Higher Education

Avoiding plagiarism and cheating

A guide for students at
Swinburne University of Technology
(2nd edition)

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How to use this guide

This guide on plagiarism has been especially written for you – new and returning Swinburne students. It contains advice, ideas and resources to assist you in avoiding plagiarism while studying at Swinburne. The contents have come from a range of sources, including students and staff at the university.

This guide has been written and given to you because plagiarism is a very serious matter that can result in very unpleasant consequences for your studies and career. Please take the time to understand the issues and advice given.

The guide is quite long, but necessarily so because plagiarism is a complex issue and there are many components that need careful explanation and discussion. You are not expected to read the whole guide in one sitting, so use the Table of Contents on the next page, and the suggestions below, to help guide your reading.

Specific suggestions for reading this guide

Most students will probably find it helpful to start with the first section, 'What is plagiarism?' This provides a clear explanation of the main concepts of plagiarism and will help you recognise what plagiarism is. This section also contains frequently asked questions by students (with answers).

The guide then provides specific advice on how to avoid plagiarism. Most students will find section 2.1, 'General strategies for avoiding plagiarism' helpful. After that, the specific parts of the guide most relevant to you will depend on the assessment you have been set for the subjects in which you are enrolled.

For example, if you have been asked to participate in group work, section 2.3, 'Specific strategies to ensure copying does not occur in group work', will probably be helpful. Similarly, if your assessment requires scholarly research and writing, it would probably be wise to read section 2.4, 'Specific strategies to avoid copying from the Internet and other text sources', carefully.

Further advice and resources

If plagiarism is an area that you have not heard much about before, it might be helpful for you to use other resources as well as this guide. Talk to your tutor or lecturer, or make use of the free and confidential services within Swinburne that are designed to help you learn how to undertake and produce work of an appropriate standard which is not plagiarised (see section 2.1.5 'Seek appropriate guidance and help early').

There are also many websites that have been created to help you develop the skills you will need to undertake scholarly work at a university level – these are listed in section 4, 'Helpful resources'.

All the best with your study at Swinburne!

Table of contents

This guide explains what is meant by plagiarism at Swinburne University of Technology (Higher Education). It also provides guidance on how to avoid plagiarism and cheating when undertaking assessment tasks.

The information, suggestions and advice that follow will be useful to all students enrolled in university courses at Swinburne. The contents of this guide may be especially useful if you are an international student and unfamiliar with Australian university education assessment practices.

1. What is plagiarism?

Put simply, plagiarism is cheating.

In essence, plagiarism is 'stealing' intellectual material. It can take many forms. Three of these forms are discussed in this guide. Before these three types of plagiarism are discussed in detail, it will be helpful to clarify some definitions.

1.1 Helpful definitions within the academic context

The words discussed below have particular meanings in an academic context, that is they have a particular meaning when used in relation to university study generally, and plagiarism in particular. All the words below are used more loosely in common speech, where they have different meanings to the ones here. Here are the meanings of the six most important terms:

Quote: *To quote* is to reproduce, in your own written work, the precise words that someone else has written or spoken. *A quotation* (or 'quote') is the reproduction of original material within your work. (See section 2.4.1 for more detail about how to quote properly).

Paraphrase: *To paraphrase* means to re-phrase or rewrite, in your own words, the words or ideas of others within your own written work. *A paraphrase* is the rephrased or rewritten material within your own work. (See section 2.4.2 for more detail about how to paraphrase properly).

Reference: This word has three meanings, all of which are important. The first is a verb: *to reference* is to provide an acknowledgement, *within* your assignment, that the words used, or the ideas written about, in your work are not your own and belong to someone else. (See section 2.4.3 for more detail about how to do this properly). The second meaning is also a verb: *to reference* is to provide an acknowledgement, *at the end of* your assignment, of the original sources from which your quotes and paraphrases were taken. This second acknowledgement usually comes in the form of a list of all the original sources used for your assignment. Ask your tutor, lecturer or Subject Convenor for guidelines or examples that show how to do this in each subject. The third meaning is a noun: each of the original sources you have used is called a 'reference'.

Cite: This word usually has the same meaning as 'Reference'. You *'cite'* a reference when you provide the details of it within, or at the end of, your assignment. Each of the original sources you have used can be called a *'citation'*.

Acknowledge: *To acknowledge* an original author, you provide a reference or citation. *An acknowledgement* is when you provide information that the words, ideas or concepts represented in your writing have come from another person.

Attribute: This word has the same meaning as 'acknowledge'. You *attribute* the words, ideas or concepts to the original author, where appropriate, or give an *attribution* to this author.

1.2 What does plagiarism look like?

The specific practices and behaviours that are considered to constitute plagiarism in the opinion of each Subject Convenor at Swinburne are generally identified in the Subject Outline you receive at the beginning of each subject. Read these Outlines very carefully. Ask questions of the Subject Convenor if you are unsure about any matter, stated or unstated.

There are three main types of plagiarism. These are explained below, with examples.

Plagiarism Type 1: Individual assignment – using other students' work

The first way in which students may plagiarise or cheat occurs when individual assignment submission requirements are the same for each student. It is plagiarism when students **use the ideas, words or work of other students and submit these in an assessment task as their own.**

For example, a student who hands in an individual assignment that was written in part or wholly by another (current or past) student; that is based on the work of another (current or past) student; or that in any way uses the work of another (current or past) student has committed plagiarism. So has the student who writes or otherwise provides the material that is then plagiarised.

