

DON'T BE A COPY CAT!



**This guide is for you, the student,
to help you understand what plagiarism is,
and how to avoid being accused of it!**



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This is a guide written by Keele University Students' Union to help you navigate your way around the tricky issue of plagiarism and to decrease the chance of you getting into trouble during your time at Keele.

The purpose of this booklet is to enhance the student body's understanding of the rules and regulations at Keele University and ensure that they do not plagiarise the work of others either intentionally or unintentionally.

University is a place where you come to learn and gain knowledge. You come to learn from others and to challenge yourself. Due to the nature of the majority of the learning at university, namely by examining the work of others, new students and those from different educational and cultural background can sometimes find themselves confused, leading to cases of plagiarism being committed with no intent, simply a lack of understanding.

It is also important to note this can occur at any time throughout your studies, so it is important that is you are struggling you should seek help:- Something as simple as neglecting to add quotation marks in your final assessments could lead to a mark of zero.

Reading this guide will help you to understand plagiarism, tell you where you can go to seek guidance, and hopefully avoid getting into trouble. However if you are accused of plagiarism this guide will also help you to find out what to do next.



So what is plagiarism, and how do I avoid it?

Keele University Regulation 8 states the following:-

12.4 Any allegation of plagiarism in an in-course assessment shall be dealt with in accordance with the following procedure. For the purpose of these Regulations, plagiarism shall be defined as the unacknowledged use by a student of someone else's work being presented for assessment as if it were the student's own. Plagiarism may constitute a form of academic misconduct and for the purposes of this regulation also includes but is not limited to the following:

12.4.1 collusion, where a piece of work is prepared by more than one student, including work deriving from a piece of authorised collaborative group-work, and is presented in whole or in part for assessment as if it were the student's own work;

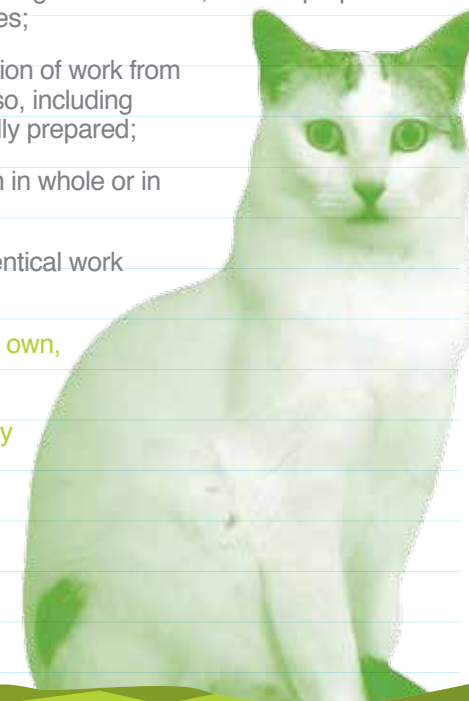
12.4.2 the commissioning or use of work, either published or unpublished, which is not the student's own and representing it as if it were, without proper acknowledgement and citation of the sources;

12.4.3 purchase, commissioning or acquisition of work from a commercial service, or the attempt to do so, including internet sites, whether pre-written or specially prepared;

12.4.4 submission of a piece of work written in whole or in part by another person;

12.4.5 duplication of the same or almost identical work for more than one coursework assignment.

Basically, if you submit work that is not your own, and do not point out whose work/ideas you have used, in the correct format (Harvard referencing style is the norm, but others may be acceptable depending on your school) then you are guilty of plagiarism. You can also get in trouble if you re-use any of your own work at a later stage in your degree.





How do I make sure I don't commit plagiarism by accident?

Find out what plagiarism is.

The easiest way to make sure you don't accidentally get accused of plagiarising is to ensure you know exactly what it is (look at the previous page). Also, take time to familiarise yourself with the referencing style at Keele (information should be available in your module handbook). After that, if you are still struggling, ask someone. Your personal tutor or your lecturer should be able to help you out if you are still unsure.

Quite often plagiarism accusations arise because students have rushed their work. Plan your work well in advance of the deadline so you have time to look back over it and ensure that all the referencing is correct and you haven't forgotten anything.

Another tip is to write a separate document of all the quotations you will be using in your work and then you can tick them off as you go. If you are not sure **EXACTLY** where the quotation has come from **DO NOT** use it. Something this small could result in being accused of plagiarism.

Common Mistakes

This is just a quick list of mistakes often made by other students.

- Handing in a draft version rather than the final version.
- Missing out quotation mark.
- Making up references at the end of a quotation
- Handing in work that is very similar to that of a course mate
- Handing in work that is similar to a friend at a different University



Excuses that just aren't going to work.

