About
Plagiarism
and
How to Avoid It

Hot Tips
for PolyU Students

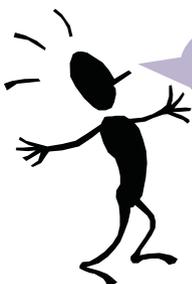Academic Integrity

Don't let it get away from you

THE HONG KONG
POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY
香港理工大學

What is Plagiarism?

In brief, plagiarism is passing off someone else's work or ideas as your own to gain some benefit. For students, 'benefit' may mean trying to get a better grade or mark, or meeting a deadline so marks are not lost. Whether you plagiarise deliberately or accidentally, it is unacceptable.

Plagiarism comes in different forms. Test what you know. Place a **X** beside any of the following actions that you think will be considered as plagiarism:

1. Copying from a classmate and pretending the work is your own.

2. Copying material, without acknowledgement, from any source (Internet, books, journals, the newspaper).

3. Copying exactly and acknowledging the source of a text, but not indenting or using quotation marks.

4. Copying a sentence but changing a few words to make it look different.

5. Rearranging another writer's words and sentences, or taking sentences from a number of different sources and joining them together to pass them off as your own work.

6. Using someone else's ideas, facts, graphs, tables, codes without acknowledgement.

7. Allowing your own work to be copied by another student who hands it in for marking.

8. You and your friend each does a part of an individual assignment and you combine the ideas and writings to be your assignment.

9. Paying someone to do your assignments or buying them from Internet sites.

10. Not acknowledging help you have been given with your work from people including friends, family or tutors.

11. Handing in the same assignment for more than one class.

Ayah! Tell me the answers. I need to know!

You certainly do! Take a look on p.7

What's Wrong with Plagiarism?

Here are just a few reasons why plagiarism is wrong, and not worth the risks:

- Not doing your own work means that you limit your learning (you cheat yourself).
- Taking someone else's work and not giving them credit is unfair to them (you cheat others).
- You may damage your future study and employment prospects (who wants a dishonest student or employee?).
- You won't develop the skills you need to get and keep a job.
- You damage the reputation of the University (and other graduates who have done their own work).
- You will be breaking PolyU's rules.

What are PolyU's Rules and Penalties for Plagiarism?

PolyU views plagiarism as a serious disciplinary offence.

Some plagiarism cases are handled by your teacher or your Department. Other cases are referred to the Student Discipline Committee. Penalties vary according to the circumstances but you might expect one of the following if you plagiarise:

- A reprimand
- A lower grade or a fail for the plagiarised work
- A lower classification than you might otherwise have got for your degree
- Suspension of studies for a specified period of time
- Expulsion for a specified or indefinite period

A̶ FAIL

This work is plagiarised!

No gain, ALL PAIN!

How do I Avoid Plagiarism?

One solution might be that you only write about your own ideas and avoid using other sources altogether. But that's NOT a good idea because you learn a great deal from what other people have thought, invented, created, constructed, composed or written. Here are some far better strategies for making your work plagiarism-free:

Use sources with care and respect

- Take careful notes so you remember where you got your information.
- Keep track of all the sources you have used for each assignment.
- Cite all your sources in your finished work making it clear who said what. By citing sources in your writing, you can provide background information about previous investigations, support your own ideas, illustrate a point you want to make, and demonstrate the breadth of your research on a topic.
- Include all your sources in your reference (or bibliography) section.
- Acknowledge all the help you get.

Find out the expectations of the University, your Department and your teacher

- Read your Student Handbook. In the *Regulations and Rules* section, under *Academic Studies,* you'll find *Academic Integrity and Plagiarism.*
- Ask your Department for specific citing and referencing guidelines.
- Ask your teacher how much you can work with your classmates on individual or group assignments if you are not clear. If you don't know the difference between co-operation and collusion, then ask.
- Read and understand the Honour Declaration before you sign it.

Develop your academic and personal skills

- Plan carefully and start early so you have time to do your own work.
- Attend courses to improve your writing and referencing skills.
- Ask for help (from your teacher, the Library, or the English Language Centre) if you are unsure about what you must do.

A little pain but MUCH to GAIN!

Play safe!

- Don't leave your completed work lying around.
- Talk and study with your classmates but don't lend your work to others in case they copy it. It may be difficult to prove who did the work first.
- Don't be lazy. Do your own work!

