

## **Plagiarism Guidelines**

Updated November 17, 2005

On April 5, 2005, an ad hoc committee was appointed to recommend a definition and guidelines regarding plagiarism and its handling at Southeastern Louisiana University. The following document is intended to be a useful tool for faculty and students who earnestly hope to avoid plagiarism incidents.

### I. Plagiarism described

- A. Plagiarism is a form of academic dishonesty.
- B. An act of plagiarism involves:
  - 1. Using another person's language (e.g., spoken or written phrases, terms), ideas or creative work without giving credit to that person, AND
  - 2. Presenting the material as original work
- C. Plagiarism includes:
  - 1. Paraphrasing information from a source without appropriately acknowledging the source
  - 2. Insufficient paraphrasing
  - 3. Not indicating verbatim citations with either quotations marks or block quotes
  - 4. Copying and pasting electronic text, graphics or audio/visual media into a work without citing the source (One common plagiaristic practice is known as "patch writing," wherein an individual takes blocks of text from various sources and patches them together into a new document to hand in.)
  - 5. Using someone else's homework
  - 6. Using (e.g., buying, copying, stealing, accepting as a gift) papers or research completed by another person and turning it in as original work
  - 7. Copying another person's visual artwork, musical composition, choreography, etc. and passing it off as an original creation
  - 8. Unauthorized multiple submission, wherein an individual "self plagiarizes" by turning in the same work for more than one assignment without the instructor's permission
- D. Plagiarism occurs both intentionally and unintentionally; levels of plagiarism can be summarized as follows (Moore, University of Kent):
  - 1. Level 1: An individual attempts to deceive others by using someone else's work, or by deliberately omitting references and methodically changing words or other aspects of a creative work.
  - 2. Level 2: An individual disregards the recognized conventions of written language (e.g., quotation marks and references), or the arts (e.g., citing copyrights). In written work, there may be no distinction between direct quotes and paraphrases. This type of plagiarism is more haphazard, and more easily detected.
  - 3. Level 3: An individual naively and unintentionally leaves out proper acknowledgments of sources. The individual fails to make sufficient changes when paraphrasing text or using another artwork as inspiration.

### II. How faculty can help students avoid committing plagiarism

- A. Include a passage on plagiarism/academic honesty in the syllabus; examples may be obtained from the Center for Faculty Excellence module, or during new faculty orientation

- B. Discuss examples of plagiarism in class – these should be tailored to fit the discipline and course
- C. Clarify consequences for plagiarism (see examples in section IV)
- D. Provide information on how sources should be acknowledged
- E. Notify students that all appropriate measures will be used to detect plagiarism
  - 1. Comparison within the class
  - 2. Comparison with previous classes
  - 3. Checking library sources
  - 4. Technology (e.g., Turnitin.com)
  - 5. Analysis of students' writing level and style
- F. Strive to assign tasks that are less susceptible to plagiarism; examples may be obtained from the Center for Faculty Excellence module or during new faculty orientation
- G. Design written assignments as a process, with a record of a literature survey, an outline, and several drafts
- H. Require submission of photocopies of all quoted and paraphrased sources
- I. Use the comparison feature of the originality reports in Turnitin.com
- J. Provide the following link to Sims Library's website "How to Cite Resources"  
<http://www.selu.edu/Library/resguides/webcite.htm>

### III. How administration can help decrease plagiarism

- A. Require plagiarism awareness training for all students in early courses (e.g., English 101, Library Science 102, Orientation 101, Freshman Seminar 101)
- B. Establish a plagiarism prevention/detection/reporting module for faculty through the Center for Faculty Excellence
- C. Make plagiarism detection technology available
- D. Ensure that faculty members' retain the discretion to penalize students who commit plagiarism in their classes
- E. Designate an individual or group to assist faculty in verifying plagiarism, deciding the severity of offense (s), and assigning consequences, and to provide support during the reporting and appeals processes
- F. Facilitate the reporting of all confirmed acts of plagiarism (at any level) to the Chief Judicial Officer, who will maintain a database that identifies students who plagiarize in multiple courses in different colleges
- G. Minimize time and paperwork requirements when faculty report plagiarism
- H. Honor faculty's need to be informed as to the disposition of each case, to the extent possible within the guidelines of the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

### IV. If plagiarism is suspected

- A. Follow current procedure on pages 58 and 59 of current catalog.
- B. Maintain a hard copy record using a version of the form created by Southeastern's English Department and/or the form created by the Office of Judicial Affairs.
- C. Once it is established that plagiarism in fact occurred, this form MUST be forwarded to the Chief Judicial Officer for inclusion in the database
- D. Use one or more of the following recommended strategies for confronting a student with an accusation of plagiarism (California State University, Fullerton)
  - 1. Attempt to positively identify the source of the plagiarized material

2. If the source cannot be identified, question the student about the assignment (i.e., ask for definitions of terms, further explanation of ideas, how the research was done, how reference materials were chosen, from which library/electronic sources reference materials were obtained)
3. If there is not enough time to resolve the issue before the end of a semester, the student may be given an “I” grade
4. Request that the student submit rough draft or notes
5. Have all pertinent information available (e.g., other work samples that may be used as comparison)
6. Ask another faculty member to be present during the confrontation (Southeastern English Dept.)
7. If the student becomes agitated/uncivil, consider the following (California State University, Fullerton):
  - a. Remain calm and speak in a calm, controlled manner. This may prevent the situation from escalating or may diffuse the tension.
  - b. Try not to take behavior or remarks personally, even though they may be directed at you.
  - c. Be specific when describing the violation that has occurred. Describe the behavior without focusing on the person. Explain why the behavior is a problem.
  - d. Use a “time-out” to allow the student to regain composure, or explain that if the student cannot remain calm, it is not possible to discuss the issue at this time and that a meeting should be scheduled when the student can be calm.
  - e. If inappropriate behavior persists or is threatening, explain to the student that the University Police will be called and disciplinary action initiated if the behavior does not cease – follow through if necessary.

## V. Consequences

- A. Consequences will be administered based upon
  1. Level of plagiarism
  2. Number of offenses
- B. Consequences should mirror the penalties that may result from such an offense in the community-at-large and the professional world.
- C. Because of their advanced standing and academic experience, graduate students are held to an even higher standard of accountability than undergraduate students. Therefore, consequences for plagiarism committed by graduate students will normally be more severe than those for undergraduate students (California State University, Fullerton)
- D. Examples of consequences for acts of plagiarism may include:
  1. Assignment-specific penalties:
    - a. Point deductions
    - b. Letter grade deductions
    - c. Redoing/resubmitting the same assignment
    - d. Preparing an alternate assignment
    - e. Failing grade on the assignment
  2. Course-specific penalties
    - a. Letter grade deduction in the course
    - b. Failing grade in the course
    - c. Requirement to successfully complete a remediation workshop on plagiarism

3. University penalties

- a. Restrictions in student privileges (e.g., participation in student organizations and/or athletic teams)
- b. Reprimand and probation
- c. Suspension
- d. Expulsion

\*NOTE: Once a case of plagiarism is transferred from an academic department to Judicial Affairs, the faculty member no longer has control over the case's outcome or any penalties that may be imposed. Judicial Affairs, as a separate, non-academic entity, follows a prescribed due process protocol.