn the appropriate conventions (such as Harvard or APA) of citing and referencing sources, as stipulated by your school or faculty
- To ask your lecturer or tutor to clarify anything of which they are unsure, relating to these conventions.

12. It is reasonable that you can expect from your lecturer the following:

- Clear indicators about where to learn the correct and appropriate citation conventions associated with the field of studies you are engaged in, usually in course or programme handbooks.
- Feedback on written assignments indicating any problems and instruction on on how to improve your writing
- Assignment topics that are clear, and researchable and ideally some indication of a model approach to the task.
- A clear warning that you have not adhered to the written conventions of citation and referencing required by your lecturer or school.
- A request to provide her or him with documentation of your writing process notes (such as summaries, drafts etc) as a way of understanding how any problem has occurred.

13. How is Plagiarism detected?

Here is a list of what to look for to detect plagiarism in student assignments, provided by the [Kimbel Library](#)^{xxx} at the Coast California University :

- Writing style, language, vocabulary, tone, grammar, etc. is above or below what the student usually produces. It doesn't sound like the student.
- Spelling or idioms used are not found in the students' native language, using English spellings or phrasing in an American paper and vice versa.
- Sections or sentences do not relate to the overall content of the paper. Students may "personalize" a paper by adding a paragraph that ties the paper to the class assignment.
- Pronouns do not agree with the gender of the writer.
- Look for strange text at the top or bottom of printed pages.
- Look for gray letters in the text, often an indication that the page was downloaded from the web, since color letters on a screen show up gray in a printout.
- Essays are printed out from the student's web browser.

- Web addresses left at the top or bottom of the page. Many free essays have a tag line at the end of the essay that students often miss.
- Strange or poor layout. Papers that have been downloaded and re-printed often have page numbers, headings, or spacing that just don't look right.
- References to graphs, charts, or accompanying material that isn't there.
- References to professors, classes or class numbers that are not taught at Coastal Carolina University.
- Quotes in the paper do not have citations.
- Citations are to materials not owned by Kimbel Library or are all from another country.
- Citations in the bibliography or works cited can not be verified.
- Citations in the paper are not included in the works cited.
- Web sites listed in citations are inactive.
- All citations are to materials that are older than five years.
- References are made to historical persons or events in the current sense.
- Students can not identify citations or provide copies of the cited material.
- Students can not summarize the main points of the paper or answer questions about specific sections of the paper.
- When provided with a page from their paper that has words or passages removed, students can not fill in the blanks with the missing words or with reasonable synonyms.

Electronic Detection



The JISC (Joint Information Systems Committee) provides the best known UK wide [plagiarism detection service](#)^{xxxii}. This is the software that is also generally used at the University of Nottingham.

14. How do I evaluate and reference web-based sources?

As a rule of thumb, you should provide the name of the author, the web or URL address and the date you accessed the website. Not all of this information is always available on the web, so it is important always to evaluate the sources you are accessing, using the questions below (based on information provided by the [University of Alberta](#)^{xxxiii}):

- **Remember that quality control does not exist**

Because there is no quality control on the world wide web, you need to remember not everything is true and you are unlikely to find everything that can be said about a topic.

- **What kind of research data do you need?**
It is vital that before using a search engine to its best advantage you know exactly what it is you want to find out.. What kind of information do you need (historical, documentary, critique, research, official or government information, theory?)
- **Who is the author of this information?**
It is very important that you understand who the author/s is/are of any information on the web. Is the author an authority in the field, or is the information copied from somewhere. It is vital that you know what bias the authors have point of view or bias
- **When was this information posted?**
Has the information been updated recently? When was it first posted?
- **What is the content intended for?**
Is the information just popular information, or is it based on scholarship and authority. Look for citations and the list of references or the bibliography. Can you identify any significant sources in the information? Does the site make any reference to important papers. Is the information designed for entertainment, or is it satirical?
- **Is there any comparison of the site contents and other sources you know about?**
It is important that your information can be cross references and that it is supported by other authorities and sources.