E x a m p l e   1 :   N o t   P l a g i a r i s m
You chat to another student about the assignment generally – you might discuss how you will approach the task, what sorts of material you might include, how you might go about putting it together. Then you both go off and write your assignments separately without consulting each other again.

E x a m p l e   1 :   P l a g i a r i s m
When the assignment each student is required to submit is the same, you look at another student's draft or finished assignment to get ideas about the format and/**or** content. You use the same resources, quotes, paraphrases, summaries, notes, ideas and/or arrangement of material as this other student in your own assignment.
OR
You ask (or pay) a 'tutor', friend, or some other person to write the assignment for you or help you to the extent that the work is not really your own, but is both your *and* your helper's work, but you hand this in as your own.
OR

You accept or buy an already completed assignment from a student (past or current) or from the Internet or some other source, put your name on it, and hand it in as your own work.
OR
You act as the 'tutor' or friend or student described above and provide work that another student hands in as their own. This last example is called 'enabling plagiarism' and if you do this, you will be treated the same as the student who has used the work you have provided.

Plagiarism Type 2: Group work - not contributing fairly to group work

The second way in which students plagiarise or cheat is to **contribute less than their student colleagues to a group assignment and then claim an equal share of the marks.**

A student who participates in a team, syndicate or group but does less than an equal or equivalent share of the work for the group assignment has committed plagiarism. This includes students who use the draft or completed assignments of other students to guide their own assignment preparation or writing. Plagiarism in group work can occur within a group and between groups.

Example 2a: Not Plagiarism:
           Group report from group work – within a group
The group agrees to divide up the responsibility for sections of the group assignment and each member completes their section using appropriate and thorough research methods, referencing and scholarship, and completes it on time. The sections are then combined and handed in as the group assignment and each member gets the same mark.

Example 2a: Plagiarism:
           Group report from group work – within a group
A group member does not turn up to all group meetings, does not undertake their component of the work with the appropriate level of care and attention, does not complete their section on time **or** does not use appropriate referencing and scholarship in the part(s) of the written task for which they have full or part responsibility. They then receive the same mark as others in the group.

Example 2b: Not Plagiarism:
Group report from group work – between groups
One or more member(s) of a group chat to one or more student(s) from another group about the assignment generally – areas that might be discussed include: how the task will be approached, what sorts of material might be included and how the assignment might be put together. Then members of different groups go off and undertake their group work within their own group without consulting each other again.

Example 2b: Plagiarism:
Group report from group work – between groups
One or more member(s) of a group use(s) the work of another group and submit(s) it as if it is their own group's work.

Example 2c: Not Plagiarism:
Individual reports from group work
The group discusses the assignment, the tasks required, how they will go about these tasks and any other matter related to the required assignment, and any required group research or tasks are undertaken. Books and other resources may be shared and ideas passed between members. Each individual student then writes and hands in their own report without further consultation with other group members. Drafts or completed assignments are not shared between members.

Example 2c: Plagiarism:
Individual reports from group work
One or more members of a group use the draft or completed versions of the assignments written by one or more of the other members of their group, or of other groups. The work of others is used to guide the formatting, arrangement, structure, overall layout, content, ideas, conclusions or any other aspect of an individual student's own assignment.
OR
One or more members of a group work together in *writing* the individual assignments. They share resources (books, articles, websites and so on), ideas, suggestions, work, words, or any other aspect of an assignment.

Plagiarism Type 3: Individual assignment – using other people's published work

The third way in which students plagiarise or cheat is **to use the ideas, words or work from published sources and submit these in an assessment task as their own.**
A student who takes material (in part or whole) from the Internet, a book, chapter, article, database, pamphlet, brochure or any other source, and includes it in their assignment without letting the reader know where the material came from, has committed plagiarism.

E x a m p l e 3 a : N o t P l a g i a r i s m
You use published material in your assignments but each time you do so, you let the reader know that you have done so by citing the original source. For example (and please note that the example used here is artificial, that is, there is no such author, publication, quote or evidence):

Smith (2004) states, 'There is now strong evidence that smoking cigarettes is linked to baldness in young women' (p. 32).
OR
Smoking has been linked to baldness in young women (Smith, 2004).
OR
Smith (2004) notes that the link between smoking and baldness in young women has supporting evidence.

Note that to 'use' published material can mean to quote, paraphrase, summarise, incorporate the ideas of or in any other way include in your work material that you did not think of yourself. **See the instructions later in this guide for more advice on how to correctly attribute the ideas or material in your assignments.**

Example 3a: Plagiarism

You use published material in your assignments but you do not cite the original source. For example:

There is now strong evidence that smoking cigarettes is linked to baldness in young women.

OR

Smoking has been linked to baldness in young women.

OR

The link between smoking and baldness in young women has supporting evidence.

