



don't be a **COPY CAT**

It's not worth it

don't be a **copy cat**

This guide is here to benefit you, the student, and make it clear how to avoid being accused of plagiarism

DON'T FALL INTO THE **PLAGIARISM TRAP...**



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introduction

This guide has been written by Loughborough Students Voice, with the sole purpose of decreasing the likelihood of you getting into trouble during your time at University.

This guide is being written to benefit you the student and make it clear how to avoid being accused of plagiarism. Loughborough Students Voice does not in any way condone or encourage plagiarism and encourages students to read this booklet to enhance their understanding of the rules and regulations at university and ensure they do not plagiarise the work of others either intentionally or unintentionally.

You, like those who came to University before you, do so to gain knowledge, to learn from others, to enhance and challenge yourself. In an environment where so much learning occurs through the work of others it is inevitable that new students and those from different educational and cultural backgrounds can find themselves confused and sometimes end up in trouble.

Even students who are towards the end of their degree can become complacent and find themselves in a difficult situation. Something as simple as forgetting to put quotation marks in your dissertation could result in you being awarded a zero and having to resubmit your work, costing you both time and money and meaning you miss graduating with your friends and course mates.

Reading this guide will help you avoid making a slip up, sign post you towards where you can get help at the University and explain where to go for help if you do get accused of plagiarism.

what is plagiarism, and how do I avoid it?

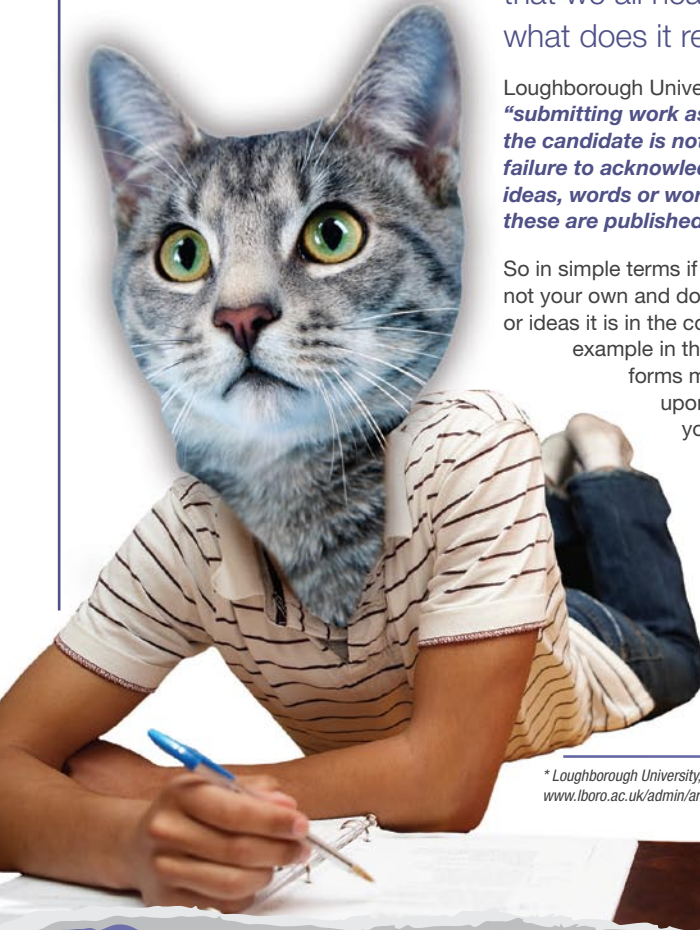
So plagiarism is one of those words that we all hear and we all fear but what does it really mean?

Loughborough University defines plagiarism as ***“submitting work as the candidate’s own of which the candidate is not the author. This includes failure to acknowledge clearly and explicitly the ideas, words or work of another person whether these are published or unpublished.”****

So in simple terms if you ever submit any work that is not your own and do not clearly point out whose work or ideas it is in the correct format (by referencing, for example in the Harvard style, though other forms may also be acceptable depending upon your Department/School) then you are guilty of plagiarism.

It is important to note the definition says nothing about intent to try and pass off someone else’s work or ideas as their own. So even if you wrongly hand in a draft instead of the final copy of your work and it is not referenced correctly you could be found guilty of plagiarism.

* Loughborough University, “Section 11 - Academic Misconduct”, Student Handbook, www.lboro.ac.uk/admin/ar/student/handbook/section11/index.htm [20 October 2009]



how can I make sure I don't commit plagiarism by accident?

Find out what plagiarism is.

Take time to familiarise yourself with the referencing style at University. If there is anything you are unsure of, make sure you ask someone – your personal tutor or a lecturer.

Make sure you plan your time effectively so that when it is time to write your work you feel confident enough about the topic not to be tempted by the idea of cutting and pasting your essay together.

If you have previously studied in another country **MAKE SURE** you take time to familiarise yourself with correct referencing in the UK as

this may be very different from what you are used to. There is more information at the back of this leaflet about where you can go for help.


Try not to be affected by external pressures, trust in your own ability to complete the work, manage your time and work hard. If you still find you are struggling you should go and see your personal tutor who may be able to advise you what else you can do.

Make sure you make clear notes all the way through the planning stage of your essay. If you do not know exactly where a reference has come from **DO NOT** include it. Something this small could result in you being accused of plagiarism .

common mistakes

This list is designed to highlight mistakes often made by other students.

- **Handing in a draft instead of a final version**
- **Missing out quotation marks** (*often because the student is used to a different form of referencing*)
- **Making up references at the end of a quotation** (*as a result of not writing it down correctly in the planning stage*)
- **Handing in work that is very similar to that of a course mate**
- **Handing in work that is similar to a friend at a different University**



Remember, this leaflet is not designed to shock or scare you. As long as you work hard, plan well and check over your work you will be ok.

excuses that just don't cut it

All work that is suspected of plagiarism is put through a piece of software called **Turnitin**.