'Fast Guide' to Citing and Referencing

This 'Fast Guide' contains several essential things that you must know and be able to do. The examples in this section will provide an easy reference point for you when you are doing your own work.

Where do I refer to sources?

Acknowledge your sources both in-text (within the paper/report) AND at the end of the paper/report (in a list that is called 'references' or 'bibliography').

How do I refer to sources?

There are different styles of citing or referring to sources, whether in-text or at the end of papers. The *American Psychological Association (APA) Style* and the *Vancouver Referencing Style* are two commonly used styles. You must use the same style consistently in a paper or a report. If in doubt, ask your teacher. The following two sections show you how to cite books and journal articles in-text and in the reference list. Do note however, that if you are citing other sources such as a newspaper article or a website, there are different rules to observe and you need to find these out.

In-text citations

There are two basic methods of acknowledging source materials within the text.

1. Using direct quotations

For a sizeable chunk (around 30 words or more)

- Indent the quotation (about five spaces from the left margin).
- Start on a new line.
- Use ellipsis (...) to indicate omission.
- No quotation marks are required.

APA style (usually for arts and social science subjects)	One of the definitions for conflict within the marketing channel was established by Stern and Gorman (1969). Their view was that a conflict was a process of system changes: ... a change occurs in the task environment or within a channel member's organization that eventually has implications for the channel members ... when the other affected members perceive the change as cause of frustration a conflict situation emerges. (p. 58)
Vancouver referencing style (usually for medical, science and engineering subjects)	One of the definitions for conflict within the marketing channel was established by Stern and Gorman (1). Their view was that a conflict was a process of system changes: ... a change occurs in the task environment or within a channel member's organization that eventually has implications for the channel members ... when the other affected members perceive the change as cause of frustration a conflict situation emerges. (1)

'Fast Guide' to Citing and Referencing cont ...

For smaller amounts, incorporate the quotation into the text and use quotation marks.

APA style	According to Chan (2003), "the experiment must be repeated several times for reliability and validity" (p. 46). Brow (2004) also points out that "this is of paramount importance" (p. 185).
Vancouver referencing style	According to Chan (5), "the experiment must be repeated several times for reliability and validity." Brow (6) also points out that "this is of paramount importance".

2. Paraphrasing

To paraphrase, you report the source information using your own words. But you also need to refer to the sources with bibliographic information so your readers can locate the items.

APA style	As Chan (2003, p. 46) points out, there is a need to repeat the experiment several times to ensure that the experiment is reliable and valid. Research by Brow (2004, p. 185) also suggests that this process is very significant.
Vancouver referencing style	As Chan (5) points out, there is a need to repeat the experiment several times to ensure that the experiment is reliable and valid. Research by Brow (6) also suggests that this process is very significant.

References or Bibliography

This is a list of all the sources you have referred to in your writing and is set out at the end of the text.

APA style Sources listed in alphabetical order by author's name and then by date
a book ⇨ Brow, B. (2000). *IT synergy in the design industry*. Singapore: Lion Publishers.
a journal article ⇨ Chan, K. P. (2003). Information, formation and transformation. *Journal of Breakthroughs in Education Practices, 18*(3), 1-20.
Vancouver referencing style Sources listed in numerical order following the sequence of the cited works in the text
a journal article ⇨ 5. Chan KP. Information, formation and transformation. Journal of Breakthroughs in Education Practices. 2003;18(3):1-20.
a book ⇨ 6. Brow B. IT synergy in the design industry. Singapore: Lion Publishers; 2000.

Note: Here are two very helpful sites for information about the different referencing styles and the rules that apply to each.

http://libguides.library.curtin.edu.au/content.php?pid=141214   http://wwwlib.murdoch.edu.au/find/citation/

PolyU Uses Electronic Tools to Help Deter Plagiarism

Why does PolyU support the use of electronic plagiarism prevention and detection tools?

