

Avoiding Plagiarism in Research

Bijesh Mishra, Ph.D.

 @BijuBjs  @biju9bjs

 bzm0094@auburn.edu; bjs.misra@gmail.com

Auburn University
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What is Plagiarism?

- Office of Student Support and Judicial Affairs, UCDAVIS: “Plagiarism is using another’s **works** without giving **credit**.”
- Auburn University (2019) Student Academic Honesty Code: Plagiarism is “using words or ideas of another as one’s own (page 100).”
- The U.S. Federal Definition from the Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP), US Department of Health & Human Service (HHS): “Plagiarism is the appropriation of another person’s ideas, processes, results, or words without giving appropriate credit.”

When Plagiarism Occurs?

Two Common ways:

- Improper use of someone else's **works** or **ideas**:
 - Misappropriating published or unpublished works fully or partially.
 - Misappropriating concepts, ideas, theories, texts, image, data, etc.
- Improper use of someone else's words.
 - Using source information too closely when **paraphrasing**.
 - Use original content by substituting/shuffling words and **cite**.
 - Failing to enclose "borrowed verbatim in quotation mark".
 - Hiring someone to write your assignment, paper, and thesis.

Why Plagiarism Occurs?

Two Potential Reasons:

- Conscious Avoidance:
 - Creating false citation.
 - Use original content as it was with citation.
 - Paraphrased properly in own words without citation.
- Unconscious Negligence:
 - I know so everyone knows.
 - Forget to acknowledge or cite.

Notes:

- Self-plagiarism and text recycling might be taken as plagiarism.
- Falsification and fabrications are also research misconducts.

Actions to Reduce Plagiarism:

- Auburn University Title XII, Academic Honesty Code.
- National Science Foundation (NSF) Office of the Inspector General (OIG) can subpoena if plagiarism is suspected (Kornfeld, 2019).
- NSF Grant recipient faculties were two times more likely to be guilty compared to that from National Institute of Health (NIH) (NSF 88% VS 42% NIH) (Kornfeld, 2019).
- According to NSF report, 5 plagiarism cases were committed by NSF grant recipients between Oct. 2021 to Sept. 2022.
- Research misconducts are publicly available and recorded in National Archive Federal Register.

How to Avoid Plagiarism?

- Summarize, paraphrase and cite.
- Contact original idea/work generator and seek approval if needed.
- Clearly and unambiguously differentiate your ideas/works from others.
- Use **common knowledge** (?).
- Plagiarism Dilemma: **REVISE, REWRITE, and CITE.**

What are “Common Knowledge”?

- Depends upon writer, reader, knowledge level, situation, events, consequence, relative field of work, etc.
- Universal truth such as “Sun rises from East.”
- ”Alfred Marshall’s Principle of Economics developed a supply-and-demand curve” **MAY BE** a common knowledge for **economics student** but **NOT** for **Palentobiology student**.
- Find frequently used but uncited information (common knowledge) in established literature in your field and context.

Auburn University:

- Plagiarism: Some Information You Should Know.
- Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) or CITI AU Basic RCR Training.
- Flow chart showing the types and severity of plagiarism violations: [Did I Plagiarize?](#)
- Office of Research Compliance
- Miller Writing Center

Additional Resources:

- U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, The office of Research integrity.
- Regulation of Research by National Science Foundation, Office of General Counsel (OGC).
- NIH Responsible Conduct of Research Training.
- AI and Plagiarism: King and chatGPT (2023). A Conversation on Artificial Intelligence, Chatbots, and Plagiarism in Higher Education. *Cel. Mol. Bioeng.*
- Collaborative Institutional Training Initiatives (CITI Program).
- Plagiarism Checker such as [turnItIn](#).

Summary:

- Be creative.
- Give credit.
- Revise, rewrite and cite.
- Use common knowledge.
- Summarize, paraphrase, and cite.