



A Student Guide on Plagiarism - What it is, How to Avoid it, and the Sanctions Applicable to it

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1. Background on what plagiarism is and why students must avoid it

As a student, you will be required to use sources such as books, journal articles, and web articles to enrich and expand on the content of your assignments and projects for assessment. Failure to do so correctly and without acknowledgment may result in a piece of submitted work being seen as plagiarised, resulting in rather severe consequences for the student concerned.

A source is any type of resource that you may use to obtain information which will assist you in completing your submissions for assessment purposes. This includes information from textbooks, encyclopedias, journals, TV, radio, the Internet and other people, for example.

An acknowledgment is a description of the source used by the student, which will enable someone else to also locate it. It is accompanied by an indication of which parts of the information in the submission came from that particular source.

Plagiarism can be defined as *“the use, without giving reasonable and appropriate credit to or acknowledging the author or source, of another person’s original work, whether such work is made up of code, formulas, ideas, language, research, strategies, writing of another form”* (Stanford, 2015).

2. Types of plagiarism

The IMM Graduate School groups the sources of plagiarism into two broad categories:

2.1 Plagiarism from textual/Internet sources:

- a. When Harvard referencing is absent or incorrectly used
- b. If presenting someone else’s work as your own – the core content is clearly the same as that of another source

- c. When paraphrasing someone else's work and presenting it as your own (i.e. the core content has been altered somewhat through the use of newly introduced words and phrases but still remains essentially the ideas and thoughts of someone else).

2.2 Plagiarism from another student or group of students or academic staff (also referred to as 'syndication'). Syndication may take the following forms:

- a. Voluntary syndication – you (or a group of students of which you are a part) submit work that is similar/identical to the submission of another student or group of students or the submission contains passages that are identical to other submissions. The group may have willingly worked together but failed to submit their own unique versions of the work for assessment.
- b. Involuntary syndication – you (or a group of students of which you are a part) appropriate the work from an unsuspecting fellow student for the express use of submitting it as your own.
- c. Teaching source syndication – you (or a group of students of which you are a part) copy and then use the outline or content detail suggested by a tutor or lecturer which was made available to all the students in the lecture session, either as is and without substantively reworking it.

3. Avoiding plagiarism

You can avoid being involved in the unpleasant and potentially damaging plagiarism issues by

- following the guidelines on correct and appropriate referencing according to the Harvard referencing style guide. This guide is available on the IMM Graduate School eLearn system – look for it under the '**Referencing**' button on eLearn, where you will find the '**IMM Graduate School Harvard Referencing System Guide**'.
- refraining from copying the work of other students.

- not using model answers made available by academic staff who may misguidedly want to 'help you'.
- focusing on becoming a confident writer of academic content yourself, having discovered your own academic voice.

4. Guidelines on sanctions for plagiarism

The term 'sanctions' refers to potential penalties or actions taken towards a student that are set in place when a student is found guilty of plagiarism. The tables below indicate the applicable sanctions for undergraduate and postgraduate students respectively.

Point of clarity for understanding the tables of sanctions:

Where the tables below refer to students losing 20% of the assignment mark or 50% of the assignment mark this means that if the original mark awarded to the work was 60%, then the student's assignment final mark will be reduced to 48% (the less 20% rule) or reduced to 30% (the less 50% rule).

Plagiarism Sanctions for Undergraduate Students		
1. Plagiarism from textual/Internet sources		
a) Harvard referencing		
Category	Sanction	
	1 st Offence	2 nd Offence
Incorrectly done	Warning letter	0% for the assignment
b) Presenting someone else's work as your own		
Category	Sanction	
	1 st Offence	2 nd Offence
Content plagiarised	Assignment mark less 50%	0% for the assignment
c) Paraphrasing someone else's work and presenting it as your own		
Category	Sanction	
	1 st Offence	2 nd Offence
Content paraphrased	Warning letter	0% for the assignment
2. Plagiarism from another student/group of students		
a) Voluntary syndication		
Category	Sanction	
	1 st Offence	2 nd Offence
a) Student can present proof of own work	a) Assignment mark less 20%	a) 0% for the assignment
b) Student cannot present proof of own work	b) Assignment mark less 50%	b) 0% for the assignment
b) Involuntary syndication		
Category	Sanction	
	1 st Offence	2 nd Offence

a) Student did not collude – with clear evidence of innocence	a) Award full mark	a) n/a
b) Student appropriated the work of others	b) 0% for the assignment	b) Suspension for 3 semesters
c) Student did not attend inquiry: guilty in absentia	c) 0% for the assignment	c) Suspension for 3 semesters

Table 1: Plagiarism Sanctions for Undergraduate Students

Plagiarism Sanctions for Postgraduate Students		
Category	Sanction	
	1 st Offence	2 nd Offence
a) Up to 59% of content plagiarised regardless of the category	a) Another submission to be provided	a) Suspension for 3 semesters
b) 60% + of the content plagiarised regardless of the category	b) 0% for the module. Re-register for the module	b) Suspension for 3 semesters

Table 2: Plagiarism Sanctions for Postgraduate Students

3 rd Offences for All Students	
Category	Sanction
Third offence of plagiarism (as a total during all years of study at the IMM Graduate School)	Dis-enrollment

Table 3: Plagiarism Sanctions for 3rd Offences - all students

Please note: The total number of offenses is calculated as the sum of offences that take place during the entire period of study with the IMM Graduate School, regardless of the programme or the year of study registered for.

5. Refund requests arising from plagiarism sanctions

The guidelines on plagiarism as outlined above and in the **Referencing – The ‘How to’ Guide** are extensive. Should any student be found guilty of plagiarism he/she will forfeit all fees paid, with the exception of those fees which exceed the amount paid for the actual semester during which the student is suspended or dis-enrolled.

6. Reference

Stanford University. (2015) 'Plagiarism and the Honor Code', *Stanford's Key to Information Literacy*. Available from: <http://skil.stanford.edu/module6/plagiarism.html>. [Accessed on 09 October 2019].