Academic Honesty In Practice

Introduction

Academic honesty involves being clear where the work of others has been used in your own work. This may be information you have gathered from books, journal articles, webpages or any other type of source: when you draw on information taken from others this must be acknowledged.

This resource provides guidance on acknowledging information taken from sources within your assignments. For details of the broader issues involved in academic honesty, be sure to consult the University's statement on academic honesty. This is available on the Academic Honesty CampusMoodle area.

Citations

When working on assignments you will be expected to undertake research and use information from several sources to give substance and credibility to the points you make. You will also be expected to analyse the material you draw on. It is important to make a clear distinction between ideas that have been taken from another author and your own analysis of a source or of the topic in focus. This is achieved by referencing. Each time you use material that is not your own it must be marked with a citation in the text along with a corresponding reference in the reference list.

Example: Citation

One of the leading criticisms of women's magazines is the supposed negative influence content has on readers (Ballaster et al. 1991). However, an alternative view is that the content of magazines adapts to suit the readers, rather than the other way around.

The following table shows the paragraph again, with comments on how information has been used within the text:

Section	Information Source
One of the leading criticisms of women's magazines is the supposed negative influence content has on readers (Ballaster et al. 1991).	Information taken from a source – citation required
…However, an alternative view is that the content of magazines adapts to suit the readers, rather than the other way around.	Student's own analysis of the topic – no citation required.

Example: Reference list

BALLASTER, R., ET AL., 1991. WOMEN'S WORLDS: IDEOLOGY, FEMININITY AND THE WOMEN'S MAGAZINE. BASINGSTOKE: MACMILLAN.

More examples - Citations

A brief examination of the issues involved (Smith and Jones 2000) reveals a worrying gap between theory and practice in the application of hygiene practices in restaurants.

Several studies undertaken in the early 1990s (Adams 1993, Gregor and Thomas 1992, Willis 1990) point to a strong trend towards adolescent financial independence.

These citations acknowledge that the writer is building their point on someone else's research. They contain the author's surname (or surnames) and a date of publication enclosed in brackets.

Steinberg (2005) provides a lucid analysis of the role of technology in modern government.

In an attempt to achieve more significant results, Finnegan and Wilson (2002) pioneered a new method of luring toads out into the open air before dawn.

In these examples the authors' names are already part of the sentence, so they don't need to go into the citation as well. Only the date of publication is placed in brackets.

Karmiloff-Smith describes this most recent model as a *"success based view of cognitive change"* (1994 p. 701).

Methodological complexities cause challenges when designing researching scaffolding: *"Studying scaffolding in a rigorous and systematic way appears to be especially challenging because of the complexity of this dynamic concept"* (van de Pol, Volmanand Beishuizen 2010 p. 283).

These citations accompany quotations and so the page number where that quotation can be found in the original source is provided. Quotations will be covered in more detail in the upcoming section on direct quotations.

Remember that all citations must have a corresponding reference in the reference list. See the library guide to referencing for further details.

Common knowledge

Facts considered common knowledge do not need to be referenced. It can sometimes be tricky to determine whether a fact is common knowledge or not, but if it is widely known in general (for example, is available in a general reference text) or is widely known within your subject area, it may be considered common knowledge. If you are unsure it's best to exercise caution and provide a reference.

Example: Common knowledge

Internet networking sites have become increasingly prevalent and accessible in the last decade. Educators have taken notice of their popularity and some networking platforms, for example Facebook and Twitter, as well as wikis and blogs, are now being considered as alternative learning formats. Opinion remains divided over the effectiveness of these new projects. Hale (2007) argues that the use of networking technology can help students gain confidence and build up their writing skills and knowledge in a relatively informal setting. However, material contributed to these networking platforms is typically visible to other participants which may be off-putting to some students (Smith 2008).

