Departmental Plagiarism Policy Statement
Department of Sociology, UL
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It is the students' responsibility to familiarise themselves with this document, and claims of ignorance will not be accepted when determining penalties. You need to be aware that penalties for plagiarism include expulsion.

What is Plagiarism?

"Plagiarism involves using other people's words and ideas as if they were one's own, without crediting the source" (Park 2004, p.291). Crediting the source means attributing the text to the author, i.e. as we have done above with Park (2004). Plagiarism also includes the falsification of references, purchasing papers, recruiting others to write your paper, submitting largely the same work for two assignments and copying another person's paper (note that both students may be penalised). All of these types of plagiarism are explained further below.

> Plagiarism is a grave academic offence and is regarded very seriously by the Department of Sociology.

"Fundamentally, plagiarism involves unacceptable practices, particularly literary theft (stealing someone else's intellectual property and breach of copyright) and academic deception (in order to gain a higher grade). Both of these are inherently wrong and they also run counter to an ethos of trust and integrity that should lie at the heart of any academic activity" (Park 2004, pp.291-2).

Plagiarism is an infringement upon the rights of the author whose work is plagiarised and it is an infringement upon the right of other students to equitable treatment. Plagiarism is also damaging to the offender. Engaging in plagiarism prevents the student from developing key competencies in information retrieval, in writing and referencing, as well as denying her the understanding that she would have gained in completing the prescribed assignment herself.

The following types of plagiarism are exemplified and discussed below
- Direct Quotes
- Paraphrasing
- Copying, purchasing or otherwise using another person's unpublished work.
- Submitting the same work for two assignments
- False References

Detecting Plagiarism

The Department of Sociology employs a number of effective methods of checking for plagiarism.

- The Department reserves the right to submit students' work to Turnitin.com which is a service specifically designed to assist lecturers in identifying the plagiarism of published work, internet-based materials and other students' papers (Turnitin 2007).
- Non-commercial searches of online materials and electronic databases of published materials.
- Our personal familiarity with literature in our field.

Responding to Plagiarism

Students should be aware that all cases of suspected plagiarism will be responded to. Cases of suspected plagiarism in Final Year Projects or postgraduate work will be automatically referred to the Head of Department. The Department will maintain a record of students who have been penalised for plagiarism and the penalties applied.

The penalties, which the Department retains the right to employ, include but are not restricted to:

- The award of a failing grade for the paper
- The award of a failing grade for the module
- Referral of the student to the University disciplinary committee

N.B. Students should be aware that plagiarism may also result in expulsion.

The best way to avoid plagiarism is to write your paper in your own words, but making comprehensive reference to the sources of your ideas and arguments. Always use inverted commas if you are using the words of another person and make sure that quotations are clearly identified by using inverted commas or indentation, along with the citation for the quote. Guidance on how to reference using the Harvard system is provided in the University of Limerick Library's *Cite it Rite* publication which is available on paper from the library or in electronic format from the library's website at http://www.ul.ie/~library/pdf/citeitright.pdf.

Types of plagiarism

In this section we will take a number of examples, explain why the text in the example is plagiarised and provide some tips for avoiding that type of plagiarism.

•*Direct quotes*

Example of plagiarised text:

Turning a blind eye to student plagiarism is not an appropriate response for a variety of reasons, including fairness to students who do not plagiarize, preserving the academic credibility and reputation of the institution, promoting both the theory and the practice of academic integrity amongst all staff and students, fostering a sense of responsibility amongst students and promoting good study skills and independent learning.

Q. Why is this an example of plagiarism?

A. The above text reproduces word for word a sentence from a journal article entitled *Rebels without a clause: towards an institutional framework for dealing with plagiarism by students* authored by Chris Park. However, Chris has not been credited in the above text. Rather his words and ideas are presented as the student's own.

Q. How would one avoid plagiarising in this manner?

A. The simplest way to avoid plagiarising in this manner is to indicate where we have drawn on someone else's exact words by enclosing those words in quotation marks and referencing the author in-text and in our bibliography.

For example the text could read:

"Turning a blind eye to student plagiarism is not an appropriate response for a variety of reasons, including fairness to students who do not plagiarize, preserving the academic credibility and reputation of the institution, promoting both the theory and the practice of academic integrity amongst all staff and students, fostering a sense of responsibility amongst students and promoting good study skills and independent learning." (Park 2004, p.291)

In our bibliography we would include a full reference to Park's article, as follows:

Park, C. (2004) 'Rebels without a clause: towards an institutional framework for dealing with plagiarism by students' *Journal of Further and Higher Education*, 28(3), pp.291-306.

The UL library (2005) publication *Cite it Rite* provides further examples of how to reference different types of sources in-text and in your bibliography.

•*Paraphrasing*

Paraphrasing is an important skill for students to learn. Paraphrasing involves re-presenting someone else's ideas, findings or words in a summarised form using your own words.

Paraphrasing has many advantages over using direct quotes, in that it allows you to demonstrate that not only could you locate appropriate materials to inform your paper and support your argument, but you were also able to extract from that material the key point you required for that purpose and you understood that point sufficiently to be able to restate it in a summarised form. As such paraphrasing offers greater opportunities to showcase your understanding than if you depend solely on direct quotes.

