COPYING AND PASTING: CAREFUL, IT’S RISKY! TO AVOID PLAGIARISM, REMAIN VIGILANT

Badly informed, pressed for time, it is tempting to think that a “copy and paste”, “just this once”, “is not that serious”...But yes it is! Even if it is occasional, even accidental, even without the intention of causing harm... plagiarism can have serious consequences.

Before writing your paper, always take the time to find out about what is allowed...and what isn’t!

What is plagiarism?

Why is plagiarism a problem?

How to avoid it?

What is ULg’s policy concerning plagiarism?

Where to get help?

Find out the answers to all these questions as well as additional bibliographical references on the website www.ulg.ac.be/plagiat

We also advise you to add to this information by talking to your professors and teaching assistants, in order to get a better idea of specific points that apply in your research field!

WHAT IS PLAGIARISM?

Plagiarism is the act of “copying (an author) by illegitimately ascribing passages of his or her work to yourself. To rob” (translated from Le Robert illustré et Dixel 2012, 2011, p. 1467).

Plagiarising is theft. It involves presenting as your own personal work something (text, image, collection of data or even an idea) that has been written or produced by somebody else. And that of course also involves “copying and pasting”, if the information gathered online is not correctly referenced.

The university student who carries out research and consults documents is thus placed at the very forefront of this issue! Correctly referenced citations demonstrate a student’s ability to investigate a question fully, a skill constituting the fundamental basis of rigorous academic and scientific research.

There is no internationally recognised classification to distinguish the different types of plagiarism and match specific sanctions to them. We can nevertheless find different cases and typologies of plagiarism according to which there is an absence of references or the presence of erroneous or insufficient references (Plagiarism.org, 2013).
WHY IS PLAGIARISM A PROBLEM?

Everyone loses when plagiarism occurs

THE PLAGIARIST

Plagiarism is penalised by academic sanctions, which can go as far as resulting in the student being expelled! Teachers look to evaluate the abilities of a student and not those of another author. Plagiarism casts doubts over the qualities expected of a university student (a critical mind, creativity, honesty, the ability to develop a personal argument and to write it up, etc.) and it is considered as a serious infringement of scientific and academic ethics. Plagiarism discredits not only the incriminating work but also brings into disrepute the whole body of the plagiarist’s work and, as a result, his or her abilities.

THE PLAGIARISED

The author of the original work is wronged with regard to his or her intellectual output: plagiarism shows a lack of respect towards the author and could be considered an infringement of his or her author’s rights. Under Code de droit économique, Livre XI "Propriété intellectuelle", Titre S, plagiarism is illegal!

HOW TO AVOID PLAGIARISM?

In practice, one cannot:

• Insert into one’s own text an extract from somebody else’s document without placing it entirely inside quotation marks and without indicating the complete explicit reference. And this is the case in relation to all of the following:
  the format (printed document, electronic document, etc.)
  the nature of the document (a passage from a text, an argument presented, an image, figure, diagram, formula, etc.)
  the language of the original document (translating does not protect one from plagiarism)
  the position of the author of the document used (even if an author has given permission for the document to be used, there is plagiarism if this is not cited)
  the length of the extract used
  changes to the layout of the page (quotation marks are essential; by itself, highlighting text by using italics or bold type is not enough)

• Paraphrase or rewrite a document (in total or in part) without explicitly providing the complete reference. Plagiarism occurs when the paraphrase or rewriting offers no new meaning to the source text.
  It is forbidden to simply use a sentence by replacing one or more words with synonyms or to reformulate somebody else’s analysis as if it were a personal inference.
  The use of previous personal work must also be signalled by clear references!

• Merely cite the references to a document in the general bibliography at the end of the paper without signalling the borrowing at the precise place where it is found in the text, whether it is a textual citation or a reformulation. It is important, despite these insertions, to ensure that one’s work remains readable.

TO AVOID PLAGIARISM

• From the very beginning of your documentary research, write down all the references to sources that might potentially be cited in your bibliography: the name(s) of the author(s), the name of the document, the date of publication, the title of the journal (if applicable), the publisher, the place of publication, the page numbers concerned, etc. And do this even if you are not yet certain that you will use this document for your work.

Plagiarism? Not for me! A short guide for University of Liège students – 2
• Always note explicitly the complete reference to the source from which you are drawing elements (extracts from the text or ideas, arguments, analyses, etc.) according to the referencing rules required by your discipline. Each reference must enable the sources of the elements used to be found without any ambiguity; a bibliography must be consistent: do not change from one referencing system to another within the same piece of work.

