



# Plagiarism & Referencing

Confused about referencing and plagiarism?

This infosheet will help you clarify the following points:

- What is plagiarism?
- What does plagiarism include?
- How can I avoid plagiarism?
- What do I need to reference?

## What is Plagiarism?

- Plagiarism is using someone else's words or work or ideas or thinking, and failing to give a reference/s to that person when you are writing your assignment;
- Giving a reference means giving both a short reference [family name & year] inside your assignment when you are writing about the ideas etc [so-called "in-text citation" or "in-body / in-text reference"], and a longer fully-detailed reference in your "List of References" / "Bibliography". Failing to do these things can result in you being accused of "plagiarism".
- Plagiarism can be accidental or deliberate. Although deliberate plagiarism is viewed as worse, and is likely to mean serious sanctions, both forms will create difficulties for you. Accidental plagiarism can easily happen when you take notes from a book or a journal etc, and you forget / don't bother to make a clear record of exactly where the notes are from when you're writing them. This can easily happen when you're in a rush or tired.

## What does plagiarism include?

- Copying – this means submitting someone else’s entire work as your own work. The original work could be:
  - from a book;
  - from the internet;
  - from a classmate;
  - from a student in a previous year at mdx;
  - or from a student at a different university
- Copying parts from a number of different books, journals, or internet sites, and failing to give a reference for the different parts.
- Failing to indicate a direct quotation from a source; a direct quotation [or quote] means the exact original words as written by someone else in a book /journal / internet site etc (quotation marks should be used).
- Paraphrasing or synthesising material from a book, journal article or internet site etc without giving a reference for it in your writing.
- Composing a paragraph by joining together sentences from a number of sources and not acknowledging them in the text (this is called “patch-writing”).
- Using your own previous work in another assignment without acknowledging it; this could be your work from an earlier year at the same university, or work from your time at a different university.

## How can I avoid plagiarism?

- Write notes in your own words where possible [i.e. paraphrasing & summarising]; try to avoid copying and pasting from your sources.
- Be fanatical about keeping accurate records of where you get your information from when making notes [i.e. the author, year & publication].
- In your own writing, use a clear & consistent system of referencing. Often this will be the Harvard system. Check your module / programme handbook for the relevant referencing system.
- Always provide a full list of references in your Bibliography / List of References.
- When in doubt – give a reference!

## What do I need to reference?

- All ideas & information you get from books & journal articles & the internet.
- Distinctive ideas / facts 'belonging' to someone who originally proposed the idea/s.
- Information/data from a particular source [e.g. statistical info, case studies, reports].
- Any quotation/s you use.

## Further Information

- Remember that generally speaking, the more references you use in your writing, the more likely it is that you will probably get good grades, because it shows you have been doing your research and finding out information about your topic/s.
- References will often help you to persuade your reader to accept what you say.
- Referencing carefully and properly shows you have attention to detail

# Plagiarism & Referencing

## Still confused?

- Visit the relevant LSS Pages at <http://libguides.mdx.ac.uk/plagiarismreferencing>
- Check out the Referencing guides, which are available at <http://libguides.mdx.ac.uk/content.php?pid=220238&sid=1828721>
- For information on Turnitin, take a look at <http://libguides.mdx.ac.uk/content.php?pid=220238&sid=1828725>
- Book yourself a 1-1 AWL tutorial – you can book directly through our website.
- Attend an LET Open “Understanding Plagiarism” workshop – these run throughout the year from October to May; further details on our website and/or at the Library pages above.