

# Guidance on Plagiarism

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The information below is intended to be useful and helpful but meant only as an informal guide which does not replace or supersede the *Students' Handbook of Regulations* and the *Regulations for Awards* or any other official documents. It covers some common scenarios but not every possible example of plagiarism.

## Copy-and-Pasting Directly from Another Source

Reproducing text without quotation marks (or other clear indication such as indentation or italics) to denote that a passage is not the candidate's own work is plagiarism even if the original reference is given. However, how short a section of text needs to be in order to avoid plagiarism is naturally subjective.

**Not acceptable:** One day when he was out walking, he came to an open place in the middle of the forest, and in the middle of this place was a large oak-tree, and, from the top of the tree, there came a loud buzzing-noise [Milne, 1926].

**Acceptable:** "One day when he was out walking, he came to an open place in the middle of the forest, and in the middle of this place was a large oak-tree, and, from the top of the tree, there came a loud buzzing-noise" [Milne, 1926].

Reproducing figures (whether modified or not) without indicating that it is not the candidate's own work is plagiarism. Good practice should see text equivalent to "reproduced from [REF]" or "modified from [REF]" included in the figure caption as appropriate. If a figure has been completely redrawn from scratch then it is good practice to include "redrawn based on [REF]". However, it is often common practice to simply give the reference in the figure caption – this is usually acceptable in a literature review but may be insufficient, for example, if a graph of experimental data were to be reproduced in a results section. Therefore how explicit the referencing needs to be should be judged on a case-by-case basis taking context into account.

**Not acceptable:**



**Figure:** Illustration of methodology for the acquisition of honey.

**Usually acceptable:**



**Figure:** Illustration of methodology for the acquisition of honey [Shepard, 1926].

**Good practice:**



**Figure:** Illustration of the methodology for the acquisition of honey. Reproduced from [Shepard, 1926].

## Paraphrasing

"Substituting a few words or phrases or altering the order of presentation of another person's work, or linking unacknowledged sentences or phrases with words of one's own" is plagiarism (see extract from *Regulations for Awards* in Appendix below) even if the reference is given. However, how much rewording is required to avoid plagiarism is naturally subjective so candidates should err on the side of caution.

It is often unavoidable that some phrases and text strings are reproduced in technical writing. However, at what point this constitutes paraphrasing and therefore plagiarism is a naturally-subjective judgement depending on the percentage of similarity, the length and number of sections of text, the context and the appropriateness of any referencing used. It is therefore best practice to rewrite as much as possible.

**Original text:** One day when he was out walking, he came to an open place in the middle of the forest, and in the middle of this place was a large oak-tree, and, from the top of the tree, there came a loud buzzing-noise.

**Not acceptable:** In the middle of the forest, he came to an open place when he was out walking one day. He heard a loud buzzing-noise from the top of a large oak-tree in the middle of this place [Milne, 1926].

**Good practice:** As described by Milne in 1926, Winnie the Pooh encountered a “loud buzzing-noise” originating from the upper branches of a sizable oak tree [Milne, 1926]. Pooh apparently made this discovery whilst on a walk during the process of which he alighted upon a clearing in the centre of the forest.

## Self-Plagiarism

Reproducing work which has been used previously by the candidate to obtain another qualification (the regulations use the phrase “submitted for a degree or comparable [academic] award” – see extract from *Regulations for Awards* in Appendix below) without a suitable declaration is self-plagiarism. However, it would not be self-plagiarism if this were clearly and explicitly stated to be the case with full details of what has been reproduced, where and when it was previously submitted and for what qualification. Please note that this does not apply to the candidate’s own work presented in Progress Monitoring Reports which can be reproduced in reports and the final thesis submitted subsequently on the same programme of study.

Every effort should be made to rewrite text which the candidate has published or submitted previously. However, sometimes this is not appropriate such as, for example, when writing the description of a methodology which has been precisely defined in an earlier piece of work and where redrafting the text would result in a change of meaning or loss of clarity. In such a situation, it must be clearly and explicitly stated what has been reproduced and where it has been used previously. Failure to do so would be self-plagiarism. However, in the example given above of a description of a methodology it would probably be unnecessary to use quotation marks and a clear declaration would suffice.

It is a University requirement to make “a statement at the start of their submission of any publications that have arisen from the thesis, whether they have been published or are still being considered for publication.” Furthermore, “where a candidate’s research programme is part of a collaborative group project or is based on work done jointly with others, the work submitted must indicate clearly the candidate’s individual contribution and the extent of the collaboration.” See extract from *Regulations for Awards* in Appendix below.

There is no defined format for the required statement but the following is a suggestion of what might be appropriate in some circumstances:

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### Statement of Publications Arising from This Thesis

The following publications have arisen from my research detailed in this thesis:

“Acquisition of honey: an engineering challenge”

J.A. Hinks and W.T. Pooh *Journal of Melittology* **42** (2017) p123

**Contribution of the candidate:** I performed all the research and wrote the entire manuscript with minor input and editorial changes from my co-author. It is indicated where text from this publication has been reproduced in this thesis.

“Using lighter-than-air inflatables for working at height in woodland environments”

J.A. Hinks and W.T. Pooh *Journal of Aeronautical Health and Safety* (Submitted 2018)

**Contribution of the candidate:** This publication was the result of a collaboration in which I performed 75% of the research and I wrote 50% of the manuscript with the remainder originating from my co-author. It has been indicated where text from this publication has been reproduced in this thesis and all such text was written by myself with minor input and editorial changes from my co-author.

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## Appendix

For reference, the relevant sections of the *Students' Handbook of Regulations* and *Regulations for Awards* are given below.

### Students' Handbook of Regulations 2018 – p33

#### Plagiarism

1. Reproduction of published or unpublished (eg. work of another student or your own work\*) material without acknowledgement of the author or source;
2. Presenting information from electronic sources such as the internet without acknowledgement of the source;
3. Paraphrasing by, for instance, substituting a few words or phrases or altering the order of presentation of another person's work, or linking unacknowledged sentences or phrases with words of one's own.

\*Self-Plagiarism is where you have already submitted work for the use towards credit elsewhere. If it is acceptable to reference work already submitted, you must ensure this is done in accordance with the University's referencing guidelines.

### Regulations for Awards 2018 – p71

#### 15.4 The Submission

The candidate must confirm, through the submission of a declaration form, that the work has not been submitted for a comparable academic award. However, the candidate is not precluded from incorporating a submission covering a wider field work which has already been submitted for a degree or comparable award, provided that it is indicated on the declaration form and also in the thesis.

Candidates are required to make a statement at the start of their submission of any publications that have arisen from the thesis, whether they have been published or are still being considered for publication.

Where a candidate's research programme is part of a collaborative group project or is based on work done jointly with others, the work submitted must indicate clearly the candidate's individual contribution and the extent of the collaboration.

### Regulations for Awards 2018 – p73

#### 15.9 Research Misconduct (including plagiarism)

The Students' Handbook of Regulations sets out the process that will be invoked when it is alleged that a candidate has acted dishonestly or unethically or otherwise conducted research in an inappropriate manner. This includes allegations of academic misconduct (including but not limited to falsification or plagiarism) in the preparation of work submitted for assessment, or other irregularities in the conduct of any examination which come to light subsequent to the recommendation of the examiners or the University.