# Introduction to academic malpractice

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| **Student focused learning outcomes**  By the end of the session, you will be better able to:   * understand academic malpractice and the importance of referencing other people’s work * identify types of information that require appropriate acknowledgement * explain how plagiarism detection software is used * identify incidents of academic malpractice * understand how tutors respond to academic malpractice * identify inappropriate use of Generative AI |

Before you begin your academic careers in the UK, you will need to understand the fundamentals of academic malpractice. This term refers to both intentional and unintentional activities that are ‘likely to undermine the integrity essential to scholarship and research’ (University of Manchester, 2021). Academic malpractice is taken seriously in Higher Education in the UK because it can result in unfair credit in assessments and research. Therefore, the aim of this session is to help you avoid engaging in academic malpractice by raising your awareness of what it involves.

## Task 1

1. Read again the definition of academic malpractice from the introduction above

*This term refers to both intentional and unintentional activities that are ‘likely to undermine the integrity essential to scholarship and research’*

What types of ‘**activities’** is this referring to?

1. We asked ChatGPT (GenAI) the same question. Please compare your response with the examples given by ChatGPT below. What similarities / differences can you see?

* *Plagiarism: Presenting someone else's work, ideas, or words as your own without proper attribution.*
* *Fabrication: Creating or inventing data, results, or sources that do not exist.*
* *Cheating: Engaging in dishonest practices to gain an unfair advantage, such as copying from others during exams or submitting work that is not one's own.*
* *Unauthorized collaboration: Working with others on assignments or projects when it is not permitted, such as copying from classmates or collaborating on individual assignments.*
* *Breach of ethical guidelines: Violating established ethical principles or guidelines for conducting research or academic work.*
* *Failure to adhere to academic standards: Not following the guidelines, rules, or expectations set by academic institutions or professional organizations.*

*These are just a few examples, and academic malpractice can take many other forms as well.*

*Source: OpenAI. (2024). ChatGPT (version GPT3). [Computer program]. Available at: https://openai.com/blog/chatgpt/ (Accessed: 15 April 2024).*

## Task 2

Are the following approaches to writing acceptable? Discuss in groups, then explain your answers to the whole class.

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| --- | --- |
| **Group 1**  Copying a paragraph directly from the source with no changes.  Copying a paragraph from Generative AI.  Copying a paragraph making only small changes, for example, replacing some words with words of a similar meaning. | **Group 2**  Cutting and pasting a paragraph by using the sentences from the original but leaving out one or two words, or by putting one or two words in a different order.  Composing a paragraph by taking short standard phrases from a number of sources, including Generative AI, and putting them together with some words of your own. |
| **Group 3**  Changing some of the words and sentences in a text but keeping the vocabulary and the overall structure of the text the same as in the original text.  Using the original author’s organisation and style of argument. | **Group 4**  Paraphrasing a paragraph by rewriting with substantial changes in language, organisation, and amount of detail; giving your own examples and including an acknowledgement of the source.  Quoting a paragraph by placing it in block format with an acknowledgement of the source. |

Adapted from: Gillet, A. (2013). *Academic Writing: Avoiding Plagiarism*. [online] Available at: <http://www.uefap.com/writing/plagiar/plagfram.htm> (Accessed: 05 February 2021)

## Task 3

Two of the approaches in Task 2 mention ‘‘acknowledgement of the source’.

1. What does this mean?
2. How do academics acknowledge sources?
3. Why is it necessary to acknowledge sources?

## Task 4

Which of these do you need to cite?

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| --- | --- |
| **Type of information** | **Citation? Yes (Y)/ No (N)** |
| 1. Any material from the Internet |  |
| 1. Something you heard in a lecture |  |
| 1. Something you saw or heard in a TV/radio programme |  |
| 1. An interview |  |
| 1. Generative AI content (text, ideas, responses to prompts) |  |
| 1. Information that is not common knowledge in the subject area |  |
| 1. Statistical information from your own research |  |
| 1. Other people’s opinions |  |
| 1. Charts, diagrams, or tables that you have not created yourself |  |
| 1. Information which is regarded as common knowledge |  |
| 1. Field-specific knowledge, “common” within a particular field or specialisation.   sspecialisationspecialisation |  |
| 1. Your own opinion |  |
| 1. Other people’s words (i.e., a quote) |  |

### Plagiarism detection software

Turnitin is software that is used by the University to help academics identify plagiarised work. Students submit their work via Blackboard and Turnitin generates an **Originality Report**. This report highlights text in submissions that matches text from one or more of the following sources.

* Other students’ work at the University of Manchester
* Any previous work you have submitted
* Students’ work at other institutions
* Academic publications
* Internet sources

When your work is submitted to Turnitin, it will normally be added to an international database of student papers. Turnitin compares submissions to:

* billions of pages of active and archived internet information;
* a repository of works previously submitted to Turnitin;
* a repository of tens of thousands of periodicals, journals, & publications.

Any matching or highly similar text discovered is detailed in the Originality Report and highlighted on the submission. Your tutors will then read the Originality Report as a standard part of the assessment process.

## Task 5

Read the following scenarios and discuss possible action a tutor might take in each situation.

**Scenario 1:**

A student has asked Generative AI to respond to their essay question, then submitted the whole response as their own work.

**Scenario 2:**

A student has copied and pasted a chunk of text into their essay because they lack knowledge of the topic they are covering. Their similarity score is 20%. In comparison, another student has good knowledge of the topic and knows enough to gather information from several sources to quote and reference correctly. Their similarity score is 22%. Both students will be shown to have matches against the Turnitin database. However, one of these students copied directly from a website, whereas the other provided properly sourced quotes.

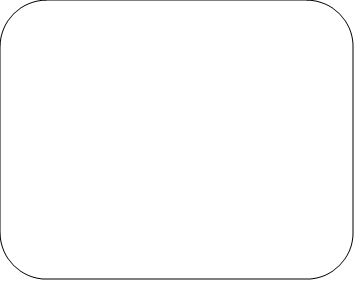
**Scenario 3:**

A student has managed to obtain a copy of another student's essay, which they then submit to Turnitin and receive a similarity score of 25%. The student who originally wrote the essay submits it to Turnitin a week later, receiving a 100% similarity score.

**Scenario 4:**

A student has input some journal articles into Generative AI and asked it to provide summaries of the articles. They have then included these summaries in their essay.

Scenarios 2 and 3 adapted from: Turnitin. (no date). *Interpreting the Similarity Report*. Available at: <https://help.turnitin.com/feedback-studio/turnitin-website/instructor/the-similarity-report/interpreting-the-similarity-report.htm>. (Accessed: 27 January 2022).



**STUDY SKILLS**

Follow this [link](https://manchester-uk.libanswers.com/teaching-and-learning/faq/264824) for the University of Manchester guidance on using Generative AI

Follow this [link](https://www.regulations.manchester.ac.uk/academic/guidance-to-students-on-plagiarism-and-other-forms-of-academic-malpractice/) for the University of Manchester guidance on academic malpractice