Note that even when you put material into your own words, if you have used someone else's idea(s) or work – as in some of the examples above – you must provide a reference to the original source of the ideas in the text of your assignment as well as in the reference list. The example above is plagiarism because there is no indication of the source of the information. **See the instructions later in this guide for more advice on how to correctly attribute the ideas or material in your assignments.**

Example 3b: Not Plagiarism

You use published material, perhaps even from one or more sources from the web, but you acknowledge that you have done so by showing where each and every significant idea that is not your own came from, both in the body of the assignment and in your reference list at the end of the assignment.

Example 3b: Plagiarism

You use published material but don't *always* indicate exactly from where you got each and every significant bit of material (both in the text and in the reference list).

Check carefully in each Subject Outline for indications of the specific behaviours and practices that are considered to be plagiarism for each subject.

1.3 Frequently asked questions (and answers)

What if I didn't know I was plagiarising?

To say you did not know you were plagiarising will not be accepted as a valid excuse. The information in this guide, coupled with the information provided in your Subject Outlines, provide clear guidelines on how to avoid plagiarism. If you are in doubt about a practice, check with a member of staff before proceeding. Even if you didn't know you were plagiarising, you may find that difficult to prove and may be penalised anyway.

What if I have been sick, get behind, and that has led to my cheating in order to get work in on time?

If you experience any circumstances beyond your control such as illness or misadventure, you should apply for an extension of time to complete your work or for Special Consideration as soon as possible. Details of how to do this are available from your Academic Unit. Student Services may also be able to provide support and assistance for you (see below for more information). Illness or other misfortune will not be accepted as a valid excuse for cheating.

What if I help my friend with an assignment – will I be punished for being kind?

In some cases, helping a friend with an assignment or other assessable work may be viewed as 'enabling plagiarism'. There can be a big difference between telling someone how to approach a problem or do something and writing, for example, a nearly full solution, or an essay, that would enable someone to submit work they did not completely understand. It will be kinder to your friend (as well as safer for you) to remind your friend about the support services available in the university, such as the language and academic skills services (see below). Ask your friend to see the Subject Convenor to explain their difficulties. Don't be tempted to show, lend, give away or sell your work – if your work is used by your friend improperly, both you and your friend may be penalised. In such cases you should protect yourself by raising the matter before it is detected.

What if I am an international student and can't manage the workload and assignments on top of the language and cultural barriers?

There are a number of free, confidential services within Swinburne available to help international, local, English-speaking and non-English-speaking background students (see below for more information). Ensure you make use of these early and often.

2.   How can I avoid plagiarism?

In summary: start early, work hard, reference your work, be careful and be fair.

2.1   General strategies to avoid plagiarism

2.1.1 Take responsibility for your learning

University study is, and should be, challenging. As a university student you are expected to work hard. This means you need to put both significant effort and time into your study. In order to be a successful student, you will need to make study one of your top priorities – your 'job' at the moment is to be a student and to study. Later, with an employer, you will be expected to apply what you have learned and if you haven't put in sufficient effort to fully master ideas and material you may expect difficulties in doing so. If you are an undergraduate or postgraduate coursework student you will need to focus on study, at least for the 14 or so weeks of each semester. Social activities, while important, should not distract you from focusing on study. Nor should part-time work distract you from study. As far as possible, this should be minimised during the approximately 7 months of the year you need to be putting study at the forefront of your priorities. While you are a student, you should try to minimise and manage activities and responsibilities outside of study so that these take as little time and effort as possible.

Good learning at university is a shared responsibility between university lecturers/tutors and their students. In contrast to many students' experiences of high school, at university level, this responsibility will be shifted more toward you – the student. After all, you are now an adult who has voluntarily chosen to undertake tertiary education. Try to make the most of the opportunity you have created for yourself by really focusing on your study and learning.

If you are a postgraduate research student, you will be expected to focus on study for longer periods of time and this commitment is a necessary part of study at a research level. The advice in relation to minimising social activities, part-time work and other external activities also applies to research students.

2.1.2 Educate yourself about plagiarism

There are many ways in which you can educate yourself about plagiarism. These include:

- Reading this guide closely and re-reading it often;
- Attending any preparation, transition, orientation or learning support sessions offered by the University or your Academic Unit and paying close attention to the advice on plagiarism;
- Reading and following the advice given in each Subject Outline on plagiarism very carefully;
- Making good use of the ongoing language and support services outlined below;
- Using the helpful resources at the end of this guide; and
- Always asking a staff member if you are not sure whether a behaviour or practice constitutes plagiarism.

Additionally, in order to avoid cheating and plagiarism, you will need to *manage your assignments carefully*. The following advice relates to the careful management of assignments.

2.1.3 Manage your time well, right from the start

Often, a number of assessment tasks from different subjects are due around the same time and/or exams in different subjects are held at the same time. You are therefore likely to find that there are periods in the semester when your workload is very heavy. Plan ahead and make sure you start your assignments and study for exams, where applicable, as early as possible. Take responsibility for your study and learning early, and ensure you leave enough time to complete assignments.

If you undertake paid work, you will need to be particularly careful to make sure you leave yourself enough time to complete assignments so you are not tempted to cheat.

2.1.4 Find out what is required to complete each assessment task

It is important at the start of each assignment to spend some time carefully reading and considering the assessment requirements. Ask your tutor, lecturer or Subject Convenor to explain anything that is not clear. At Swinburne, these people are approachable outside class times. Don't be shy to make use of this – you will find that each member of staff has some arrangement for how they see students individually.

