

UTHealth School of Public Health Student Guide on Plagiarism

In all their work at UTHealth School of Public Health, students are expected to create original work, expressing in their own words their understanding of readings they use for completing assignments and the materials they use for writing papers. When students write about ideas or facts developed by other people, students must use their own words to summarize or paraphrase those ideas and they must attribute the source of the information by correctly citing the original author and publication.

Borrowing or copying another person's ideas or words, even accidentally, and presenting it as one's own work is plagiarism.

Under UTHealth SPH policy, plagiarism is treated as serious academic dishonesty, regardless of whether the person copied intentionally or accidentally.

See UTHealth SPH Handbook of Operating Procedures (HOOP) [Policy Number 186 – Student Conduct and Discipline](#) and [Appendix A - Unacceptable Conduct](#)

The purpose of this section is to help students understand what plagiarism is, how to prevent plagiarism in their own work, and how to correct their work when plagiarism occurs.

Defining Plagiarism: The Plagiarism Spectrum

Both defining and recognizing plagiarism has become more difficult with the growth of the Internet, which makes vast amounts of written material freely accessible throughout the world. As one recent study on plagiarism noted, "The Web's more interactive 'Web 2.0' evolution has created an environment that encourages information sharing and values the remixing and remaking of original content. In this environment, plagiarism is easier to commit and originality more difficult to define." (White paper the plagiarism spectrum: Instructor insights into the 10 types of plagiarism.2012) Nevertheless, students are responsible for educating themselves about what constitutes plagiarism and using good practices to prevent plagiarism in their own work. Plagiarism of any sort is completely unacceptable in academic work.

Plagiarism includes a range of activities from intentionally copying an entire document, word-for-word, and presenting it as one's own work, to accidentally borrowing a few phrases from a source and forgetting to reference the source.(Purdue online writing lab.2013) One study on plagiarism conducted in 2012(White paper the plagiarism spectrum: Instructor insights into the 10 types of plagiarism.2012) categorizes plagiarism into 10 different types of activities that cover the spectrum from most serious to least serious. The study gives names to each type of plagiarism:

1. CLONE: presents another person's work, word-for-word, as one's own.
2. CTRL-C: contains large portions of text copied from a single source.
3. FIND-REPLACE: substitutes synonyms for key words and phrases in the original but keeps the same basic content.
4. REMIX: paraphrases other sources without citation to make a text that fits together seamlessly.
5. RECYCLE: borrows generously from one's own previous work without citation; this is self-plagiarism.
6. HYBRID: combines in one paper some perfectly cited sources with some copied passages without citations.
7. MASHUP: mixes copied material from several different sources without proper citation.
8. 404 ERROR: includes inaccurate information about sources or citations to fake sources.
9. AGGREGATOR: includes proper citation, but the paper contains almost no original work.
10. RE-TWEET: includes proper citation, but relies too closely on the text's original wording and/or structure.

Examples of each of these types of plagiarism are presented and discussed at http://www.turnitin.com/assets/en_us/media/plagiarism_spectrum.php. A copy of the full study report, which discusses the seriousness and frequency of each type of plagiarism as well as approaches to preventing plagiarism, is available from the same website. (White paper the plagiarism spectrum: Instructor insights into the 10 types of plagiarism.2012)

Preventing Plagiarism

The best way to prevent plagiarism is to start with good note-taking habits. Students should practice taking notes in their own words about the main ideas in each source they read, rather than copying phrases directly into their notes. (Purdue online writing lab.2013)

Students should be encouraged to create evidence tables to summarize their research findings and organize their notes with references. See, for example, templates for evidence tables developed by The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) (About NICE.2013) in the United Kingdom, an organization set up in 1999 to provide national quality standards and guidance for organizations that provide public health, clinical, and social services.