The paragraph is now repeated with comments on the use of common knowledge within the text

Section	Information Source
Internet networking sites have become increasingly prevalent and accessible in the last decade.	Common knowledge
…Educators have taken notice of their popularity and some networking platforms, for example Facebook and Twitter, as well as wikis and blogs, are now being considered as alternative learning formats.	Common knowledge (within area)
…Opinion remains divided over the effectiveness of these new projects.	Introduction of evidence

...Hale (2007) argues that the use of networking technology can help students gain confidence and build up their writing skills and knowledge in a relatively informal setting.	Evidence from a source
...However, material contributed to these networking platforms is typically visible to other participants which may be off-putting to some students (Smith 2008)	Evidence from another source

Example: Common knowledge (2)

One of the earliest and most famous case studies in clinical neuropsychology is that of Phineus Gage, a railway worker who, in 1848, suffered brain injury when a tamping iron was propelled through his skull, destroying part of his left frontal lobe. Although later CT scans show the damage caused to the skull, Gage's brain was not preserved after death. Macmillan (2010) states that it is impossible to determine the areas of the brain that were destroyed as both the position of the brain within the skull and localisation of brain function can differ between individuals.

Below, the paragraph is repeated with comments on the use of common knowledge within the text.

Section	Information Source
One of the earliest and most famous case studies in clinical neuropsychology is that of Phineus Gage, a railway worker who, in 1848, suffered brain injury when a tamping iron was propelled through his skull, destroying part of his left frontal lobe. Although later CT scans show the damage caused to the skull, Gage's brain was not preserved after death.	Common knowledge within subject area
Macmillan (2010) states that it is impossible to determine the areas of the brain that were destroyed as both the position of the brain within the skull and localisation of brain function can differ between individuals.	Not common knowledge - citation provided

Using Quotations

Carefully selected direct quotations can add weight to the arguments you present in your assignment. You may choose to reproduce the author's exact words as a quotation because it sums up the author's point particularly effectively or because it includes potent language that helps convey the meaning of the text.

Quotations should be clearly identifiable within your assignment. Shorter quotations should be placed inside quotation marks (double inverted commas) and longer quotations should be indented, without quotation marks. Citations provided for a quotation should contain a page number, indicating exactly where in the original source the quoted text can be found, as well as the author's

surname and the year of publication (See library guides to referencing for specific details).

Example: Short Quotation

Anaphylaxis is the abrupt onset of an acute sensitivity reaction, the symptoms of which are *"...fascinating in their variation, rapidity and potential intensity"* (Crusher 2004 p. 24).

Climbing the career ladder can be daunting for new scientists. However, advancement in a chosen area can seem more manageable with the guidance of a more experienced scientist: *"Perhaps the most important action you can take to help your career advance is to find one or more mentors"* (Busch-Vishniak 2006 p. 65).

Example: Longer Quotation

So whilst Woman's Own may not feature career articles, it is acknowledged that the reader will most likely have a job. This is reflected in the content, which also includes traditional features. McCracken summarises this view: *Traditional magazines walk a fine line as they attempt to modernise in response to women's new work patterns... the magazines must entice one group without offending the other. In both cases, traditional values are upheld; employed women are to sew, make crafts... even though they now have less time to do so (McCracken 1993 p.177).*

It is advisable to avoid over-long quotations, and you should not use too many quotations in your assignments. It's important that the word count is achieved with mostly your own words and not those of others. Instead, you could try to paraphrase what you have read.

Paraphrasing

When writing, you may present ideas or information by paraphrasing the original author. This involves putting the meaning of the text into your own words. Paraphrasing is often preferable to using quotations because by putting ideas or information into your own words you will show that you have an understanding of the subject matter and also demonstrate your ability with writing.

To paraphrase you must use your own words and your own sentence structure to convey the meaning of the original text. It is not appropriate to copy a sentence and substitute the author's words with synonyms: a paraphrase too similar to the original material is considered to be a 'close paraphrase' and is unacceptable in academic work. An acceptable paraphrase must contain a

different sentence structure as well as vocabulary. This can be achieved by taking notes of the key points in your own words as you read, putting the text to one side and rewriting the key points in your own words, making sure you always acknowledge the source of the information.