2.1.5 Seek appropriate guidance and help early

Ensure you learn how to use the library and on-line resources. The library runs orientation and skills programs each semester – see section **4. Helpful Resources** for details. In addition, Swinburne has services and resources to help international and Australian students with various aspects of their study and learning (see below).

For international students

If you think it might be helpful to discuss your approach to an assignment, or how to write up or structure a particular assignment, phone 9214 5583 to make an appointment with a Language and Academic Skills (LAS) Adviser. Advisers can help you with the structure and style of different types of writing (reports of various sorts, reflective journals, proposals), as well as with referencing skills, reading skills, oral presentations and handling group discussion. Their services are free of charge. Of course they are not there to do your assignment for you, so do enough work prior to consultation to be able to critically assess, and properly benefit from, the information and advice you receive.

High performance in your course at Swinburne will require high performance in the four English language skills: reading, listening, writing and speaking. You will also be expected to be familiar with the expectations of Australian academic culture, including expectations around group work, oral presentations and referencing. Attending one-to one consultations with the LAS Advisers and workshops offered by the English Language Centre (ELC) can help you develop the skills you need for high performance. Contact details for each campus appear in the Appendix.

For Australian students

Attend free workshops and individual appointments offered by the Access Department in the TAFE School of Social Sciences. Note that although it is located in the TAFE sector, Swinburne higher education (university) students are welcome to use this service. Contact details appear in the Appendix.

For all students

Receive free advice on developing study and time management skills from the Counselling Service. Contact details appear in the Appendix.

2.1.6 Ask for more time or Special Consideration if necessary

You may ask for extra time (or 'an extension') to complete an assignment if you have experienced unavoidable circumstances that have prevented you from completing it on time. Note that managing your time poorly and simply running out of time will usually not be considered reasonable grounds for being granted extra time. See your Subject Convenor for details.

You may also apply for *Special Consideration* in serious and exceptional circumstances that have prevented you from undertaking study and assignments adequately. You will usually need documentation such as medical certificates and the like to support your application for Special Consideration. See your Academic Unit office for details.

If you are not eligible for either an extension or Special Consideration, the assignment due date arrives and you have not completed the assignment, submit whatever you have managed to complete. You may receive some marks for partially completed work (although this cannot be guaranteed in every case).

2.2 Specific strategies to avoid copying between students

2.2.1 Avoid copying from others

There is a simple way to avoid copying from others – **do your own work.**

Do not accept offers that appear to be easy options. These include borrowing a student colleague's assignment 'just to have a look at the structure' or buying an assignment that is 'guaranteed' to get you a grade of pass or better. Chances are the dishonest students selling assignments have done so before, and many Swinburne staff are familiar with their work.

The possible consequences of using these seemingly easy options include: wasting your money (if you pay for an assignment); risking lower marks; risking a poor academic record; and perhaps, risking your future if the penalty you receive excludes you from a subject or course.

Do not believe other students if they tell you cheating is OK, even if they are ahead of you in the course. Plagiarism and cheating at Swinburne will not be tolerated.

2.2.2 Specific advice for I.T. students

The Department of Computer Science at RMIT University (RMIT) has specific advice for I.T. students that is applicable to Swinburne students undertaking I.T. subjects. They say that sometimes students are uncertain about whether or not they have plagiarised while working on an assignment with friends. Answers to the following questions are likely to help for Swinburne students doing I.T. courses or subjects to determine whether or not they have plagiarised. If a student has *not* plagiarised, the honest answer to each of these questions is 'yes'.

- Has code I copied from elsewhere been fully acknowledged?
- Did I write all the rest of the program myself?
- Did I write the comments myself?
- If asked, could I explain the solution to the lecturer?
- Can I explain the purpose of every variable, declaration, function, and loop?

You can ask similar questions about written assignments, for example software design documentation. You have not plagiarised if, for each of these questions, the honest answer is 'no'.

- Has anyone, other than myself or members of my team, made use of the same solution?
- Did anyone, other than myself or members of my team, contribute the design of the solution?
- Did anyone give me a written document to copy?
- Did I read another solution to figure out what to do, and not acknowledge or reference the document?
- Was any of this written work copied from the web and not referenced?

Finally, they suggest that every single line of text taken from another source be referenced (Department of Computer Science, RMIT, 2003). This is excellent advice and is applicable to all written submissions for Swinburne I.T. students.

Note: We have been able to use a good bit of advice from RMIT here, without plagiarising them, by paraphrasing their advice and then simply properly attributing the ideas to them.

2.2.3 Ensure other students do not copy from you

Unfortunately, in the past, some Swinburne students have had their individual work stolen or borrowed and copied by other students. In some cases, even though they may be innocent of any deliberate wrongdoing, these students have been disadvantaged further by having to attend formal hearings within their Academic Unit and in some cases, receiving a penalty.

Below are some suggestions to help ensure that your individual work is not used by other students for their advantage, and your disadvantage, when the assignment you are required to undertake is identical. These suggestions do not apply to group written assignments to which all group members are expected to contribute. By all means collaborate on practice assignments, tutorial problems and the like. However, different expectations apply when the item is assessable as an individual student's own work.

