

The Oxford Dictionary defines plagiarism as *“the practice of taking someone else’s work or ideas and passing them off as your own”*.

Plagiarism is viewed as theft and is taken very seriously within MTU. All works of original thought are considered Intellectual Property and are protected under copyright law.

Types of Plagiarism – Intentional and Unintentional

Intentional:

- Purchasing essays or material from someone else and passing it off as your own work.
- Having someone write an assignment or essay for you.
- Falsifying citation details or fabricating a quotation.
- Copying large amount of text or ideas without citing the original author of the work.
- Copying text from websites or other online media without citing the author.
- Copying text word for word or only making minor changes to another person’s work and then passing it off as your own individual work.
- Collusion- collaboration with others that has not been authorised, the exception to this is group projects that have been assigned by the course lecturer.
- Self-plagiarism or duplication -Submitting work or reusing sections of work that has been submitted previously by yourself without acknowledging it, is counted as intentional plagiarism even though the ideas are your own.

Unintentional:

- Carelessly leaving out references or incorrectly referencing material
- Inappropriate use of paraphrasing.
- Improper use of quotation marks.
- Incorrectly assuming something is common knowledge and not citing it.
- Too much reliance on other people’s work or ideas.
- Expressing someone else’s ideas while changing the wording into your own words but not crediting the original author.
- Copying and pasting images from the internet.

REMEMBER!

Citation always needs to be used for **visual material, graphs, statistics, music, images, video or film.**



How to avoid Plagiarism

- Writing academically and formulating essays takes practice and good note taking skills.
- Start your research early and always include details of your source when you make notes (author, title, year of publication, page number etc.) It's easier to do this during the course of your research rather than trying to locate references later.
- Use Bibliographic software packages such as *Endnote Online*, *Mendeley* or *RefWorks* that can be used easily to store references and insert citations into your assignments.
- Avoid plagiarism by improving your writing skills and learn to strengthen your analytical abilities.

How to Paraphrase

- Don't paraphrase sentence by sentence as the original meaning may be lost.
- It's a good idea to read a long paragraph from a book or journal article, put it away and then write in your own words.
- Remember you cannot just use alternative vocabulary for paraphrasing so put away the thesaurus!
- Proper paraphrasing employs your own words and sentence structure. If you can't change the author's words or if you think the meaning will be lessened use a mini quote in the paraphrase.
- Be careful not to change the author's original ideas when paraphrasing as otherwise you will be misrepresenting their work. You always need to cite the source when paraphrasing.

Examples of direct quotes and paraphrasing.

- **Direct Quote:** *"Tourism in Ireland is increasing, with a growth level of 12% from 2008 to 2009 overall and growth in city trips up over 20%"* (CSO, 2009:201).

- **Paraphrased:** *According to the Central Statistics Office (CSO), the number of tourists coming to Ireland is increasing substantially, both overall and in particular regarding trips to Irish cities* (CSO, 2009) [the author's original words are substantially rewritten, but the original meaning is retained].

- **Summarising:** *According to the Central Statistics Office (CSO), the number of tourists visiting Ireland is increasing* (CSO, 2009) [the author's original words are rewritten into a substantially shortened form that captures the most important elements].

When not to reference

- Common Knowledge- this is facts, dates, events or information that is general knowledge e.g. *there was a worldwide financial crash in 2008*.
- Familiar opinion- You have to judge how familiar it is, e.g. *there is a housing rental crisis in Ireland in 2016*.
- When you refer to an author's particular interpretation of a commonly known fact- you still need to reference.
- Paradigm- these are dominant theories in an area of study, e.g. Marxist theory in sociology and do not need to be referenced.
- Original observations and your own conclusions made on a topic- there is no need to reference.
- When writing you need to ask yourself- did I know this information prior to studying this topic? Did the information or ideas come from my own thoughts?
- Remember if in any doubt, cite the source.

Finally

- References are there to support your discussion, not to replace it.
- Forming your own opinions is good academic practice and will lessen the likelihood of plagiarism.
- Know why and when to reference.
- Use your quotes sparingly and avoid using longer quotes unless necessary.
- An essay or assignment should not be just a string of lengthy quotations and large paragraphs of paraphrased material.
- To avoid plagiarism, your own opinions and analysis on the topic need to be clearly evident within your work.