Incorporating work by others

To place their own work in the context of current research, students must be able to properly summarize, paraphrase, and quote work by other people. Students should consult a guide to conducting research in the biomedical sciences for instructions on how to summarize, paraphrase, and quote sources. Several sources are:

1. The Purdue University Online Writing Laboratory (OWL)(Purdue online writing lab.2013) provides a good introduction to the important differences between summarizing, paraphrasing, and quoting, and explains the correct use of each. The website also provides illustrative examples, as well as exercises for students to practice correct paraphrasing and citation. See <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/563/01/> .
2. The Bedford Handbook (Hacker, 2009) a technical writing manual that is available as both a printed book and as an eBook, also provides excellent guidance in correct practices.
3. Academic Writing for Graduate Students: Essential Tasks and Skills (Swales & Feak, 2004) provides exercises in how to write summaries for graduate-level work.

Citing sources

Documents in public health use one of two basic styles for citing source materials.

1. **Author, date style:** Public health research in behavioral sciences and health promotions typically reference source materials by putting the first author's name and the publication date in parentheses within the text of the paper. This is the style used by the American Psychological Association.(American Psychological Association, 2010) All references are then listed in the bibliography by author, in alphabetical order.

Example:(Businelle et al., 2013)

Text with citation in parentheses:

Smokers consume more alcohol than nonsmokers, and drinkers are more likely to smoke than are nondrinkers (e.g., Bien & Burge, 1990; Dawson, 2000; Friedman, Tekawa, Klatsky, Sidney, & Armstrong, 1991).

Reference list at end of paper:

Bien, T. H., & Burge, R. (1990). Smoking and drinking: A review of the literature. *Substance Use & Misuse*, 25, 1429–1454. doi:10.3109/10826089009056229

Dawson, D. A. (2000). Drinking as a risk factor for sustained smoking. *Drug and Alcohol Dependence*, 59, 235–249. doi:10.1016/S0376-8716(99)00130-1

Friedman, G. D., Tekawa, I., Klatsky, A. L., Sidney, S., & Armstrong, M. A. (1991). Alcohol drinking and cigarette smoking: An exploration of the association in middle-aged men and women. *Drug and Alcohol Dependence*, 27, 283–290. doi:10.1016/0376-8716(91)90011-M

2. **Numbered reference:** Most other disciplines in public health use numbered references, either in parentheses or superscript. This is the style used by the American Medical Association. (Iverson et al., 2007). The references are listed at the end of the paper by number, in the order in which they first appear in the text.

Example: (Shipp, Cooper, Del Junco, Cooper, & Whitworth, 2013)

Text with numbered citations: Although agriculture is among the most hazardous industries in the USA, a number of minors labour in this industry as migrant and seasonal farmworkers. Based on the National Agricultural Workers Survey, minors comprise 6% of the entire hired farmworker population, which is largely Hispanic (83%), foreign-born (75%) and often temporary (i.e., migrant or seasonal).¹ The precise number of minors working as farmworkers is not known due to difficulties enumerating a mobile, temporary, underage and potentially undocumented workforce.¹ Crude estimates are in the hundreds of thousands.²

Reference list at end of paper:

1. Carroll D, Samardick RM, Bernard S, et al. Findings from the National Agricultural Workers Survey (NAWS) 2001–2002: a demographic and employment profile of United States farm workers. Washington, D.C: US DOL Office of the Assistant Secretary for Policy Office of Programmatic Policy, 2005. Report No.: 9.
2. US General Accounting Office. Child labor in agriculture: changes needed to better protect health and educational opportunities. Washington DC: US General Accounting Office, 1998. Report No.: GAO/HEHS-98-193.

3. Manage citations and create good bibliographies

Students are strongly urged to use a bibliographic database such as **RefWorks** to manage citations and create bibliographies for papers. The program **RefWorks** is provided free to all students and faculty through the school's library website. Each semester, members of the library staff teach workshops on how to use **RefWorks**. Students can also use the **RefWorks** handouts posted under Guides to Using Library Resources at: <http://libguides.sph.uth.tmc.edu/refworks-handouts>.