- Never leave your individual work unattended on a computer – even for a short time to go to a printer in another room or to go to the washroom. Close down the document or program on which you have been working and wipe from the machine any trace of your work or lock the terminal if that is possible;
- Never leave disks containing copies of your individual work unattended even for a short time;
- Never leave hard copies of your individual work unattended even for a short time, for example, on a printer, even if it is only a draft;
- Do not lend your draft or completed individual report/assignment or work to another student, even briefly;
- Do not let other students look at your draft or completed individual report/assignment or work, even in your presence.

Some of these suggestions may seem harsh, or even inappropriate, to some students. After all, argue some students, working with other students can help you, as well as them. This is true, and collaborative work is to be encouraged, particularly in group assignments. However, when the assessment requirement is that you must write an individual assignment, that is exactly what you, and all of your student colleagues, should do.

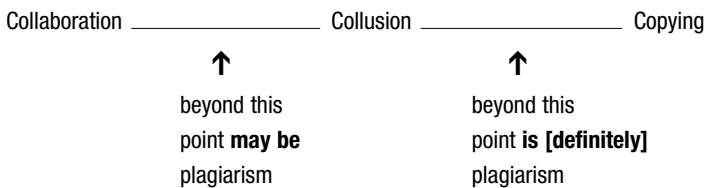## 2.3 Specific strategies to ensure copying does not occur in group work

Group and syndicate work is used extensively at Swinburne because they involve important skills associated with collaboration and teamwork, which are required in industry. However, students seem to be at particular risk of *accidental plagiarism* in group work. Many students are particularly unclear about what constitutes plagiarism in a group setting. In particular, students are often uncertain about where cooperation and collaboration* stops and where collusion** and copying*** begin.

***Collaboration** means working together with one or more other students cooperatively with the permission (and often encouragement) of teaching staff. This is perfectly acceptable practice and does not constitute plagiarism. (See section 2.2.1 for examples).

****Collusion** means working together in a way where there is secrecy, conspiracy or inappropriate cooperation. (See section 2.2.1 for more information).

*****Copying** means reproducing or imitating the work of other students and therefore not producing your own, independent work. Copying from other students is unacceptable at Swinburne. (See section 2.2.1 for more information).

The diagram below illustrates this issue.

Collaboration ——————— Collusion ——————— Copying

↑ beyond this point **may be** plagiarism

↑ beyond this point **is [definitely]** plagiarism

Figure 4: Co-operation/Collaboration/Copying Continuum
(Culwin and Naylor, 1995)

2.3.1 Group work questions and answers

What is the difference between collaboration and copying in group work?

Collaboration includes working together with the lecturer's permission on shared activities related to the assessment task (you can always do whatever you like if you are not working on an assessable task). Activities related to assessment tasks can include discussing the assignment generally, locating and sharing resources, and in the case of a *group report* (NOT an individual report), having someone within the group 'tidy up' the writing, layout and/or referencing.

Where does collusion start in group work?

In *individual assignments* or *individual reports from group work*, collusion starts when you engage in behaviour with other students that will give you an unfair advantage over other students who have worked alone, and fairly, to produce their assignment. If you are unsure about whether your behaviour or that of others in your group is collusion, check with your lecturer or the Subject Convenor.

How do you avoid copying and therefore plagiarising in group work?

Once again, the answer is simple – when all students in your subject are asked to do an identical assignment, do your own work. Once you start writing or solving problems, stop talking to other students about what you are doing so that you produce an original piece of work. Do not check what you have done with student colleagues and do not look at their written work (including computer code and calculations). If you are not confident about your written work, make an appointment to see your lecturer, tutor, or a language and academic skills adviser and get some help.

But surely it is OK, or even admirable, for fellow students to help each other with their work?

Learning cooperatively and collaboratively with others is a very good way to learn, and wherever it is permissible to do so, working with other students will be helpful to most students. However, you must also ensure that the individual reports and assignments you submit are truly individual and that they reflect *your* skills and effort and not those of others who have helped you. Similarly, others should not be getting credit for your work.

In any case, if you accept an excessive level of help from others while you are a student, you are likely to find life after university very difficult when this help is no longer available. It is therefore better to learn how to undertake and complete the work yourself and thereby develop in yourself the skills and knowledge you will need for your future. Nevertheless, because you are here to learn, there are free and confidential services at Swinburne that have been set up specifically to teach you the skills you need both for study and beyond – make use of them.

2.3.2 General advice for avoiding plagiarism in group work

There are a few general pieces of advice for avoiding plagiarism in group work, including the following:

- Read the assessment requirements very carefully – ask your tutor or lecturer if you are not sure exactly what your group has to do or you individually have to do;
- Check the list of behaviours/practices in each Subject Outline that are considered to be plagiarism in each subject and be sure to avoid these;
- Make sure you arrive on time to all group meetings and contribute fairly to the work of the group;
- Ensure that you do the work you say you will do – if you do not fully understand what you have to do or are having trouble with your work, ask for help from your tutor, lecturer or the language and academic skills service as soon as possible;
- If you have to write an individual report/assignment from a group project, check that you understand the requirements clearly, that you start work early and that you use the university support services if you need to do so;
- If an individual report/assignment/submission is required, do not look at the drafts or completed versions of your student colleagues' assignments – even if you are 'stuck' or having trouble with the assignment. Instead, make an appointment to see your tutor/lecturer or a language and academic skills adviser; and
- Ensure you have correctly cited/referenced *all* sources you have used in your report/assignment. You will need to keep careful notes of these as you are researching and writing your report/assignment.