This software compares your work with a database of sources including books, journals, the internet, other students' work from your University (including your year and previous years) and students' work from other universities.

Excuses that just don't cut it

- I didn't know how to reference properly
- I told my lecturer that I had used a lot of other people's work because I found it really hard
- My girlfriend handed in my work and handed in a draft instead of the final copy
- I did work with my friend but we didn't realise we were not allowed to

It is no longer possible to get away with plagiarism so don't be tempted to try it.

is plagiarism worth the risk?

Quite simply the answer to this is NO.

With lecturers more aware of the pressures on students, and with advances in technology, it is extremely unlikely you will get away with plagiarism.

The punishments for plagiarism are also **very high**.

In the majority of cases of plagiarism your punishment (even if your plagiarism was a result of lack of knowledge) will be your work receiving a zero. You will then have to spend the time and money to resubmit this work, and even then it

is highly unlikely that the maximum mark you can achieve will be more than 40% (or 50% if that is the lowest mark required in your course to pass it).

For more serious cases where it is deemed you have used a very high percentage of someone else's work and the plagiarism is calculated and planned, it is possible that your studies may be terminated. If you commit a second offence of academic misconduct or a second offence of plagiarism then it is also highly likely that your studies will be terminated. There is lots of help available throughout the university (details later in this guide) so don't be tempted in by plagiarism.



have you been accused of academic misconduct?

Are you reading this because you have been accused of plagiarism?

If so, we **strongly advise you to seek help now**. Come and see us at Student Voice as soon as possible.

One of our fully trained Student Advocates will be able to give you personalised advice and help on what to do next. We will be able to explain to you how best to defend yourself, what you need to do and when, and explain the hearing and punishment procedure to you.

From our experience, students who come to seek help from Student Voice have a better chance in any hearings, are better informed and more aware of their options and of what may happen.

If you have been accused of plagiarism now is a perfect time to seek help from the library or your personal tutor to ensure this doesn't happen again. Even if it happens again by accident, it may result in your studies being terminated. **Don't take the risk, seek help.**

There will unfortunately be individuals who deliberately decide to pass off someone else's work as their own and this is why the University applies such harsh rules. Make sure you don't fall into the plagiarism trap.

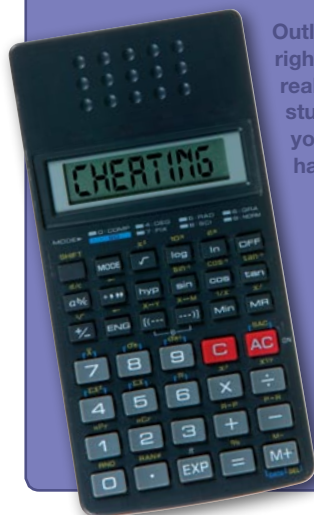
case studies

Ever wondered what happens to people who are accused of academic misconduct?

Considering taking something into the exam with you to help you out? Just a small equation on your calculator or a few notes?

Well, the clear message here is don't do it. The University takes a harsh stance on any form of misconduct. Even if you honestly didn't know you had your notes in your pocket, unfortunately it is nearly impossible to prove your innocence.

Outlined on the right are a few real life case studies to show you what can happen to you.



case study 1

An International student bought a dictionary from the internet and took it into the exam. The dictionary was found to have an equation in it by an exam invigilator. The student had no idea this was in the dictionary and believed it must have been written by the previous owner.

The punishment given was that the student received 0 for the module.

His department did not offer resits during the SAP so had to turn down the offer of a fully funded PhD.

case study 2

A student was accused of plagiarism in a piece of coursework worth 10% of the module. In the coursework the student pointed out in the conclusion of the work that lots of material was taken directly from other sources as they really struggled with the assignment. This student was wrongly under the impression they would receive 0 from the copied sections of work.

This particular student had previously been found guilty of academic misconduct by having an equation on a calculator in an exam. The student had borrowed this calculator from a friend and didn't know there was anything written on it.

The student stressed as part of their defence that they had no intent to try and pass someone else's work off as their own and that they were very sorry about the mistake.

The initial punishment put in place by the academic misconduct committee was to terminate the students studies.

The student appealed the penalty on grounds that they didn't mean to get an advantage from the work of others, that it was a silly mistake and that it was overly harsh to terminate their studies, meaning they were left with £20,000 debt and no degree. The student took a long time to explain that this was a simple error rather than any attempt to cheat.

The appeals committee decided that the punishment was suitable and therefore the student left after 4 years at Loughborough with no degree and a lot of debt.



where to go for help

Here is a list of useful places to go that can help you with understanding how to reference correctly and help you avoid inadvertently plagiarising.

Library

The library provide various training courses throughout the year, likewise they have an online learning resource, accessible via www.lboro.ac.uk/library/skills/workshops.html

Student Support Centre

Specifically for students whose first language is not English:
Tel 01509 222058 email: ssc@lboro.ac.uk

Lecturer

Often a quick chat following a lecture can clear things up and ensure that you do not run into problems

Personal tutor

It is a good idea to try and build a good relationship with your personal tutor as they may be able to help you in many different situations.

It is wise to seek help as soon as possible

If you have any questions about anything in this guide or want more information on anything, please contact us

email: voiceadvisor@lufbra.net

phone: **01509 635 072**

Our website has useful links to online resources on plagiarism and also to the University Student Handbook

web: www.lufbra.net/voice



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