

PROGRAM STATEMENT ON ETHICAL SCHOLARSHIP AND PLAGIARISM

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KEY TERMS AT A GLANCE

Academic Misconduct: The University of Connecticut Division of Student Affairs (Dean of Students Office) states the following in *The Student Code*:

Academic misconduct is dishonest or unethical academic behavior that includes, but is not limited, to misrepresenting mastery in an academic area (e.g., cheating), failing to properly credit information, research or ideas to their rightful originators or representing such information, research or ideas as your own (e.g., plagiarism).
(http://www.dos.uconn.edu/student_code_appendixa.html)

The Division of Student Affairs website further amplifies the definition of Academic Misconduct as:

providing or receiving assistance in a manner not authorized by the instructor in the creation of work to be submitted for academic evaluation (e.g. papers, projects, and examinations); any attempt to influence improperly (e.g. bribery, threats) any member of the faculty, staff, or administration of the University in any matter pertaining to academics or research; presenting, as one's own, the ideas or words of another for academic evaluation; doing unauthorized academic work for which another person will receive credit or be evaluated; and presenting the same or substantially the same papers or projects in two or more courses without the explicit permission of the instructors involved.

A student who knowingly assists another student in committing an act of academic misconduct shall be equally accountable for the violation.
(http://www.dos.uconn.edu/standards_misconduct_faq.html)

Misuse of Sources: The misuse of sources is the failure to acknowledge properly the source of an idea and/or specific language that is presented in any work submitted for evaluation, including (but not limited to) journal entries, drafts of papers, and final submissions of papers. The misuse of sources is a violation of academic codes of conduct and could result in serious penalty. The severity of the penalty depends on an individual instructor's assessment, in consultation with the Director of First-Year Writing.

Plagiarism: Plagiarism is the theft of another's ideas, specific language, or other media, and the presentation—for the purposes of evaluation—of that material as one's own, at any stage of the writing process, including (but not limited to) journal entries, drafts of papers, and final submissions of papers. The First-Year Writing program takes plagiarism very seriously. **Any student who commits plagiarism will receive a grade of "F" for the assignment in which he or she has committed the act or for the course (at the instructor's discretion).** The First-Year Writing office and the Office of Community Standards will keep the student's name in a permanent record of students who have committed plagiarism. The Dean of the School or College may also refer the case to the Academic Misconduct Hearing Board to consider whether or not further penalties, including expulsion from the University, are warranted.

To avoid misusing sources or committing plagiarism, a student must include all of their sources with full and proper acknowledgment.

Full and Proper Acknowledgement: The unambiguous identification of the sources of all ideas, language, and other materials that are not one's own. There are many different methods of identifying a source [MLA, APA, Chicago, etc.], depending on the discipline's academic conventions. Students must consult with their instructors to determine which method is appropriate for the course. [For English courses, use MLA Style.]

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Mike Rose, in his description of academic writing, touches on an important dynamic in the ongoing study of plagiarism:

Virtually all the writing academics do is built on the writing of others. Every argument proceeds from the texts of others. [Students are] only partially initiated to how this works: [They are] still unsure as to how to weave quotations in with [their] own prose, how to mark the difference, how to cite whom [they use], how to strike the proper balance between [their] writing and someone else's—how, in short to position [themselves] in an academic discussion. (180)

Until very recently, scholars have labeled any failure to attribute the source of an idea properly as “plagiarism.” Yet in light of what Rose observes about the difficulty students may have while “position[ing] themselves in an academic discussion,” the ubiquitous term “plagiarism” is too vague to encompass the many different degrees to which a person might fail to acknowledge another's ideas. It also fails to acknowledge a student's intent, varying degrees of proficiency in incorporating source materials, or the way their proficiency evolves as they develop as an academic writer. In light of these observations the Council of Writing Program Administrators makes a distinction between the misuse of sources and plagiarism (2). The University of Connecticut First-Year Writing program believes that the misuse of sources rises to the level of plagiarism—an infraction warranting adjudication—only in extreme cases.

In an effort to eliminate much plagiarism in the First-Year Writing Classroom and deal more justly and directly with students' use or misuse of sources, the First-Year Writing program directs instructors to discuss with students the academic implications and consequences of both concepts early and often in the term. Instructors should consult the *First-Year Writing Program Guidelines for Addressing the Misuse of Sources and Responding to Plagiarism*, available in the First-Year Writing Office, Austin 162. However, *students*, both with their instructor and outside the classrooms, have a responsibility to become familiar with department and University policies regarding plagiarism, and to behave ethically as writers. Students should ask questions and always be vigorous and diligent in using sources.