If necessary, seek assistance from your lecturers and/or tutors, the support services available to you through the University and the printed and other resources staff make available to you.

2.4 Specific strategies to avoid copying from the Internet and other text sources

One author on the topic of copying from the Internet or other published sources suggests that one way to avoid copying or too closely paraphrasing is to avoid looking at the original while you're writing or typing your assignment (Zuckerman, 2003). Another useful suggestion, from the same author, is to avoid re-writing the original work sentence by sentence. Instead, try to summarise the idea(s) of the original author as a whole in your own words. To help you develop the skills you need to do this, you might like to complete the relevant parts of the online workshop at:
http://www.unisanet.unisa.edu.au/learn/LearningConnection/?PATH=/Resources/
workshop%2Dplagiarism/Plagiarism+Online+Resource/&default=welcome.htm

If you wish to use material from the Internet or other sources, you will need to acknowledge it correctly. Correct acknowledgment procedures are mentioned further below (also see section **4. Helpful Resources**).

If you are an international student, or are otherwise not familiar with Australian university education practices, it is vital that you become familiar with the acknowledgment (or 'attribution' or 'referencing' or 'citation') practices and conventions used in Australian universities.

In some educational settings, the more closely a student can replicate the work or words of a master or expert in a field, the better the student is considered to be. For example, a student in such a setting who can repeat word-for-word the teachings of a particular scholar is likely to be well regarded, considered to be an excellent student and may be rewarded with high marks. This is **not** the case in Australia or, therefore, at Swinburne.

In Australian higher education, there are certain subject areas where definitions are expected to be learned word-for-word. However, you should never use others' opinions or ideas or research word-for-word in your writing without using quotation marks (short quotes) or format conventions (long quotes) and correct in-text citation.

Swinburne assessment practices do value and reward students for using the words and ideas of scholars from published and other sources, **but only if they are used in two particular ways.** These two ways are outlined below.

2.4.1 'Quoting': Using the precise words of someone else to support your ideas or the point you are making

One of the two ways students are encouraged to use the ideas of masters, experts and/or scholars in their field is to quote or **use the precise words of the scholar to support the student's own ideas or to emphasise a point the student is making**. Sometimes when you wish to refer to the work of another person, it is best to use the precise words of that person. When you do this you are expected to **acknowledge that someone else wrote the words or developed or wrote about the ideas that you have used**. The way to do this at Swinburne is outlined in: http://www.swin.edu.au/lib/guides/harvard_system.pdf

2.4.2 'Paraphrasing': Reporting the ideas of someone else in your own words

The second of the two ways students are encouraged to use the words and ideas of others is to paraphrase or re-phrase the words and ideas of experts or others. If you do not wish to include the precise words used by another person but you do wish to report that person's ideas you might **summarise the ideas of this scholar in your own words**. Sometimes when you wish to refer to the work of another person, it is better to use a summary of the ideas of a particular scholar in a way that clearly shows your understanding of the ideas. When you summarise the main ideas you have learned from someone else in your own words, you are also expected to clearly **acknowledge that someone else first wrote about the ideas you have summarised**. Giving proper references shows that you have read the appropriate literature and are well informed. Ask your lecturer or Subject Convenor for guidelines on how to do this in each subject (requirements may be slightly different for each subject).

Note that completing an assignment by joining together numerous quotes and paraphrases without any comment, criticism and/or discussion from you about the work you have quoted or paraphrased is likely to lead to low marks in most areas. Remember that the language and academic skills services in the university provide workshops, individual appointments and other advice and guidance in writing assignments using quotes, paraphrases and your own views appropriately – see section 2.1.5 and the Appendix for details.

2.4.3 How do I acknowledge that I have used someone else's work or ideas?

As mentioned earlier, in the case of both quoting and paraphrasing, there are rules for how to acknowledge where the words and ideas you have used have come from; in other words, there are rules for how to acknowledge the original authorship.

The rules for acknowledgment or attribution are referred to most often as the rules of 'Referencing' or 'Citation'. The rules are quite complex and they must be followed closely. To complicate things a little more, there are two main systems used at Swinburne. The first is the Harvard or 'in-text' or 'author-date' system and the second is the Cambridge or 'endnote' or 'footnote' system. Your Academic Unit will tell you which system to use or if there is no requirement to use a particular system then you may choose whichever you prefer.

2.4.3.1 The Harvard system

To use the Harvard system, you put the family name of the author, the year the text was published and the page number from which you have quoted or paraphrased as close as possible to the use of the author's ideas, words or work. For example:

Smith (2004) has indicated that there is now evidence to support the link between smoking and baldness in young women (p. 32).
OR
Smoking has been linked to baldness in young women (Smith, 2004, p. 32).

Both uses of the conventions demonstrate to the reader that the facts about the link between baldness and smoking are from Smith, from a publication issued in 2004 and that this idea can be found on page 32 (*see note below). The full details of Smith's publication will then be found in the reference list at the end of the assignment.