Example: Paraphrasing 1

Original text – Murray 2009

Mixed methods research should be used with caution. The interpretation of results can be complex as disparate theories of learning are inherent in the different methodological approaches.

Close paraphrase (unacceptable)

Murray (2009) advises that mixed methods research should be used with apprehension. Results can be complicated as diverse theories of learning are associated with the different methodologies.

Acceptable paraphrase

Murray (2009) believes that as different methodologies are linked to different ways of conceptualising learning, it can be difficult to understand results from mixed method research. As a result, Murray states that researchers should be wary of this employing this approach in their work.

Example: Paraphrasing 2

Original material (from Busch-Vishniak 2006 p. 65)

Perhaps the most important action you can take to help your career advance is to find one or more mentors. A mentor is a person with knowledge that they are willing to share with you on some aspect of professional success. Mentors usually establish close personal ties with their protégés and develop a strong interest in seeing them succeed; they advocate for you as you make your way through the process of learning and growing. Mentors open doors and give a protégé a distinct advantage over someone without mentors. There is no limit to the number of people who can serve as your mentor. Typically,

different mentors help with different aspects of your professional life.

Acceptable paraphrase:

An individual who has had success in their field may act as a mentor to less experienced staff who are keen to develop their careers. Mentors may support their charge by providing favourable opportunities for advancement. It is beneficial for developing staff to have a number of mentors from a variety of relevant areas (Busch-Vishniak 2006).

Beware of copying and pasting

Copying and pasting sentences, paragraphs, sections etc. from others' work (including webpages, books, web-forums, articles and other students' work) without referencing the source is clearly unacceptable and constitutes plagiarism.

Even with acknowledgement an assignment containing a large percentage of others' words means the student will have contributed little of their own writing. This can also be viewed as a form of plagiarism.

Example: 'copy and paste' text

This example is from an essay on the influential architect and designer, Arne Jacobson. As you can see the whole paragraph consists of two large direct quotations (from webpages so no page numbers have been provided). The student has included none of their own writing within the paragraph.

"Born in Copenhagen in 1902, Arne Jacobsen worked as an apprentice bricklayer before winning a place to study architecture at the Royal Academy of the Arts in 1924. Humble though Jacobsen's first job may seem, there are echoes with those of other great architects like John Soane and Ludwig Mies Van Der Rohe, who worked for their fathers as a bricklayer and stone mason respectively. It also imbued Jacobsen with the love of materials, which became a dominant feature of his work" (Design Museum 2011)."Influenced by the work of Le Corbusier, Mies van der Rohe and other Modernists during a trip to Berlin in the late 1920s, his early career, as with many architects, was spent working on small private commissions" (Design Classics 2011).

Carefully selected quotes or paraphrases should be used to support a student's analysis of a topic. Large amounts of copied text would not demonstrate a student's understanding or critical thinking of the content and would be unlikely to secure a satisfactory grade.

Working in groups

You may be assigned to a group as part of an assignment, or you may form an informal study group to share and further your understanding of the topic you are studying.

Collaboration in this way can be beneficial to the learning process and can also help in the development of transferable skills that will serve you well in future employment.

Where group work is part of an assignment, guidelines will generally be given about how you should work together as a group. For example, group members are commonly asked to collaborate to create and develop ideas, and to produce a report in which each member is responsible for writing a specific section.

When working in groups it is important to be aware of the distinction between collaboration and collusion. Collusion is defined as two or more people working together with the intention of deceiving another. Within the academic environment this can occur when students work with others on an assignment that is intended to be completed separately. To avoid inadvertent collusion it is important that all group members are clear about the task and their role in the group. If you are unclear about how you are expected to work as part of a group you should consult your tutor.

Example

Scenario

Students are assigned into groups as part of a coursework assignment. Following the guidelines provided by their lecturer they collaborate to develop a research proposal and individually write and submit the corresponding report.

