

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH – INDIANA UNIVERSITY

*From the AI Handbook for the Composition Program:*

•Plagiarism Policy

According to I.U.'s Code of Student Rights, Responsibilities and Conduct,

“Plagiarism is defined as presenting someone else’s work, including the work of other students, as one’s own. Any ideas or materials taken from another source for either written or oral use must be fully acknowledged, unless the information is common knowledge. What is considered ‘common knowledge’ may differ from course to course.

- a. A student must not adopt or reproduce ideas, opinions, theories, formulas, graphics, or pictures of another person without acknowledgment.
- b. A student must give credit to the originality of others and acknowledge indebtedness whenever:
  1. Directly quoting another person’s actual words, whether oral or written;
  2. Using another person’s ideas, opinions, or theories;
  3. Paraphrasing the words, ideas, opinion, or theories, whether oral or written;
  4. Borrowing facts, statistics, or illustrative material; or
  5. Offering materials assembled or collected by others in the form of projects or collections without acknowledgment.”

As an act of academic misconduct, plagiarism is a serious offense having serious consequences; from the Procedures for Bloomington Campus, a companion publication to the Code of Student Rights, Responsibilities, and Conduct,

“If the faculty member [NB: AIs are considered faculty members in this context] concludes that misconduct occurred, s/he may impose an academic sanction for the course. Sanctions that may be imposed by the faculty member include but are not limited to one or more of the following:

- a. A lower or failing grade for any assignment(s) in which misconduct occurred
- b. A lower or failing grade for the course; the penalty for a serious act of academic misconduct ordinarily should involve the recording of a failing grade for the course.
- c. Repeating the assignment(s) in which misconduct occurred
- d. Completing additional assignments

- e. Required withdrawal from the course, with a grade of either F or W at the faculty member's discretion, regardless of when during the semester the student withdraws from the course"

While the responsibility for avoiding plagiarism ultimately resides with the student, instructors should take whatever steps they can to discourage plagiarism in their classes. The first step is to ensure that students understand just what plagiarism is and what penalties it carries, an explanation ideally delivered both orally and in writing and accompanied by instruction in documentation procedures. Section-specific writing assignments based on assigned readings and class discussion also discourage plagiarism, as does giving students sufficient time to complete their assignments, requiring them to proceed through a series of carefully monitored stages, and requiring that drafts and photocopies of outside sources accompany final papers.

[NB: To minimize opportunities for plagiarism, instructors should not permit students to submit written assignments in their mailboxes in Ballantine 408, where such assignments can easily get lost, misplaced, or stolen; nor should they direct students to leave them with the English department office staff. Instead, instructors should require students to submit work directly to them.]

Despite all such efforts, however, instructors may occasionally receive a paper that appears to be plagiarized. In that event, they should follow these guidelines:

1. Do not accuse the student of plagiarism. Such a charge is serious and should be made only with sufficient evidence and the support of the Composition Program.
2. Locate the source(s) represented in the paper; underline all passages in the paper that are quoted or paraphrased without proper acknowledgment, and indicate the appropriate page(s) in the original source(s).

NB: If no source can be located, no penalty expressly for plagiarism can be exacted by the instructor nor can any official action be taken by the Composition Program; in order to pursue a case of suspected plagiarism, the instructor must have definite proof, not merely the suspicion that the style of the paper is too far removed from the style of the student's earlier work.

3. Take the paper and the source(s) to the Composition Coordinator, who, in consultation with the instructor, will determine the appropriate course of action. This course of action may include the filing of a report on the student's misconduct with the Dean of Students at the Office of Student Ethics. (Such a report must be filed if the instructor penalizes the student expressly for plagiarism.)

NB: In January, 2003, the Composition Program adopted a new policy toward academic misconduct. This policy involves two major changes for the program:

First, students who plagiarize on the final version of a major paper will no longer receive merely a failing grade for the paper. Instead, they should expect to receive a failing grade for the course. Accordingly, instructors should be sure to inform students on their syllabi that anyone

found to have committed academic misconduct on the final version of a major paper should expect to receive an F in the course.

The other major change is that this policy will not refer to rough drafts. While plagiarism certainly does occur in rough drafts, instructors should no longer consider themselves responsible for identifying plagiarism at this stage. An instructor who does sense that a rough draft has been plagiarized may confine him- or herself to making interrogatory comments on the draft, such as "Are you certain that you have documented all of your sources?" If the student continues to plagiarize on the final version, that is the time for calling the student's attention to the misconduct and for responding to it as an act of plagiarism. For graded writing that is not major (e.g., annotations, microthemes), instructors' announced policy should be that plagiarism on such writing will normally result in a zero for the assignment.