

## NCTA PLAGIARISM POLICY

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to define plagiarism, provide information on techniques for avoiding plagiarism, and to define procedures to be employed by members of the NCTA community when plagiarism is suspected.

Much of the information in this document has been adopted entirely or in part from the University of Nebraska Lincoln College of Graduate Studies (**Source:** <http://www.unl.edu/gradstudies/current/integrity#plagiarism>).

### **Definition**

Plagiarism is presenting the work of another as one's own (i.e., without proper acknowledgement of the source) and submitting examination, theses, reports, speeches, drawings, laboratory notes or other academic work in whole or in part as one's own when such work has been prepared by another person or copied from another person. Materials covered by this definition include, but are not limited to, text, video, audio, images, photographs, websites, electronic and online materials, and other intellectual property (source: <http://stuafs.unl.edu/dos/code#appendix-B>).

### **Avoiding Plagiarism**

Members of the NCTA community are held to a "zero-tolerance" standard concerning plagiarism. No level of plagiarism is acceptable at the college. If you have questions about the proper way to cite someone else's words or ideas in your own writing, ask your instructor. Services for learning how to avoid plagiarism are available at the NCTA Writing Center or upon appointment with the Writing Center Director, Eric Reed ([ereed2@unl.edu](mailto:ereed2@unl.edu)).

Course assignments may be reviewed using SafeAssign, a plagiarism prevention service available to NCTA faculty and students in Blackboard. An instructor may require students to submit assignments through SafeAssign.

### **When to give credit**

To avoid plagiarizing, give credit every time you:

- Use or refer to another person's idea, opinion or theory from a "magazine, book, newspaper, song, TV program, movie, web page, computer program, letter, advertisement, or any other medium" (OWL, 2003)
- Cite or state any facts or statistics that are not common knowledge
- Quote another person's exact spoken or written words, either taken from the media listed above or heard first hand through conversation, interview or email (and these words must be placed within quotation marks)
- Reprint (or use as a basis for graphics you create) any graphics, illustrations or pictures from any of the media listed earlier
- Paraphrase another person's spoken or written words

### **Consequences of Engaging in Plagiarism**

Plagiarism is a serious academic offense. Academic consequences for plagiarism may range from a penalty grade to dismissal from the college. As with all instances of academic integrity, judgements about a student's work, including judgements about plagiarism, are the responsibility of the instructor.

Disagreements regarding an occurrence of plagiarism or sanctions for engaging in plagiarism are normally resolved by means of a conference between the student and instructor. A student may access the NCTA grade appeal process if he or she wishes to appeal a plagiarism sanction. See the current NCTA College Catalog for complete details about the grade appeal process.

### Terms to know

**Common knowledge:** Facts that can be found in many places and are likely to be known by many people.

**Example:** John F. Kennedy was elected president of the United States in 1960.

This is generally known information — you do not need to document this fact. However, you must document facts that are not generally known, as well as ideas that interpret facts.

**Example:** According to the American Family Leave Coalition's new book, *Family Issues and Congress*, President Bush's relationship with Congress has hindered family leave legislation (6). The idea that Bush's "relationship with congress has hindered family leave legislation" is not a fact, but an interpretation; therefore, you need to cite your source.

**Quotation:** A verbatim repetition of someone's words. When you quote, place the passage in quotation marks and document the source according to a standard documentation style.

**Example:** According to Peter S. Pritchard in *USA Today*, "Public schools need reform but they're irreplaceable in teaching all the nation's young" (14).

**Paraphrase:** Using someone else's ideas but putting them in your own words. This is the skill you will use most often when incorporating source material into your own writing. Although you use your own words to paraphrase, you still must acknowledge the source of the information.

### Examples of proper use of others' words and ideas

To illustrate an example of plagiarism, as well as proper ways to use the words and ideas of someone else, we present a short original passage, followed by examples of a plagiarized paraphrase and an acceptable paraphrase.