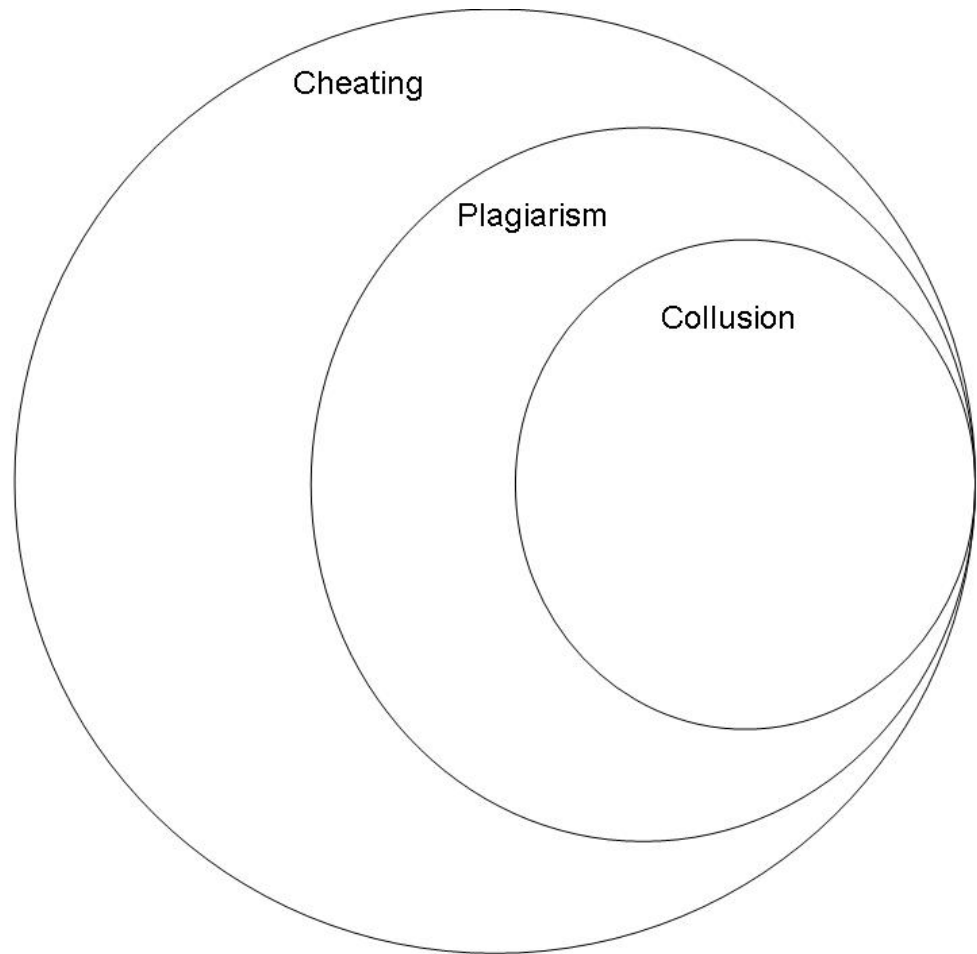
15. Differentiating cheating behaviours

ACTIVITY : Look at the statements (1-19) below. Decide whether the behaviour describes is 'cheating' , 'plagiarism' or 'collusion'

1. Allowing your coursework to be copied by another student.
2. Taking unauthorised material into an exam.
3. Fabricating references or a bibliography.
4. Lying about medical/other circumstances to get special consideration.
5. Copying another student's coursework with their knowledge.
6. Paying someone to write your coursework
7. Downloading coursework off the web and submitting it unchanged
8. Taking an exam for someone else or vice versa.
9. Continuing to write an exam after the invigilator calls time.

10. Copying another student's coursework without their knowledge.
11. Illicitly gaining information about the contents of an exam.
12. Inventing or altering data.
13. Not contributing a fair share to group work that results in a group mark
14. Ensuring the availability of books/journals in the library by deliberately mis-shelving them or cutting out chapters/articles.
15. Paraphrasing material from a source without acknowledging the original author.
16. Copying material for coursework ... without acknowledging the source.
17. Planning between two or more students to share answers in an exam.
18. Copying from a neighbour during an exam without them realising.
19. Submitting jointly written coursework as an individual piece of work.

This exercise is based on Franklyn-Stokes, A and Newstead, SE (1995), 'Undergraduate Cheating: who does what and why', *Studies in Higher Education*, 20:2



16. Where do you draw the line? Based on Swales and Freak (1994) Academic Writing for graduate Students, cited in Carroll (2004)

ACTIVITY: Look at the listed statements 1-6, below. Number 1 is plagiarism. Number 6 is not. Where do you draw the line?

1. Copying a paragraph. No acknowledgement given
2. Making small changes in a copied paragraph. No acknowledgement given
3. Making small changes in a copied paragraph. Source is listed in reference list but not in the text.
4. Composing a paragraph without quotation marks that mixes phrases from the original document with student's added words or paraphrasing. Acknowledgement in text and in the reference list.

5. Referring to a piece of work that is discussed in another text. There is in-text acknowledgement and the text is listed in the references – but not the original piece of work.
6. Writing a paragraph that is based broadly on material in a text. You cite the in-text reference and list the work in the reference list.
7. Quoting word for word, a paragraph in block format with quotation marks. It is cited within the text and in the reference list.

Acknowledgements and List of References

Carroll, Jude. (2002). A Handbook for Defining Plagiarism in Higher Education. Oxford Centre for Staff and Learning Development.