* It is important to note that in some subjects you will be required to put page numbers; in others you will be required to leave page numbers out and in others still, the staff will not mind whether page numbers are in or out, as long as the author and date are present! There are many variations in the details required when the Harvard system is used. You must seek advice from each Subject Convenor about the exact requirements for each subject and/or assignment. For research theses (i.e. Masters and PhD) the requirements are very specific and can be obtained from the Office of Research and Graduate Studies.

Further details about Harvard referencing can be found at
http://www.swin.edu.au/lib/guides/harvard_system.pdf

2.4.3.2 The Cambridge system

To use the Cambridge system, you insert a small, raised number as close as possible to
the use of the author's ideas, words or work that you have quoted or paraphrased.[1]
For example:

Smoking has now been linked to baldness.[2]

Note that a *foot*note appears at the *foot* (bottom) of the page (an *end*note appears at the
end of an assignment). Many word-processing packages have a function that allows you
to easily and neatly insert footnotes or endnotes. Check the guidelines from your Academic
Unit or Subject Convenor for more information.

2.4.4 Why do I have to use these complicated methods and rules?

One of the central purposes of Australian higher education is to produce independent
thinkers, who are able to critically analyse information and ideas. This means that during
your time at Swinburne you will be asked not only to become familiar with the theories,
techniques and ideas of scholars and experts, but to examine these theories/ideas closely
and to decide how much or how little you agree with them. You will develop your ability to
form opinions about ideas and to communicate these opinions verbally and in writing.
These opinions must be based on evidence and one common source of evidence is the
ideas or research findings of others. You are likely to find yourself using the ideas of one
scholar to analyse and perhaps criticise the ideas of another. This is considered excellent
scholarly practice at Swinburne (and at all Australian universities).

[1] This is an example of a footnote.
[2] Smith, J. <u>The effects of smoking on hair</u>. Made Up Publications, Melbourne, 2004, p. 32.

There are two reasons, then, why Swinburne (and all Australian university) students are expected to acknowledge the source or origin of the words of scholars they use in their assessment tasks. The first is that you need to let readers know where you found your ideas so that they can check to see whether they are reliable and valid ideas for the point you are making. Secondly, you need to make it clear which ideas are yours and which are those of others.

For some students, the excellent scholarly practice described above may be very different from what they are used to. Some students will never have been asked before to develop and present their own opinion on a scholarly matter. If you are one of these students, remember that there are support services available to help you. Make an appointment as soon as possible so that you can begin learning how to undertake this essential university requirement. Remember also that relying on help from other students can lead to plagiarism – be very careful about the advice and help you accept.

2.5   A final word on plagiarism

Working out which practices are considered to be plagiarism and which are not, can take a little time and practice for some students. Until you are sure about what you are allowed to do, keep checking with your tutor, lecturer or Subject Convenor and be aware that expectations may change from one subject to another.

> It is *essential* for your success as a Swinburne student that you learn how to use the words and ideas of original authors correctly in your own work.

3. A final word on cheating

Plagiarism is one form of cheating. There are many other forms that are not discussed in detail in this guide. These include:

- taking unauthorised or inappropriate materials into an exam
  (such as programmable calculators, notes and so on when they are not permitted);
- accessing Internet files in practical computing and other exams;
- writing notes in dictionaries and other allowed/authorised texts
  (sometimes in another language to avoid detection);
- stealing a copy of an exam prior to sitting for it; or
- having someone else sit an exam for you.

While this list is not exhaustive, it gives some idea of the sorts of behaviour that are considered to be cheating and therefore unacceptable at Swinburne. If you are unsure about whether a behaviour constitutes plagiarism or cheating – check with your tutor, lecturer or Subject Convenor.

4. Helpful resources

4.1 Swinburne library

The Swinburne library has an online guide to referencing – go to:
http://www.swin.edu.au/lib/guides/harvard_system.pdf

The library also hosts training for students in referencing. See the details for the 'Cite
Smart' training program at: **http://www.swin.edu.au/lib/infoskills/dropin_content.htm**

4.2 Ten useful websites on plagiarism and related issues

1. For an online workshop and learning guide on avoiding plagiarism, go to:

**http://www.unisanet.unisa.edu.au/learn/LearningConnection/?PATH=/Resources/
workshop%2Dplagiarism/Plagiarism+Online+Resource/&default=welcome.htm**

This website contains a clear, detailed, step-by-step workshop on many issues related to
plagiarism – well worth a look!

2. The website listed below is written specifically for international students:

It provides an overview of assessment in Australian universities as well as offering advice
on how to avoid unintentional cheating. It is also likely to be useful for Australian students
unfamiliar with university assessment.

Devlin, M. (2002). *Advice for students unfamiliar with assessment practices in Australian
higher education*, Australian Universities Teaching Committee for the Centre for the Study
of Higher Education, The University of Melbourne:
http://www.cshe.unimelb.edu.au/assessinglearning/03/intstuds.html

3. For answers to frequently asked questions such as 'Should I use quotations or paraphrasing?' and 'How do you reference information given in a lecture or tutorial?' and many others, go to:

http://www.unisanet.unisa.edu.au/learningconnection/students/lrnsvcs/faq.asp

4. For a plain English explanation of plagiarism as well as advice on how to avoid it, go to:

http://owl.english.purdue.edu/workshops/hypertext/ResearchW/plag.html

5. For advice on avoiding the many different types of plagiarism – with examples – go to:

http://www.zoology.ubc.ca/bpg/Advising/plagiarism.htm

6. For a clear, easy to understand introduction to referencing – what referencing is, why you have to reference, how to manage your references and links to further resources – go to:

http://www.unisanet.unisa.edu.au/learningconnection/students/Lguides/intro_refncng.doc

7. For general advice on how not to plagiarise, go to:

http://www.utoronto.ca/writing/plagsep.html. Note that this site was developed for students at the University of Toronto, so not all the advice given here will be relevant for Swinburne students.