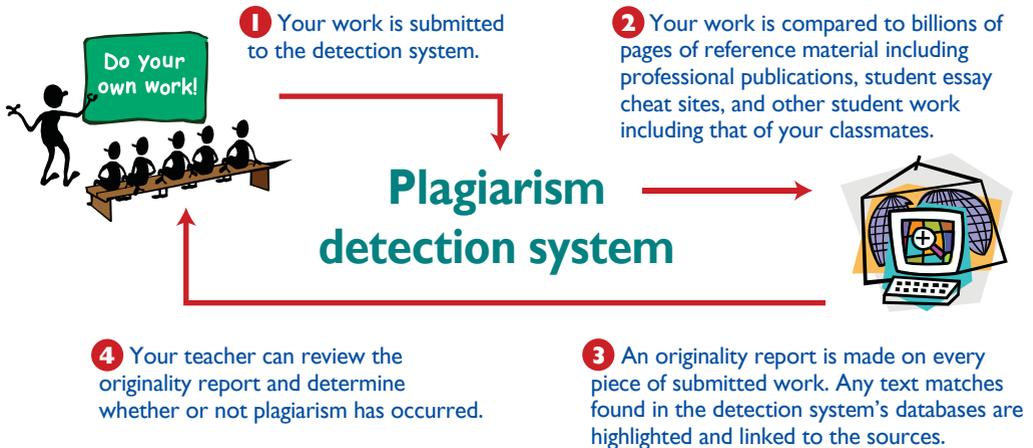Here are some reasons why PolyU has introduced the use of such tools:

- These tools can help students be more aware of plagiarism and improve their work.
- The plagiarism detection function of these tools thoroughly checks students' work for plagiarism and so students get the marks and grades they deserve (as well as the penalties!)
- PolyU can be confident in telling employers that "our students do their own work".

The main purpose is to help you rather than to catch and punish you.

Which tools does PolyU use?

PolyU provides licensed use of the plagiarism prevention and detection system *Turnitin*, as well as *SafeAssign* operated on the Blackboard e-learning management system.

These systems work like this:

1 Your work is submitted to the detection system.

2 Your work is compared to billions of pages of reference material including professional publications, student essay cheat sites, and other student work including that of your classmates.

Plagiarism detection system

4 Your teacher can review the originality report and determine whether or not plagiarism has occurred.

3 An originality report is made on every piece of submitted work. Any text matches found in the detection system's databases are highlighted and linked to the sources.

For more information about how to use these two systems at PolyU, refer to the *Student Guide to Using Turnitin Assignment* (http://edc.polyu.edu.hk/PSP/SG_Turnitin.pdf) and *Student Guide to Using SafeAssign* (http://edc.polyu.edu.hk/PSP/SG_SafeAssign.pdf).

Quiz Answers

All of the actions in the Quiz except cases 3, 7, 10 constitute plagiarism. Cases 3, 7, 10 are not plagiarism but they are academically improper, so you MUST also avoid.

Getting More Information and Help at PolyU

- Your Student Handbook (see *Academic Studies* in the *Regulations and Rules* section) http://www.polyu.edu.hk/as/

- The Online Tutorial on Academic Integrity has been developed to help you understand the importance of honest behaviours in academic pursuits and how to avoid plagiarism in your work. It is available at LEARN@PolyU(理學網). For more information on the Online Tutorial, refer to the *Online Tutorial on Academic Integrity: A Student Guide.* http://edc.polyu.edu.hk/PSP/SG_Tutorial.pdf

- The English Language Centre (ELC) in A core provides resources and services.
  - The Centre for Independent Language Learning (CILL) provides information about in-text referencing, quoting, summarising, paraphrasing, and how to write a bibliography: http://elc.polyu.edu.hk/CILL/reference.aspx. Also read "English for Academic Purposes" (book available in CILL) for advice and examples.
  - The Referencing Guides provide detailed explanations on citation mechanics of different referencing styles as well as examples on referring to different types of sources: http://elc.polyu.edu.hk/referencing/
  - The Reference Machine formats references for you: http://elc.polyu.edu.hk/CILL/referenceMachine.aspx
  - The Writing Assistance Programme offers individual help with your writing: http://elc.polyu.edu.hk/WAP/

- The Pao Yue-kong Library offers workshops and an online programme for students. Module 4: 'Managing Information' of the Online Information Literacy Programme will help you learn how to avoid plagiarism, cite sources, and use bibliographic software. If you pass the quizzes for all 4 modules, you will be awarded a certificate by the Library. http://www.lib.polyu.edu.hk/literacy/module2_4/manage0.htm

The above information can be found on the "Resources for Students" webpage: http://edc.polyu.edu.hk/psp.htm.

It's easy to do my own work now that I know what to do!