- I didn't know how to reference properly.
- I told my lecturer that I had used a lot of other people's work because I found it really difficult.
- My friend handed in my work for me and handed in a draft by mistake.
- I did work with my friends but I didn't know we weren't allowed to.

All work that is suspected of plagiarism are put through a clever bit of software called Turnitin. This compares your work with a massive database of sources that include books, journals, the internet (including Wikipedia) and other students' work from Keele as well as students' work from other Universities...across the world. Essentially if you think that using an essay from your mate in Australia means you won't get caught, you're wrong.

**YOU WILL GET CAUGHT.
DON'T TRY IT.**

Ok, But I can't get into that much trouble, can I?

Actually yes, you can get into a lot of trouble.

In a lot of cases of plagiarism your punishment (even if your plagiarism was a result of lack of knowledge) will be your work receiving a zero marks. You will then have to spend time re-doing the assessment, and even then it is unlikely that you will be eligible to receive a mark of more than 40%.

For more serious cases, where it has been seen that you have used a very high percentage of someone else's work and the plagiarism is deemed to be calculated, it is possible that you studies may be terminated and you will be forced to withdraw from the university. A copy of the academic misconduct guidelines for Keele can be found by Googling "Keele Regulation 8".

For students on professional courses who have been found guilty of plagiarism may have to report this to their professional bodies which could reflect negatively when applying for jobs.



Have you already been accused of academic misconduct?

Are you reading this because you have been accused of plagiarism?

If you are, then we strongly advise you seek help now.

At Keele University Students' Union we have trained advisors in the Independent Advice Unit (IAU) that would be able to give you independent, confidential advice and help as to what you do next. They will be able to explain to you how best to defend yourself, what you need to do and when, and explain the hearing and punishment procedure to you. They will even be able to help represent you at the hearing.

From our experience, students who seek advice from the IAU have a better chance in any hearing, are better informed and more aware of their options and of what may happen.

If you have been accused of plagiarism, now is the perfect time to seek help to make sure it doesn't happen again. The library, your personal tutor or even a friend may be able to help you out to make sure this isn't repeated. Don't take the risk and go it alone, seek help now.



Case Studies.

Situation One

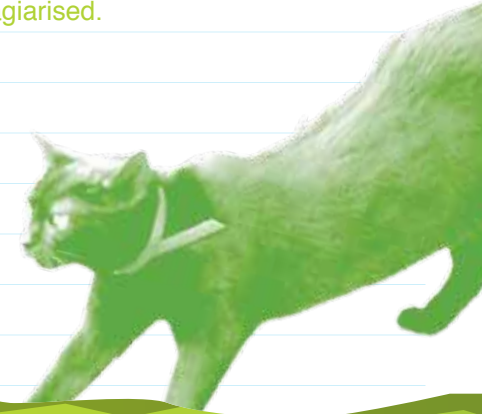
Undergraduate Student submitted an essay which was copied from internet sites. The matter was referred to Academic Panel as the student already had a record for plagiarism. The student claimed the information in the essay was taken "from handouts" and didn't feel it was necessary to reference them. As a result of the students statement to the panel (they had lied) they were withdrawn from the University.

Advice:- Student should have been honest, spoken to the IAU and took them exactly what they had done. The IAU would have explained what could happen and it would be likely that the outcome wouldn't have been so severe.

Situation Two

A Law student submitted dissertation which was written in a hurry, it was submitted with minutes to spare. The student had left references out but had extenuating circumstances but had not disclosed them until they had been accused. The panel was sympathetic but as the matter was major, they had to report it to the professional law body and would be kept on the student's record.

Advice:- The extenuating circumstances should have been reported by using the extenuating circumstances procedures. This way it would have been possible to ask for an extension for the essay rather than hand in one that appeared to be plagiarised.





Where to go for help

Here's a few places you can go to get help learning how to reference properly, are help you to avoid inadvertently plagiarising:-

Student Support and Development Services (SSDS)

They offer services specifically for international students with our International Student Support Officer (ISSO) Karen Manley. Their contact number is 01782 734734. Or you can email on iss@acad.keele.ac.uk.

Lecturer

If you have any questions or problems, a quick chat with your lecturer can help to clear things up and don't run into any problems.

Personal Tutor

It is a good idea to try and build a good relationship with your personal tutor and meet with them as regularly as you want. They can offer vast sources of information and help you through a number of different issues.

If you have any questions about anything in this guide, or want more information on anything, please contact the IAU **01782 734800** or **IAU@keele.ac.uk**

There is also lots of other useful information on the IAU website, including links to online resources. Please have a look:

www.kusu.net/advice