Acceptable - each member of the group follows the guidelines for the group assignment.

Alternative scenario

One member of the group, Paul, fails to attend meetings and does not contribute ideas. A week before the assignment submission date another

member of the group gives Paul a draft copy of his report which Paul rewrites and submits as his own work.

This is clearly an example of plagiarism as Paul is passing off another student's work as his own. In addition, the other student may be accused of assisting plagiarism.

Self-Plagiarism

There is a debate about whether self – plagiarism is acceptable or not (US Department of Health and Human Services. Office of Research Integrity 2018) but the best strategy for students to adopt in their writing is that it is better to avoid the possibility at all by not recycling their own material in assessments.

The debate centres on the expectation that a new work by an author should not contain substantially the same material taken from a previous work. Self-plagiarism is sometimes a difficult concept for student authors. It occurs when someone copies or re- uses portions of a previous work that they themselves have authored, perhaps in a different context or for a different purpose. It applies to the re-use of text, data and images.

Students who choose to submit a piece of written work for assessment that does include content from other writings do need to cite the previous work, as they do for the inclusion of any other piece of evidence when writing based on sources. Readers, and in these cases the academic assessors, need to know that what they are presented with is not the first use of the material.

Essay Mills/Contract Cheating

Students submitting work for assessment which is not their own is a notorious practice and a real threat to academic integrity and achievement. Paying someone else to write the work or buying the assignment from an auction site,

or even asking a friend to write an assessment, are clearly unacceptable practices. Jo Johnson, the former UK Universities and Sciences Minister, quoted in the Times Higher, has said exactly this (Sokol 2017). Students should be in no doubt whatsoever that this kind of cheating is outlawed, that it will be discovered through the systems in place and that it will be dealt with accordingly.

Example paragraphs from student essays

Example 1:

Some paragraphs will be more descriptive than others and will typically contain more references than paragraphs with more analytical content. The example given here is taken from the beginning of an essay on Ménière's Disease. In the paragraph the student has paraphrased information from various sources and has attributed the paraphrased information with a citation. Citations must occur at the point at which the information occurs.

Ménière's disease, first described by French physician Prosper Ménière in 1861, is a disorder of the inner ear that can be difficult to diagnose and complicated to manage (Sajjadi 2008). The term Ménière's disease is usually applied to cases where the symptoms have no known cause, while disorders with a known aetiology that present with the classic Ménière's symptoms are labelled Ménière's syndrome. Ménière's disease may, in a small percentage of cases, be heritable (Semaan & Megerian 2010) and its incidence may be slightly more prevalent (54.76%) in females (Gonzales 2009). Onset usually occurs in the fourth to sixth decade and is unusual in children (Friedland & Minor 2009). There is no clear consensus on the management of Ménière's disease and over the course of the disease, symptoms may change (lessen or worsen), with or without medical treatment or surgery. From an audiological perspective, it is difficult to find evidence for effective treatment and management of the fluctuating hearing loss and tinnitus associated with Ménière's disease, and there is no way, currently, to preserve or restore the hearing (Semaan and Megerian 2010).

Here, the paragraph is shown again in the table below, providing comments on the use of citations.

Section	Information Source
Ménière's disease, first described by French physician Prosper Ménière in 1861,	Common knowledge within area

...is a disorder of the inner ear that can be difficult to diagnose and complicated to manage (Sajjadi 2008).	Information from source
...The term Ménière's disease is usually applied to cases where the symptoms have no known cause, while disorders with a known etiology that present with the classic Ménière's symptoms are labelled Ménière's syndrome.	Common knowledge within area
...Ménière's disease may, in a small percentage of cases, be heritable (Semaan & Megerian 2010) and its incidence may be slightly more prevalent (54.76%) in females (Gonzales, 2009). Onset usually occurs in the fourth to sixth decade and is unusual in chilrdren (Friedland & Minor 2009).	Information from sources
... There is no clear consensus on the management of Ménière's disease and over the course of the disease, symptoms may change (lessen or worsen), with or without medical treatment or surgery.	Student's analysis
...From an audiological perspective, it is difficult to find evidence for effective treatment and management of the fluctuating hearing loss and tinnitus associated with Ménière's disease,	Student's analysis
...and there is no way, currently, to preserve or restore the hearing (Semaan and Megerian 2010).	Information from source

The following paragraph contains paraphrased information from sources, duly acknowledged with citations, and analysis of the topic in focus.