The First-Year Writing program also requires its instructors to arrange a conference with any student who fails to acknowledge the sources of his ideas properly. During this conference the instructor should try to determine the reason behind a student's lack of proper citation. If a student has failed to acknowledge his sources because of a lack of proficiency in incorporating sources, then his instructor may choose to work with the student, to teach him the way academics share information and develop knowledge.

In most cases when a student fails to cite a source properly the instructor will assign a penalty based on his assessment of the infraction's severity. In all cases the instructor will consult with

the Assistant Directors or Directors of the First-Year Writing Program and supply the First-Year Writing office with electronic or photocopies of the paper in question and, if available, the source from which the ideas or language were taken.

If the instructor determines that a student has committed plagiarism, then they have the right to fail the student for the entire class, and report them to Director(s) of the First-Year Writing program. Instructors should consult *Responding in Writing to Plagiarism*, available in the First-Year Writing office. Instructors will notify students in writing of the penalty and of the student's opportunity to request a hearing within five days of receipt of the written notice. The Directors of First-Year Writing will submit the student's name to the Office of Community Standards, who will then add the student's name to a database that catalogs instances of academic misconduct. The Dean of the School or College will carry out any further adjudication, if deemed necessary. **Plagiarism completely undermines the academy's ongoing efforts to share and develop ideas, and it cannot be tolerated under any circumstances.**

For the sake of clarity we have listed possible scenarios for plagiarism. A student is guilty of plagiarism if they do *any* of the following:

- “Cuts and pastes” printed or electronic text (from the Internet or elsewhere) into their paper, and presents it as their own
- Consults an Internet or print source to “get ideas” that they then incorporate into a paper, without proper attribution
- Retypes material from a printed or electronic source into their own paper, and presents it as their own
- Submits a paper written by someone else, including a tutor, while claiming to be the author
- Submits a paper they have written in another course
- Puts another person's ideas “in their own words,” without documenting the source
- Takes another person's expressions—a key word, a phrase, or a longer passage—without telling the reader precisely what has been done. This is considered plagiarism even when the student's own ideas are being expressed.

GUIDELINES TO AVOID MISUSING SOURCES AND COMMITTING PLAGIARISM

Because “virtually all the writing academics do is built on the writing of others” (Rose 180), and academics need to know an individual writer's contribution to a subject, they have established certain conventions for attributing the source of an idea. Academic conventions dictate that a writer must provide **full and proper acknowledgment** of all ideas and expressions that are not his own. To provide full and proper acknowledgment, a writer must do all of the following:

- Indicate clearly where direct quotations within a paper begin and end by using quotations and introductory phrases
- When paraphrasing, make it clear to the reader that the ideas expressed are someone else's, by using introductory phrases and/or transitions
- Include internal documentation of the source quoted or paraphrased. (For documentation in English papers, use the most recent MLA guidelines, which can be found in any recent writing handbook.)

- When citing from the Internet or another electronic source, follow citation conventions, as they are articulated in any recent writing handbook
- Include a works cited page at the end of the paper. (A works cited page alone is useful, but it is not full and proper acknowledgment, since it does not tell the reader precisely what parts of the paper present another person's ideas.)

When in doubt about citing sources and documenting them, a student should consult his instructor, as the penalties for the misuse of sources and plagiarism are severe and strictly enforced. If a student has any doubts about the misuse of sources, plagiarism, or academic misconduct after reading this document and speaking with his instructor, he should consult The University of Connecticut's Division of Student Affairs Policy on Academic Misconduct.

If a student wishes to discuss misuse of sources or plagiarism, he or she should consult with the Director of First-Year Writing, Prof. Scott Campbell (Austin 126, 486-2866), the Associate Director of First-Year Writing, Prof. Lisa Blansett (Austin 125, 486-2066), or Assistant Directors Ruth Book or Sarah Moon (Austin 162, 486-2859). If the instructor files a formal charge of plagiarism, the case then moves to the UConn Office of Community Standards.

Works Cited

- "Community Standards: Academic Misconduct FAQ," University of Connecticut Division of Student Affairs. 28 Aug. 2008. <http://www.dos.uconn.edu/standards_misconduct_faq.html/>
- "Defining and Avoiding Plagiarism: The WPA Statement on Promising Practices." Council of Writing Program Administrators. 11 Oct. 2004. <<http://www.ilstu.edu/~ddhesse/wpa/positions/WPAplagiarism.pdf>>
- "Responsibilities of Community Life: The Student Code." University of Connecticut Division of Student Affairs. 11 Oct. 2004. <http://www.dos.uconn.edu/student_code_appendix.html>
- Rose, Mike. Lives on the Boundary: A Moving Account of the Struggles and Achievements of America's Educationally Underprepared. New York: Penguin Books, 1989.