<b>Original text</b>	Dengue virus infections in humans can be subclinical or can cause illnesses ranging from a mild, flulike syndrome with rash and some hemorrhagic manifestations (dengue fever [DF]) to a severe and sometimes fatal disease, with coagulopathy, capillary leakage, and hypovolemic shock (dengue hemorrhagic fever [DHF]).	This is the original text from page 1 of "Dengue Fever in Humanized NOD/SCID Mice" by D.A. Bente, et al. in the <i>Journal of Virology</i> , November 2005.
<b>Unacceptable paraphrase</b>	Dengue virus infections in humans can range in intensity from subclinical manifestations, to a mild flulike illness with a rash and some hemorrhaging (dengue fever [DF]) to a severe and sometimes fatal disease with blood clotting defects, leaking capillaries, and hypovolemic shock (dengue hemorrhagic fever	This is considered <b>plagiarism</b> because the writer has: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• only changed around a few words and phrases</li><li>• failed to cite a source for any of the facts or ideas</li></ul>

[DHF]).

**Acceptable  
paraphrase**

Dengue virus infections affect humans in a variety of ways. In some, the disease doesn't show up at all; others may have a rash and some minor bleeding, while still others may experience severe bleeding, shock, and even death (Bente et al., 2005).

This is **acceptable paraphrasing** because the writer:

- accurately relays the information in the original
- uses her own words
- lets her reader know the source of her information.

**Acceptable  
paraphrase  
with quotation**

In humans, dengue virus infections can range from mild to severe, from a flu-like syndrome "to a severe and sometimes fatal disease, with coagulopathy, capillary leakage, and hypovolemic shock" (Bente, et al., 2005, p.1).

This is **acceptable paraphrasing** because the writer:

- gives credit for the ideas in this passage
- indicates which parts are taken directly from the source by putting them in quotation marks and citing the page number.

**Guide for faculty**

- Educate students about plagiarism by citing the definition above in syllabi and referring students to this policy.
- Assign an appropriate style of citation for assignments, such as MLA, APA, CSE, or Chicago.
- Require students to submit assignments through a software program such as SafeAssign provided by Blackboard. While instructors are strongly recommended to review all SafeAssign reports, the following interpretation scale should be used:
  - **Scores below 15%** usually papers with such scores contain some quotes and few "typical" phrases that match other documents. In most cases, they do not require any further analysis, and there is no evidence of plagiarism in the report.
  - **Scores between 15% and 40%** papers with such scores can contain plagiarism or can have just too much quoted material. We usually recommend reviewing the reports with such scores before making any judgments about the papers.
  - **Scores over 40%** with such scores, there is almost 100% probability that the papers contains some text copied from elsewhere, and, even if this text is properly cited, such amount of cited material is considered excessive in most cases. Therefore, such scores give a clear warning to instructors. However, there are few cases when such scores can be given to authentic papers, for example, when the paper was legitimately published online before it was sent for processing (instructors have just to "Delete" the source pointing to the legitimate copy), or when the same student has already submitted this paper or a similar paper to another class (it is not plagiarism, but such practice is not allowed in some institutions).
- Be attentive to signs of plagiarism when grading:
  - Observe citations carefully
  - Look for evidence of plagiarism such as outdated information; sudden changes in font style, color, or size; shifts in diction, grammar, or writing style; inaccurate citations; and the inclusion of highly specialized or expert information and authoritative knowledge;
- Confirm that plagiarism has taken place (often using a search engine) and document or record the evidence.
- Assign a penalty and notify the student. While penalties are at the discretion of the instructor, normal penalties are as follows:
  - First violation: A grade of 0 on the assignment
  - Second violation: Failure of the course

- In cases of student disputes follow the NCTA Grade Appeals process listed in the *NCTA College Catalog* and paraphrased below:
  - The NCTA Academic Council hears appeals from students on grades received within all college programs. The committee will hear such appeals, however, only after the student has followed the process listed.
    - Appealed without satisfaction to the course instructor.
    - Notified the Division Chair, then the Associate Dean of Student Services of the circumstances and filed an appeal with each.
    - The student is to provide to the Academic Council a written statement stating the grounds of the appeal. Both the student and the course instructor will be given an opportunity to present materials to the NCTA Academic Council in the presence of each other.
    - A student will have 30 days following the beginning of the next session to protest a posted grade from the previous session. If no protest is received the grade will stand. After that time any grade change will need to be approved by the Academic Council. This does not apply to Incompletes.

### Sources cited

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