In addition, paraphrasing better enables you to present your own coherent argument, a key skill that we seek to develop in sociology students. Paraphrasing prioritises your own voice; the materials you use are integrated into your unique argument, written in your own words. An argument, which is merely pieced together from direct quotes, will not be as coherent.

Finally, because it demands summarising, paraphrasing also facilitates the more concise use of supporting materials, which is important if you are working within a word limit.

Example of plagiarised text:
Inadequate paraphrasing often occurs, when a student has difficulty moving away from the words used by the author of the idea they have extracted for their use. The following are two examples of inadequate paraphrasing:

Ignoring student plagiarism is not fair to students who do not plagiarize (Park 2004, 291).

Or

Ignoring student plagiarism is not fair to students who do not plagiarize.

Q. Why are these examples of plagiarism?
A. In the first example above, the student has extracted a point from Park's words, but they have made little effort to summarise it or to represent it in their own words.

In the second example, the student has inadequately paraphrased Park <u>and</u> has failed to credit him, thus presenting his idea (and many of his exact words) as her own.

Q. How would one avoid plagiarising in this manner?

A. Adequate paraphrasing involves:

- extracting the point you want to use,
- summarising it,
- representing it in your own words,
- crediting the author(s)

Below is an example of the adequate paraphrasing of the direct quote from Chris Parks:

If we are to treat our students equitably we should address plagiarism (Park 2004, p. 291).

Alternately, we might wish to paraphrase all three points that Park made in that sentence, but we must still be careful to summarise and re-present in our own words:

We should address plagiarism if we wish to treat our students equitably, promote best practise in learning and maintain the standing of our educational establishments (Park 2004, p.291).

If you are having difficulty in representing paraphrased materials in your own words, try the following:

- Avoid writing your paper *while* reading the books and articles you have sourced.
- First read through the books and articles you have sourced.
- Make note of key points (not quotes) that you find relevant to the paper you intend to write.
- As you record these points, carefully reference where you extracted them from.
- When you have finished your reading, draw up an outline of the paper you intend to write.

For example:

> Introduction
> Note the overall argument that you wish to make.
> List the issues you will have to address to make
> this argument.
>
> Issue One
> Note down the argument you wish to make in
> relation to issue one. Note down the points you
> wish to use to support your argument.
>
> Issue Two
> Note down the argument you wish to make in
> relation to issue two. Note down the points you
> wish to use to support your argument (and so on)
>
> Conclusion
> In the conclusion you can bring together the
> supported arguments that you have made in
> relation to issues one to and three to support your
> overall argument.
>
> Bibliography or Reference List

- Include in the outline, the points from your notes and their references.
- Write up your paper, without looking at the original sources.
- Then return to the original sources to check that you have adequately paraphrased them and correctly referenced them.

You can include direct quotes in your paper as well, but use these sparingly. The Sociology Writing Group (1994, p.71) advises that you should only use direct quotes when:
- you have genuinely tried and failed to adequately paraphrase the text,
- you need to retain the style of the original writer,
- the regard in which the original work is held adds necessary weight to your paper
- the quote itself is the subject of your analysis.

In order to best showcase your understanding, when you include a direct quote, it is also a good idea to use your own words to explain to the reader how the content of the quote supports the argument you are making.

•*Copying, purchasing or otherwise using another person's unpublished work*

Plagiarism relates equally to published and unpublished work.

Presenting unpublished work by another author as your own constitutes plagiarism. This includes:
- Presenting work written by current or former students as your own
- Presenting purchased papers or sections thereof as your own.
- Presenting work written in collaboration with others as wholly your own (unless your assignment specifically permits you to engage in group work, in which case the group should be credited).
- Note that students found to have facilitated the copying of their own work may also be penalised.

•*Submitting the same work for two assignments*

Submitting the same or largely the same work for two assignments is also a form of plagiarism. Unless otherwise instructed by your lecturer, you are required to produce unique work for each assignment.

In some cases, lecturers may specifically instruct you to submitted two drafts of the same document for separate assignments.

•*False References*

Including falsified references, entails either:
- Supporting points by reference to texts which do not exist
  or
- Supporting points by reference to texts that do exist but do not support the point made.

Students may be tempted to falsify references in order to appear to have read more widely than they have. However, this is a very serious form of academic cheating and will be treated as such by the department.

Referencing Internet Sources

Below are two examples of text which avoids plagiarism of online materials through adequate referencing and paraphrasing.

Direct quote:
"Plagiarism (from Latin *plagiare* 'to kidnap') is the practice of claiming, or implying, original authorship or incorporating material from someone else's written or creative work, in whole or in part, into one's own without adequate acknowledgement" (Wikipedia 2007).

Paraphrasing:
Plagiarism involves presenting someone else's work as one's own
(Wikipedia 2007).

The bibliographic reference to the above would read:
Wikipedia (2007) Plagiarism [online] accessed 01/08/07
(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Plagiarism)

It is worth noting that material which is available on the internet,
including on Wikipedia, may be less reliable than material which is
published on paper. The UL Library (2005) publication *Cite it Rite*
contains some good advice on how to judge the reliability of material
that is available on the internet.

Bibliography

Park, C. (2004) 'Rebels without a clause: towards an institutional
framework for dealing with plagiarism by students' *Journal of Further
and Higher Education*, 28(3), pp.291-306.

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Papers*, 3rd ed. New York: St. Martin's Press.

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Wikipedia (2007) Plagiarism [online], available:
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Plagiarism [accessed 01/08/07].