8. For information and advice on the different methods and styles of referencing, go to:

http://www.unisanet.unisa.edu.au/learningconnection/students/lrnsvcs/refncing.asp

9. For advice on referencing electronic sources, go to:

http://www.unisanet.unisa.edu.au/learningconnection/students/Lguides/intro_refncng.doc

10. For information and advice on general study skills, including research; reading effectively; writing and time and stress management, go to:

http://www.swin.edu.au/lts/support/study_skills/studyskills.htm

References

Culwin F. & Naylor J. (1995). *Pragmatic Anti-Plagiarism*. Proceedings 3rd All Ireland Conference on the Teaching of Computing, Dublin.

Department of Computer Science, *Plagiarism in Computer Science, RMIT University* http://goanna.cs.rmit.edu.au/~jz/plagiarism/studentguide/, accessed 16th October, 2003.

Zuckerman, J. (2003). *Writing the literature or paraphrase carefully, and use the right verb tense*, Powerpoint presentation, Walden University, United States of America: http://www.waldenu.edu/acad-rsrcs/writing-center/plagiarism/writinglit_files/frame.htm, accessed 21st August, 2003

Note: The reference by Smith is not real – it was made up for illustrative purposes only.

Appendix

Hawthorn campus
Nancy Moncrieff or Mary Lou Ridsdale
Room TD 345
Telephone: 9214 5583
Email: nmoncrieff@swin.edu.au or mridsdale@swin.edu.au

Prahran campus
Mary Lou Ridsdale
Room PK 422
Telephone: 9214 6985
Email: mridsdale@swin.edu.au

Lilydale, Wantirna and Croydon campuses
Elena Verezub
Room LA 102.0 (Lilydale)
Telephone: 9215 7225
Email: mschneider@swin.edu.au

Also, use the services of the International Student Unit, in particular the International Student Advisor (ISA) on your campus. For details of the services available, go to: http://www.swin.edu.au/isu/current/index.htm.

Contact details of language and academic skills services for Australian students

Hawthorn campus
Elena Verezub
Room TD 345
Telephone: 9214 8816
Email: mschneider@swin.edu.au or enorman@swin.edu.au

Prahran campus
Bett Norman
Room PK 422
Telephone: 9214 6550
Room: PK422a
Email: enorman@swin.edu.au

Lilydale, Wantirna and Croydon campuses
Elena Verezubr
Room LA 102.0 (Lilydale)
Telephone: 9215 7225
Email: mschneider@swin.edu.au

Contact details of the Counselling service for all students

Croydon campus
Counsellors: Noni Dorrell, Angela Hartnell
Building A, Room A129 (just off the Student Lounge and Cafeteria)
Telephone: 9726 1710

Hawthorn campus
Counsellors: Helen Kalaboukas, Michele Kemm, Liza Ng, Mary Shaw,
Katherine Yannakis, Todd Zemek
36 Wakefield Street (next door to the Corner Cafe)
Service hours are usually 9am–5pm weekdays and
9am–6pm on Monday and Wednesdays
Telephone: 9214 8025

Healesville campus
Counsellor: Julie Swinburne
Campus Reception
Telephone: 5957 1800 (or Lilydale Student Centre Reception 9215 7101)

Lilydale campus
Counsellor: Julie Swinburne, Lisa Ng
Student Centre Reception
Telephone: 9215 7101

Prahran campus
Counsellors: Mema Galante, Helen Kalaboukas, Michele Kemm
Second Floor Building PK. Room PK 223 (just near the Student Union offices)
Telephone: 9214 6734

Wantirna campus
Counsellor: Angela Hartnell
Building 3. Room 259 (near the Library and the Student Lounge)
Telephone: 9210 1205

Remember, the sooner you seek help, the sooner you will benefit and the less likely
it is you will feel tempted to resort to plagiarism.

Note: If you are experiencing a crisis, cannot contact a counsellor, and need help
urgently, phone Lifeline on 131 114 or Care Ring on 136 169.

Notes

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Course Information

Telephone 1300 368 777

www.swin.edu.au

Croydon campus
Norton Road
Croydon Victoria 3136
Telephone (03) 9214 8000

Hawthorn campus
John Street
Hawthorn Victoria 3122
Telephone (03) 9214 8000

Healesville campus
Maroondah Highway
Healesville Victoria 3777
Telephone (03) 5957 1800

Lilydale campus
Melba Avenue
Lilydale Victoria 3140
Telephone (03) 9214 8000

Prahran campus
High Street
Prahran Victoria 3181
Telephone (03) 9214 8000

Wantirna campus
Stud Road
Wantirna Victoria 3152
Telephone (03) 9214 8000