

Advice about plagiarism

What is plagiarism?

Plagiarism means presenting someone else's work as your own. If you present the words or ideas of an author or another source without stating that it is someone else's work, you could be accused of plagiarism. Plagiarism is a form of cheating or copying someone else's work without acknowledging the source.

Why is it important to know about plagiarism?

If you are found to have plagiarised it could have serious, negative results. Penalties for plagiarism, especially in assessed work, can be very severe and may include failing your course; especially if there are repeated incidents. Many students have trouble understanding what plagiarism is and incidents of plagiarism often result from students' misunderstanding rather than a deliberate intention to cheat. It is your responsibility as a student to make sure that you understand and avoid plagiarism; ignorance will not be accepted as an excuse or as a defence against an accusation of plagiarism.

Referencing

Whenever you use a quotation from a book, or reproduce an author's ideas (even in your own words), you should indicate what the source is; this process is known as 'referencing'. There are different styles of referencing. Make sure you check which one is preferred with your academic department. Do not rely on the advice of friends/classmates. If you are an international student, you may find the accepted ways of quoting and referencing work in the UK are very different from those you are used to.

You will be plagiarising if you copy someone else's work and pretend it is your own, even if you change some words and phrases. You must not copy any source material without correctly referencing. Source material includes: books, journals, newspapers, web sites, other people's essays and your tutor's handouts. You must always acknowledge and give full credit to all your sources.

Consequences of plagiarism

Academic staff at the University of Liverpool are trained to detect plagiarism and special software is also used to assist detection. If you are suspected of plagiarism you may be issued with a written warning. A copy of this warning will be placed on your student record. Plagiarism could also lead to you receiving a mark of zero for your assessment and may also cause you to fail the module. In cases of repeated incidents of plagiarism, it may lead to the Board of Examiners not granting you your final award.

What should you do next?

- Look at the full University policy on the Student Administration and Support web pages: www.liv.ac.uk/sas. Click on the link to 'Guidelines & Policies' and then 'Guidelines for Dealing with Plagiarism and Collusion' under the heading of Policies and Procedures.
- Learn how to reference correctly. Information will be provided by your academic department.
- Read more about what plagiarism is and how to avoid it. Ask at the University library or bookshop for books on referencing. Your tutor may be able to recommend some good books.
- Make sure you are aware of any specific advice on plagiarism from your academic department. There may be some information in your department's student handbook. If not, speak to your lecturer or personal tutor.
- If you are unsure or confused about any aspect of plagiarism then check with an academic member of staff.