Checking for originality

All students should check their work for originality and overlap with other sources BEFORE they submit written work for any course. UTHealth School of Public Health provides free access to the program **Turnitin** on Canvas as one tool that students can use to help them check their work for originality and make corrections before submitting an assignment to the instructor. However, the instructor sets the parameters for student access to the originality report and will also determine if students can check their papers multiple times before the assignment's due date. Information about and instructions for using **Turnitin** are located at on the Academic Affairs page, under the "Guides" tab (<https://sph.uth.edu/academics/academic-affairs/>).

Turnitin is a tool in Canvas that uses the Internet to compare student writing against a database of journal articles, other texts, and papers submitted by students worldwide. **Turnitin** identifies similarities between the student document and these other texts.

Students can use **Turnitin** to:

- check the originality of their own work BEFORE they submit it to an instructor provided the instructor has set the assignment up to include multiple

- submissions through Turnitin before the due date of the assignment.
- identify parts of their writing that need revision because they borrow ideas or words from others.

Interpreting a Turnitin Report

Turnitin gives a % matching score to indicate how much text in the student paper was found to be very similar to a source.

A high percentage matching score usually indicates that the student followed the original source too closely. A score of 90 percent means that there is a 90 percent probability that these two sentences express the same idea, even if the words are not identical. However, a high match score does not necessarily mean that the student copied material. For example, citations and lists of references are usually marked as matching other sources, because other sources have cited the same resources. Matching citations do not count as copying.

Alternatively, a low match score may still indicate that the student borrowed a sentence or phrase, and must edit rewrite the section. Further, a 0% matching score is not a guarantee that the work is completely original, you may not have included adequate sources.

In a **Turnitin** report, students should check to make sure that:

- When quoted text matches the original source exactly word-for-word, the quotation appears in quotation marks and the original source is correctly cited with the page number.
- Paraphrases or summaries of ideas or facts from a source are explained in the student's own words
- Each source for each idea or fact is properly cited.
- Any phrases that match more than a few (3 or 4) words in a source are rewritten in the student's own words.

There is no straight forward answer to the question: 'What percentage of my assignment can match with other sources?' This decision is made on a number of factors and a **Turnitin** Originality Report forms just one part of this decision making process. Your instructor will look at the paper and the originality report to make the determination of whether or not something is plagiarism, and to what extent, i.e., intentional plagiarism, unintentional plagiarism, improper/lack of citation, or mere coincidence. Suspicious documents submitted for course credit that contain attribution issues, direct copying, and/or patch writing will be reported to the Assistant Dean of Students for further investigation. If your Originality Report identifies any of the potential problems described in this handout, you should take steps to improve your academic practices.

References

About NICE. (2013). Retrieved from
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Businelle, M. S., Lam, C. Y., Kendzor, D. E., Cofta-Woerpel, L., McClure, J. B., Cinciripini, P. M., & Wetter, D. W. (2013). Alcohol consumption and urges to smoke among women during a smoking cessation attempt. *Experimental and Clinical Psychopharmacology*, 21(1), 29-37. doi:10.1037/a0031009; 10.1037/a0031009

Hacker, D. (2009). *The bedford handbook* (8th ed.). Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's.

Iverson, C., Christiansen, S., Flanagan, A., Fontanarosa, P., Glass, R., Gregoline, B., Young, R. (2007). *AMA manual of style: A guide for authors and editors* Oxford University Press New York, NY.

Purdue online writing lab. (2013). Retrieved from <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/>

Shipp, E. M., Cooper, S. P., Del Junco, D. J., Cooper, C. J., & Whitworth, R. E. (2013). Acute occupational injury among adolescent farmworkers from south texas. *Injury Prevention : Journal of the International Society for Child and Adolescent Injury Prevention*, 19(4), 264-270. doi:10.1136/injuryprev-2012-040538; 10.1136/injuryprev-2012-040538

Swales, J. M., & Feak, C. B. (2004). *Academic writing for graduate students: Essential tasks and skills* (2nd ed.). Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press.

White paper the plagiarism spectrum: Instructor insights into the 10 types of plagiarism. (2012). Retrieved from http://pages.turnitin.com/plagiarism_spectrum.html