**Edison State College Libraries**

**Preventing & Detecting Plagiarism: A Guide for Faculty**

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**Ironic Quote from an Internet Paper Mill**

“If a site is charging more or less than the prices that are mentioned here then BEWARE as you are being cheated.” –Top Term Papers and Research Papers Writing Sites

**Introduction**

The proliferation of Internet paper mills – online services that sell research papers and essays to college students – and social networking sites has caused a sharp increase in plagiarism: the use of another person’s ideas, research, or words without giving credit to that person. This guide, which is designed to combat plagiarism, contains the following resources: Edison’s policy on plagiarism, tips for detecting and preventing plagiarism, student and faculty resources, and a plagiarism contact that I created for my history classes, which you may customize and circulate to your students.

**Edison’s Academic Dishonesty Policy**

The Department of Academic and Student Affairs is in the process of revising Edison’s Academic Dishonesty and Plagiarism Policy. The October 2006 edition of the Edison State College Faculty Handbook includes the following information about academic dishonesty, cheating, and plagiarism on page 38:

# Academic Honesty/Cheating/Plagiarism

In meeting one of the major objectives of higher education, which is to develop self-reliance, it is expected that students generally will be responsible for the completion of their own academic work. Exceptions are formal group work or teamwork. The use of literature, notes, aids, or assistance from other sources should be clearly identified with respect to all course assignments and exams. Students are expected to use all resources, including books, journals, and computers only in legal and authorized ways. They should refrain from falsification of information and participate in the educational process without disrupting the orderly processes and functions of the college.

**Basic Forms of Plagiarism**

Some students knowingly and purposefully plagiarize, while others unintentionally plagiarize. Students who unintentionally plagiarize typically do not understand how to properly cite resources.

**Forms of Intentional Plagiarism**

* Copying from print sources
* Copying from the Internet or subscription databases
* Purchasing a paper from an Internet paper mill
* Using a paper from another student who took your course
* Submitting the same paper for more than one course (self-plagiarism)
* Using fake resources and/or citations

**Unintentional Plagiarism**

* Not knowing when or how to cite resources

**When to Check for Plagiarism**

* varying font
* strange formatting
* datedness (e.g., no references beyond 1990)
* anachronisms
* mixed citation styles
* off topic
* no references
* missing references
* no parenthetical citations
* references not cited within the paper
* writing is unusually sophisticated
* sharp shifts in style
* writing style doesn’t coincide with the student’s previous work

**How to Check for Plagiarism**

* Do an exact phrase search using a passage from the student’s paper in Google
* Do an exact phrase search using a passage from the student’s paper in a database cited in the paper
* Use SafeAssign (Ask Mary Myers)
* Become familiar with websites that give away or sell papers

**Focus on Preventing Rather than Detecting Plagiarism**

* Educate students about plagiarism
* Explicitly define plagiarism
* Create a plagiarism contract
* Customize assignments
* Require students to complete the Edison Libraries’ Research Tutorial
* **Schedule a Research Instruction Session with a Librarian**

**Instructional Methods and Assignments Designed to Prevent Plagiarism**

* Develop, review, and consistently adhere to a policy and penalties for plagiarism
* Clearly define and explain assignments
* Create and circulate explicit assignment instructions
* Provide sample assignments
* Require each student to submit a writing sample on the first day of class
* Specify resource requirements, e.g., students must use a mixture of books, journal articles, and reliable free Internet sources
* Discuss why students should cite resources: allowing readers to locate the resources listed, giving credit to authors, respecting intellectual property, etc.
* Discuss plagiarism when introducing an assignment
* Discuss the 3 major ways of incorporating an author’s work into a research paper – paraphrasing, summarizing, and directly quoting – with examples of each
* Practice paraphrasing, summarizing, and directly quoting resources in class
* Discuss when and how to cite different types of resources, using examples
* Review print and online citation guides
* Carefully construct assignments
  + assign topics
  + change topics each semester
  + require narrowly defined or specific topics
  + require particular formats or text models
  + require specific types of resources, e.g., journal articles, films, books, etc.
  + require recently published resources
  + focus on current issues
  + ask students to research and write about local issues
  + require personal interviews or primary sources
  + require some personal reflection
  + require team reports
  + require the student to present the paper in class
  + personalize a component of the assignment
* **Focus on the Process as well as the Product**
  + coach and guide students throughout the research and writing process
  + teach students how to prevent plagiarism throughout the process
  + **require submission of one, some, or all of the following:** 
    1. topic
    2. thesis
    3. outline
    4. abstract
    5. bibliography
    6. research Log
    7. photocopy or print out of resources: title page of book, bibliographic record for journal article, homepage of website
    8. annotated bibliography
    9. rough draft with citations
  + require a personal reflection essay a few weeks before, or on the day the paper is due, which includes
    1. challenges students faced while completing the assignment
    2. how students overcame those challenges
    3. specify their research strategy
    4. discuss what they learned from the process and the product
  + peer review/feedback
    1. devote a class to peer review of rough drafts
    2. collect drafts for written comments
    3. offer writing workshops

**Plagiarism Resources for Faculty**

* Bedford/St. Martins Workshop on Plagiarism. <http://bcs.bedfordstmartins.com/plagiarism/>.
* Council of Writing Program Administrators. Defining and Avoiding Plagiarism: The WPA Statement on Best Practices. <http://www.wpacouncil.org/node/9>
* Coastal Carolina University Library. Cheating 101: Internet Paper Mills.

<http://www.coastal.edu/library/presentations/mills2.html>.

