



## **The Ridge (Scotland) CIC**

### **Student Guide to Plagiarism**

***Plagiarism is intellectual theft and is a major offence, which the Ridge takes seriously in all cases. Students must therefore avoid committing acts of plagiarism by following these guidelines and speaking to academic staff if they are uncertain about what plagiarism means. Those who are found to have plagiarised will be subject to the Ridge's disciplinary procedures, which may result in penalties ranging from the deduction of credits and modules already achieved by students to compulsory termination of studies.***

## 1. Introduction

- . 1.1. This guide is intended to provide students at the Ridge with a clear definition of plagiarism and examples of how to avoid it.
- . 1.2. The guide may also be of use to members of staff who seek to advise students on the various issues outlined below.

## 2. Definition

- . 2.1. Plagiarism involves the act of taking the ideas, writings or inventions of another person and using these as if they were one's own, whether intentionally or not. Plagiarism occurs where there is no acknowledgement that the writings or ideas belong to or have come from another source.
- . 2.2. Most academic writing involves building on the work of others and this is acceptable as long as their contribution is identified and fully acknowledged. It is not wrong in itself to use the ideas, writings or inventions of others, provided that whoever does so is honest about acknowledging the source of that information. Many aspects of plagiarism can be simply avoided through proper referencing. However, plagiarism extends beyond minor errors in referencing the work of others and also includes the reproduction of an entire paper or passage of work or of the ideas and views contained in such pieces of work.

## 3. Good Practice

- . 3.1. Academic work is almost always drawn from other published information supplemented by the writer's own ideas, results or findings. Thus drawing from other work is entirely acceptable, but it is unacceptable not to acknowledge such work. Conventions or methods for making acknowledgements can vary slightly from subject to subject, and students should seek the advice of staff in their own subject area, about ways of doing this. Generally, referencing systems fall into the Harvard (where the text citation is by author and date) and numeric (where the text citation is by using a number). Both systems refer readers to a list at the end of the piece of work where sufficient information is provided to enable the reader to locate the source for themselves.

- . 3.2. When a student undertakes a piece of work that involves drawing on the writings or ideas of others, they must ensure that they acknowledge each contribution in the following manner:

3.3.

- **Citations:** when a direct quotation, a figure, a general idea or other piece of information is taken from another source, the work and its source must be acknowledged and identified where it occurs in the text;
- **Quotations:** inverted commas must always be used to identify direct quotations, and the source of the quotation must be cited;
- **References:** the full details of all references and other sources must be listed in a section at the end of any piece of work, such as an essay, together with the full publication details. This is normally referred to as a “List of References” and it must include details of any and all sources of information that the student has referred to in producing their work. (This is slightly different to a Bibliography, which may also contain references and sources which, although not directly referred to in your work, you consulted in producing your work).

When setting work where plagiarism may be an issue, tutors will explain clearly to students the importance of crediting sources, and will give clear examples of how to do this in an appropriate manner.

### Common Mistakes

Students may also find the following examples of common plagiarism mistakes made by other students useful when reflecting on their own work:

- “I thought it would be okay as long as I included the source in my bibliography”  
[without indicating a quotation had been used in the text]
- “I made lots of notes for my essay and couldn't remember where I found the information”
- “I thought it would be okay to use material that I had purchased online”
- “I thought it would be okay to copy the text if I changed some of the words into my own”
- “I thought that plagiarism only applied to essays, I didn't know that it also applies to oral presentations/group projects etc”

- “I thought it would be okay just to use my tutor's notes”
- “I didn't think that you needed to reference material found on the web”
- “I left it too late and just didn't have time to reference my sources”
- 3.4.

**None of the above are acceptable reasons for failing to acknowledge the use of others' work and thereby constitute plagiarism.**

## 4. Managing Plagiarism

4.1. Students, supervisors and institutions have a joint role in ensuring that plagiarism is avoided in all areas of academic activity. Each role is outlined below as follows:

*How you can ensure that you avoid plagiarism in your work:*

- Take responsibility for applying the above principles of best practice and integrity within all of your work
- Be aware that your written work will be checked for plagiarism and that all incidents of plagiarism, if found, are likely to result in severe disciplinary action by the Ridge. The standard penalty is to annul all assessments taken in the same diet of assessments
- Highlight written guidance on how you can avoid plagiarism and provide you with supplementary, verbal guidance wherever appropriate
- Regularly check student work to ensure that plagiarism has not taken place. This may involve both manual and electronic methods of checking. A number of plagiarism detection packages are available, of which the Ridge may make use if plagiarism is suspected.
- Alert you to the procedures that will apply should you be found to have committed or be suspected of having committed an act of plagiarism and explain how further action will be taken in accordance with Ridge policy and procedures.

*How the Ridge will endeavour to reduce student plagiarism:*

- Provide clear written guidance on what constitutes plagiarism and how to avoid it directly to your tutors and to you
- Alert you and your tutors to the penalties employed when dealing with plagiarism cases
- Take steps to ensure that a consistent approach is applied when dealing with cases of suspected plagiarism across the institution
- Take the issue of academic dishonesty very seriously and routinely investigate cases where students have plagiarised and apply appropriate penalties in all proven cases.

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