Avoiding plagiarism

Related articles:

- academic honesty and plagiarism: responding to an allegation
- academic honesty for research students

To help you avoid plagiarism, we recommend that you:

1. learn to reference according to the requirements of your faculty, school, or department
2. complete the Academic Honesty in Education Module (AHEM)
3. read relevant style guides, course handbooks and your unit outlines
4. complete any training provided by your faculty on how to reference properly

If in doubt, talk with your lecturer, unit coordinator, or support staff within your faculty.

Academic Honesty in Education Module (AHEM)

Commencing students must successfully complete the AHEM in their first semester. This is an online module. The University expects students to complete all assessments with integrity, to have a good understanding of what constitutes academic dishonesty and to avoid it. We recommend all students complete AHEM as soon as possible.

Improve your skills in researching, note-taking, editing and time management

Poor study habits can lead to accidental referencing errors. When researching for your assessments, you will often be making a lot of notes. In your notes, always differentiate your own thoughts and ideas from the quotes and ideas you take from the texts you are reading. This will help you avoid the mistake of coming back to your notes later and thinking that another author’s quotes or ideas are your own original ideas. Poor note-taking can easily lead to an accusation of plagiarism. Learn to reference everything fully
as you research and prepare your assessment. Keep your own thoughts and ideas separate.

It is best to not rely only on Google, Baidu or Youtube for your academic research. The University’s academic liaison librarians can help with ideas for scholarly search engines.

**Do not leave researching, editing and referencing to the last minute.** Make sure you have enough time to properly check your references and assessment before submitting.

**Undertake group work honestly and responsibly**

Working in groups creates significant challenges, especially when students prepare different parts of the assessment separately. Establish processes for cross-checking all references, and the quality of sources, for all group participants. The whole group will receive allegations of academic dishonesty even if only one member was directly responsible for the problematic section/s.

**Learn to paraphrase properly**

Get expert help early in your course. Learning how to paraphrase appropriately takes time, patience, and practice. If you are unclear on how to paraphrase well, seek advice from your unit coordinator, faculty learning advisers, the Learning Centre or the academic liaison librarians.

**Improve your academic English skills**

**Do not rely on Google Translate** to change drafts that you might first write in your home language. Using Google Translate too much can lead to a high similarity index in the Turnitin compatibility report, meaning you will face an allegation of academic dishonesty. If you need to improve your communication in English seek assistance from the the Learning Centre or practice your conversational skills with the University’s peer learning advisors.
Need more assistance?

Contact us, our SAAO Service will help you:
Phone: (02) 9351 3715
Email: help@supra.usyd.edu.au

Contact the Learning Centre
Camperdown/Darlington Campus: (02) 9351 3853
Cumberland Campus: (02) 9351 9319

Check the University policy register, in particular:

- Academic Honesty in Coursework Policy 2015 and Academic Honesty Procedures 2016
- Research Code of Conduct 2019
- University of Sydney (Student Discipline) Rule 2016
- Educational Integrity Decision-making and Penalty Guidelines 2018

Last updated Feb 2020