The plummet in career content in women's magazines the 1990s and 2000s could indicate that career is less important to women today. However it is a struggle to conceive that this is true, considering the advances women have made in society professionally. Gauntlett (2008) found that readers deemed successful career women were also those who preferred the most 'girly' content, such as fashion and beauty advice. Therefore, the interpretation could be made that as magazines continue to feature greater proportions of this content, it is perhaps in response to the growing ambition and progress of women professionally in society. As readers become increasingly successful in their careers, they become less interested in reading this type of content in their relaxation time, so women's magazines publish more 'girly' features. This theory is supported by the steady decrease of career content since the 1980s, and the increase of beauty content which does not require much interaction from the reader (Hermes 1995).

The paragraph is repeated below, with comments on the use of citations.

Section	Information Source
The plummet in career content in women's magazines the 1990s and 2000s	Information established through research earlier in the report
...could indicate that career is less important to women today. However it is a struggle to conceive that this is true, considering the advances women have made in society professionally.	Student's analysis
...Gauntlett (2008) found that readers deemed successful career women were also those who preferred the most 'girly' content, such as fashion and beauty advice.	Information from a source
...Therefore the interpretation could be made that as magazines continue to feature greater proportions of this content, it is perhaps in response to the growing ambition and progress of women professionally in society. As readers become increasingly successful in their careers, they become less interested in reading this type of content in their relaxation time, so women's magazines publish more 'girly' features.	Student's analysis
...This theory is supported by the steady decrease of career content since the 1980s,	Information established through

	research earlier in report
...and the increase of beauty content which does not require much interaction from the reader (Hermes 1995).	Information from a source

Example 3:

This paragraph makes use of a direct quotation as well as paraphrased information:

By the 1990s controlling one's physique was seen as a viable way of constructing identity – and imitation of media images were not solely to blame:

> *While women's participation in dieting would not have been possible without this multifaceted commercial stimulus, neither would it have occurred had bodily appearance not been so closely associated with identity for women* (MacDonald 2003 p. 201).

Gill (2007) furthers this point, explaining that in post-feminist society the female body can be seen as an internal representation of an individual's satisfaction with their life. Gill uses the Bridget Jones character as an example: when Bridget is seen to smoke forty cigarettes a day and struggles with her weight, it is a sign of her correlating emotional breakdown (Gill 2007). A slim, 'controlled' figure is representative of success in today's society – although no-one seems exactly sure why.

Below, comments are given on the use of citations within this paragraph.

Section	Information Source
By the 1990s controlling one's physique was seen as a viable way of constructing identity – and imitation of media images were not solely to blame:	Introducing the quotation
While women's participation in dieting would not have been possible without this multifaceted commercial stimulus, neither would it have occurred had bodily appearance not been so closely associated with identity for women (MacDonald 2003 p. 201).	Direct quotation – long so indented
Gill (2007) furthers this point, explaining that in post-feminist society the female body can be seen as an internal representation of an individual's satisfaction with their life.	Information from a source
Gill uses the Bridget Jones character as an example: when Bridget is seen to smoke forty cigarettes a day and struggles with her weight, it is a sign of her correlating emotional breakdown (Gill 2007).	Information from a source
A slim, 'controlled' figure is representative of success in today's society – although no-one seems exactly sure why.	Student analysis

References

SOKOL, D., 2017. Contract cheating and essay-mills: how much proof do you need? [online]. London: THE. Available from: https://www.timeshighereducation.com/blog/contract-cheating-and-essay- mills-how-much-proof-do-you-need

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