* [Blum, Susan Debra.](http://catalog.linccweb.org/F/4AXIXFQG5CQHFN81HA816PQDCH3Y9BGY7NE4EAXDCFX8YAFTV3-02505?func=service&doc_number=001587417&line_number=0013&service_type=TAG)[*My Word!: Plagiarism and College Culture*](http://catalog.linccweb.org/F/4AXIXFQG5CQHFN81HA816PQDCH3Y9BGY7NE4EAXDCFX8YAFTV3-22211?func=full-set-set&set_number=020322&set_entry=000003&format=999).Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009. Call# TLC PN167.M9 B48 2009, Lee Campus Library
* [Eisner, Caroline and Martha Vicinus, eds.](http://catalog.linccweb.org/F/4AXIXFQG5CQHFN81HA816PQDCH3Y9BGY7NE4EAXDCFX8YAFTV3-26400?func=service&doc_number=001503979&line_number=0017&service_type=TAG)[*Originality, Imitation, and Plagiarism: Teaching Writing in the Digital Age*](http://catalog.linccweb.org/F/4AXIXFQG5CQHFN81HA816PQDCH3Y9BGY7NE4EAXDCFX8YAFTV3-15744?func=full-set-set&set_number=020606&set_entry=000002&format=999)*.* Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2008. Call# TLC PN167 .O75 2008, Charlotte, Collier, & Lee Campus Library

**Plagiarism Resources for Students**

* Purdue University. Online Writing Lab: Avoiding Plagiarism. <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/589/01/>
* Northwestern University. The Writing Place: Avoiding Plagiarism.

<http://www.writing.northwestern.edu/avoiding_plagiarism.html>

* Edison State College. Libraries’ Research Tutorial. <http://www.edison.edu/library/researchskills/>
* Stern, Linda. [*What Every Student Should Know About Avoiding Plagiarism*](http://catalog.linccweb.org/F/HFBIMYHASDCVN89T1AC653UUM5J3VEECJJ861LCAU72KPNIJG3-39297?func=full-set-set&set_number=020626&set_entry=000002&format=999). New York: Pearson/Longman, 2007. Call# REF PN167 .S74 2007, Lee Campus Library
* [*Plagiarism: It’s a Crime*](http://catalog.linccweb.org/F/4AXIXFQG5CQHFN81HA816PQDCH3Y9BGY7NE4EAXDCFX8YAFTV3-31513?func=full-set-set&set_number=020983&set_entry=000007&format=999). Huntsville, TX: Educational Video Network, 2006. Call# DVD PN167 .P53 2006 Charlotte & Collier Campus Library

**Plagiarism Contract**

**Professor: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Student: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Date Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**What is plagiarism?**

Plagiarism is using another person’s ideas, research, or words without giving credit to that person. Plagiarism is theft; it is a serious academic offense. Plagiarism is also illegal. U.S. law protects intellectual property rights.

**What are some examples of plagiarism?**

* Buying or using a research paper written by someone else
* Copying information or downloading a paper from the Internet
* Copying information from your course textbook
* Copying information from a print resource, such as a book or journal article, without citing it
* **Submitting a paper that you already have submitted or plan to submit for another class**
* Including information in your paper from a resource without citing it
* Quoting, paraphrasing, or summarizing another person’s words or thoughts without citing them

**What happens if I am caught plagiarizing?**

You will earn a **zero (0)** for the assignment with **NO** opportunity to redo it.

**How do I avoid plagiarizing?**

* Write down complete citation information for each resource you consult
* Cite any information included in your paper that is not your own
* **DO NOT** buy or download a paper for free from the Internet and submit it as your own
* **DO NOT submit a research paper written by someone else**
* **DO NOT** directly copy information from the Internet without using direct quotes and citations
* **DO NOT** directly copy information from the Internet without using direct quotes and citations
* **DO NOT** copy information from a print resource, such as a textbook, book, or journal article, without using direct quotes and citations
* **DO NOT submit a paper that you already have submitted, or plan to submit for another class**
* **CITE ALL RESOURCES: when in doubt, cite your source!**

**What exactly is citing?**                   
Whenever you quote or base your ideas on another person’s work, you must document that work. You must credit all authors who have informed the ideas presented in your paper.

**When and how do I cite?**   
Use parenthetical, in-text citations to cite resources within the body of your paper. Create a works cited page for each work cited within your paper. Quoting, paraphrasing, and summarizing are the main ways to incorporate another person’s ideas into your paper.

**What exactly is a quotation?**

Quotations are the exact words of an author, copied word for word directly from the source. Attribute quotations to the original author, and use quotes.

**What exactly is a paraphrase?**

Paraphrasing is restating a sentence or passage from a resource in your own words. Paraphrases should be approximately the same length as the original passage. Attribute all paraphrases to the original source.

**What exactly is a summary?**

Summarizing is rewriting the main ideas of a source in your own words. Summaries provide a broad overview of a resource, and typically are shorter than the original text. Attribute all summarized ideas to the original source.

**Online citations guides for citing information in the APA, MLA, and Chicago Citation Styles are available at** <http://www.edison.edu/library/citationguides.php>.

**Citation Tips**

* Create and maintain a list of every resource you consult during your research
* Take clear, precise notes on where you found your information
* Write down complete citation information for every resource you use
* Use quotation marks when repeating another person’s words verbatim
* Credit original authors for their information and ideas
* Each paragraph, excluding the introduction and conclusion, generally will need at least one citation
* Do not cite common knowledge, such as a well-known quote, familiar proverb, or universal fact. For example, you do not need to cite when the American Civil War ended (1865).