• Indicate clearly through the use of quotation marks the extent of the borrowing (citation), including elements taken from the internet. Specify at this point in the text the author, the year of publication (and the exact page number if you are using a quotation). If you are using an author’s idea but not citing his or her exact words, quotation marks should not be used, but the reference to the author must be explicit.

Be careful! A piece of university work must not be limited to a series of citations (unless the teacher has given explicit instructions in certain specific cases), even if they are correct: a personal contribution is expected by the teacher.

WHAT IS ULG’S POLICY CONCERNING PLAGIARISM?

As is the case in every university, plagiarism is not tolerated at ULg!

In monitoring students’ work, the expertise of the teachers is a major strength that enables them to recognise extracts of texts published in their research domain. The institution also has available plagiarism detection software, which allows students’ texts to be compared with a multitude of references.

If a case of plagiarism is detected, sanctions are authorised by the general rules governing exams (www.ulg.ac.be/reglements).

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Art. 55
§1 Any fraud or plagiarism leads to a grade of 0/20 for the teaching activity in question. The teaching staff will immediately inform the student and the President of the jury (or if the teaching staff is the President of the jury, the Dean, or if necessary the deputy Dean). Upon his or her request, students may speak to the President of the jury (or if the teaching staff is the President of the jury, the Dean or if necessary the deputy Dean).
§2 If the case is justified and upon request of the President of the jury (or if the teaching staff is the President of the jury, the Dean or if necessary the deputy Dean), he or she may request that disciplinary action be taken, which may go as far as exclusion (Chapter IX).
§3 In the event of gross misdemeanor, the teaching staff or one of the people mentioned in article 48 §1 line 2 and 3 may take any measures considered necessary ensure the fraud is ceased. As quickly as possible, the facts will be communicated by the teaching staff in question to the president of the jury (or if they are the President of the jury, to the Dean or, if necessary, the deputy Dean).
§4 Students are required to comply with the instructions related to the organisations of tests and exams (http://www.ulg.ac.be/cms/c_5333644/fr/consignes-relatives-a-latenue-des-epreuves-et-examens). These may be added to or changed by each teacher, and students must be notified of such additions or changes in a timely manner.

Art. 83
Article 60 of the Law of 28 April 1953 allows academic authorities to take academic sanction against a student. The academic sanctions are as follows:
1) an admonition;
2) suspension of the right to attend classes, laboratories and seminars for one month;
3) suspension of the right to attend the university for more than one month (without exceeding one year); 4) exclusion.
Depending on the case, these are issued either by the Rector (actions 1, 2 and 3) or by the Board of Directors (action 4) after instruction by a committee consisting of a member of the jury and a member of the Directorate General for teaching and training. The student must be called and heard. The student may be accompanied by a person of his or her choice. The decision must be justified. These sanctions may be applied to students whose behavior is likely to seriously disrupt university activities and/or serious damage the reputation and/or values of the University.
For application of the preceding line, all fraud or plagiarism is considered to be a serious attack on the University's values (art. 55).
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WHERE TO GET HELP?

VARIOUS CONTACT PEOPLE (RESOURCES) CONCERNING PLAGIARISM:

• Your supervisor, the professors and the teaching assistants in your department can help you to better understand the citation requirements and regulations specific to your discipline. Do not hesitate to ask them for help.
• The libraries and their staff, experienced in bibliographical research.
• The regulations and information found online on the ULg site, and notably at www.ulg.ac.be/plagiat, including:
  
  further details on plagiarism
  advice on avoiding plagiarism: resources by Faculty
  regulations, detection and disciplinary measures
  bibliographical references and useful links
• The methodology seminars offered by the Study Guidance Department (Service Guidance Etude) and the ISLV (Modern Languages Institute) French department, for general advice on how to produce end of study papers, from the initial reading to the writing up of quotations (ulg.ac.be/memoire).

Your supervisor or the teacher supporting your work remains your main contact point for you to check whether your work matches up to his or her expectations. Nevertheless, a situation may arise whereby the two of you do not agree about the manner in which you have carried out or written up the work. In the case of a dispute, you may contact Nicole Taton (nicole.taton@ulg.ac.be). She will listen to what you have to say and will go over with you the different forms of action you can take.

REFERENCES


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