- ⁱ “Plagiarist to sue University” 27 May 2004. BBC News
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/education/3753065.stm>
- ⁱⁱ “Online plagiarism threatens ULK degrees” August 2 2006. DAN World homepage. August 5, 2006.
<<http://www.dnaindia.com/report.asp?NewsID=1045080>>
- ⁱⁱⁱ “Cheating 101: Internet Paper Mills”. Coastal Carolina University, Kimbel Library Presentations. August 4 2006.
<<http://www.coastal.edu/library/presentations/mills2.html>>
- ^{iv} Elizabeth Hall Associates Homepage. 3 August 2006.
<<http://www.elizabethhall.co.uk>>
- ^v Definition of Plagiarism. The Council of Writing Program Administrators homepage. 6 August 2006.
<<http://www.wpacouncil.org/node/9>>
- ^{vi} York University Canada The Academic Integrity Tutorial “Plagiarism Defined” 7 August 2006.
<http://www.yorku.ca/tutorial/academic_integrity/plagdef.html>
- ^{vii} Examples of Plagiarism. Academic Integrity at Princeton. University Princeton web page. August 6 2006.
<http://www.yorku.ca/tutorial/academic_integrity/plagdef.html>
- ^{viii} “Why do Students Plagiarise? Archived web page from the JISC homepage. 5 August 2006.
<http://www.jisc.ac.uk/index.cfm?name=plagiarism_why>
- ^{ix} “Monash and its VC: the end of the affair”. 13 July 2002 The Business Weekly
<<http://www.theage.com.au/articles/2002/07/12/1026185107089.html>>
- ^x “Wish you knew someone who knew everything about...”. Kasamba (Expert advice, live) homepage. August 1, 2006.
<<http://www.kasamba.com/>>
- ^{xi} Computer Science Tutoring home page. 1 August, 2006.
<<http://computersciencetutoring.com/>>
- ^{xii} “Rent a coder” (how software gets done) homepage. 3 August 2006.
<<http://rentacoder.com/RentACoder/default.asp>>
- ^{xiii} Elance homepage. 1 August 2006.
<<http://www.elance.com/>>
- ^{xiv} Princeton University webpage “Academic Integrity at Princeton” online Tutorial and website, 8 August, 2006.
<<http://www.princeton.edu/pr/pub/integrity/index.html>>
- ^{xv}
The Centre for Academic Integrity. Home page 17 July, 2006.
<<http://www.academicintegrity.org/>>
- ^{xvi} University of Rutgers web page. “Plagiarism and Academic Integrity at Rutgers University”, online tutorial 8 August 2006 <<http://www.scc.rutgers.edu/douglass/sal/plagiarism/intro.html>>

- ^{xvii} Quality Manual University of Nottingham Webpage. Academic Offences Policy and Procedure. June 17, 2006
<<http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/quality-manual/assessment/offences.htm>>
- ^{xviii} The University of Nottingham web page. University of Nottingham Research Code of Conduct. August 7, 2006.
<http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/ris/policy/code_of_conduct.pdf>
- ^{xix} Developed from 'A Guide to Academic Integrity and Good Practice' University of Kent September 12, 2006. <<http://www.kent.ac.uk/registry/quality/guidance/plagiarism.htm>>
- ^{xx} "Is it Plagiarism Yet?" The Owl at Purdue. Owl Materials from the Owl Family of Sites. Purdue University Web pages. August 6, 2006. <<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/589/02/>>
- ^{xxi} University of Nottingham Information Services web pages. "Referencing and Citing" August 4, 2006.
<<http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/is/support/training/referencing-citing.phtml>>
- ^{xxii} Leeds University Library "Citations and References" External web links. August 8, 2006.
<<http://www.leeds.ac.uk/ROADS/subject-listing/service/01.1.html>>
- ^{xxiii} Bournemouth University Web pages Academic support – Library "Harvard System". August 3, 2006.
<http://www.bournemouth.ac.uk/library/citing_references/citing_refs_main.html>
- ^{xxiv} University of Sussex Information Literacy Tutorial "Numeric Style: Introduction" August 4, 2006
<http://www.sussex.ac.uk/library/infosuss/referencing/n_intro.shtml>
- ^{xxv} "MLA Formatting and Style Guide" The Owl at Purdue. Owl Materials from the Owl Family of Sites. Purdue University Web pages. August 6, 2006.
<<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/557/01/>>
- ^{xxvi} "APA Formatting and Style Guide" The Owl at Purdue. Owl Materials from the Owl Family of Sites. Purdue University Web pages. August 6, 2006
<<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>>
- ^{xxvii} "Citing Electronic Information" The Internet Public Library. August 7, 2006.
<<http://www.ipl.org/div/farq/netciteFARQ.html>>
- ^{xxviii} "Working Habits that Work" Academic Integrity at Princeton. Online tutorial 1 August, 2006
<<http://www.princeton.edu/pr/pub/integrity/pages/habits.html>>
- ^{xxix} "Acknowledging your sources" Princeton University webpage "Academic Integrity at Princeton" online Tutorial and website, 8 August, 2006.
<<http://www.princeton.edu/pr/pub/integrity/pages/acknowledge.html>>
- ^{xxx} "Cheating 101: Detecting Plagiarized papers. Coastal Carolina University the Kimberl Library Presentations homepages . 3 August 2006-08-08
<<http://www.coastal.edu/library/presentations/plagiarz.html>>
- ^{xxxi} JISC Plagiarism Detection Service. 19 September 2006.
http://www.submit.ac.uk/usage_jisc/JISC_student_quickstart.html
- ^{xxxii} Evaluating Internet Resources. University of Alberta. 13 September, 2006.
<<http://www.library.ualberta.ca/guides/plagiarism/handouts/evaluating.pdf>>