

WAUBONSEE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Plagiarism Statement

The college is firmly committed to upholding sound principles of academic integrity and responsibility. Plagiarism, one form of academic dishonesty and misrepresentation, is a serious breach of academic integrity, and, as such, is considered a breach of the Code of Student Conduct.

What is plagiarism?

Plagiarism is most simply defined as *representing another person's work as your own, whether intentionally through outright cheating or unintentionally through inaccurate or incomplete documentation*. In this sense, plagiarism is more than the theft of mere words: plagiarism involves ideas, theories, insights, work products, projects and images—all collectively termed intellectual property. Authors, scientists, and artists own their intellectual property, so any use of this property without credit is the equivalent of theft. [Refer to Section (I)(B)(1)(b) in Code of Student Conduct.]

Examples of plagiarism include:

- Handing in a paper or assignment (in part or in whole) written by someone else
- Incorporating information from a book or article without documenting the source
- Incorporating information from an electronic source (website, listserv, etc.) without documenting the source
- Submitting a paper, assignment, or project that was purchased and representing it as your own work
- Inaccurate or incomplete documentation of the source of any information

What is not plagiarism?

The learning process often calls upon students to work collaboratively or seek outside assistance—such work does not fall within the bounds of plagiarism.

Examples of work that is not plagiarism include:

- Working on a group project
- Seeking assistance from the Writing Assistance Center
- Asking another student to read over your work and offer his or her opinion
- Consulting with an instructor on a paper or assignment

Why is plagiarism such a concern?

Plagiarism runs counter to the entire learning process. When a student takes a shortcut to completing an assignment or hands in someone else's work, he or she has missed the opportunity to learn. This is a rather disingenuous approach to education as well as a breach of academic integrity. Furthermore, students who cheat may find that they have

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really cheated their own futures, as they may later be called upon to use the very skills and abilities the assignment was designed for them to learn.

Plagiarism is about ownership. Scholars, artists, writers, computer programmers and many other professionals make their livings through the articulation of ideas. Through publication they have allowed others access to these ideas but they still own them. Plagiarism robs these individuals not just of their intellectual property but also of their livelihood.

Plagiarism is a form of dishonesty. Students who plagiarize hurt not only themselves but also other students who have done the work honestly. Avoiding the sometimes laborious work of scholarship is not only dishonest; it is also unfair to those who were willing to put in the time and effort necessary.

How can students avoid plagiarism?

There are several ways students can avoid plagiarism. Many are common sense, but others require that you learn the conventions and procedures of standard citation and documentation.

As you prepare a paper or assignment:

1. Keep careful records of the sources you consult. If you record this information as you work, you will avoid needless searching later on.
2. Familiarize yourself with the instructor's preferred method of citation and documentation. For example, English 101 and English 102 require a writer's handbook, an invaluable source for several documentation formats that you should consult early in the research process and refer to as you prepare the finished paper. If you need additional assistance, Waubonsee offers workshops on research writing and the services of tutors in the Writing Assistance Center.
3. Learn what falls within the limits of common knowledge. Common knowledge is very tricky to define, but it generally consists of facts and information that are readily available to the public through a variety of sources.
4. When in doubt, cite it! If you are not sure whether or not the information would be considered public knowledge either ask your instructor or cite it to be on the safe side.
5. Place quotes around words that are not your own. Even if you've documented the source at the end of the paper or assignment, you are not done yet. Quotation marks indicate that you are using someone else's language, and you need to include exactly where the information appeared (i.e. page number, web address, etc.)
6. Be careful when you paraphrase information. Paraphrasing refers to including someone else's information in your own words. Learn what

makes for an appropriate paraphrase and remember to cite—even though you may have changed the language, the author still owns the ideas behind the language.

Before you hand in a paper or assignment:

1. Keep copies of drafts, outlines, and any other planning documents you used in preparing course assignments. If any questions arise, you will then have evidence you've done your own work.
2. Double-check your documentation and citation format for accuracy. Read through the paper or assignment asking yourself: Did I know this before I began my research? Would I have expressed this the same way had I not been exposed to the same sources? Is every quote followed by the source? Are paraphrases accurate? Are paraphrases representative of my own language use?

After you hand in a paper or assignment:

1. Keep a dated copy for yourself. In case questions arise, you will have a record of the completed version.
2. Do not allow others to hand in your work as their own. Allowing others to misrepresent your work is also plagiarism and truly undermines the hard work you have put into the learning process.

What are the consequences for plagiarizing?

The penalty for plagiarizing will be determined by the instructor. Penalties vary based on the severity of the incident, whether it was outright theft or faulty documentation. However, lack of knowledge regarding documentation is no excuse for plagiarism. Penalties may include receiving a grade of F in the course, receiving an F on the assignment or referral to the Student Conduct Board.

I have read and I understand the contents of the **Waubonsee Community College Plagiarism Statement**. I hereby agree to uphold the standard of academic integrity set forth in this statement. Furthermore, I understand that I am accountable for my own actions and there will be consequences should I commit an act of plagiarism.

Name (please print)

Signature

Date