



A GUIDE TO ACADEMIC CONDUCT

OTAGO MEDICAL SCHOOL
Te Kura Hauora o Ōtākou

Introduction

Over the course of your studies you will be required to submit a wide variety of work in a range of styles and formats. The purpose of this guide is to introduce you to good practice and help you avoid poor or unacceptable academic practice.

The Academic Grievance Procedure For Students, section 3.1.5 requires that, ‘A clear statement on the nature and unacceptability of academic dishonesty, including cheating, plagiarism and fabrication or falsification of data will be provided to the students by the course co-ordinator or the department.’ This appendix fulfils that requirement.

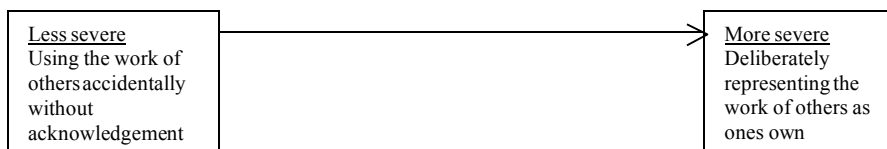
What do we mean by academic conduct?

In simple terms we mean ‘not cheating’, but academic conduct is much more than that. Gaining a university degree indicates that you have achieved certain knowledge and skills in your chosen subject. The academic integrity of the awarding institution adds considerable kudos to the value of your degree, hence the concern about buying degrees over the Internet. Academic conduct means playing by the rules, demonstrating a high level of personal integrity in your academic work.

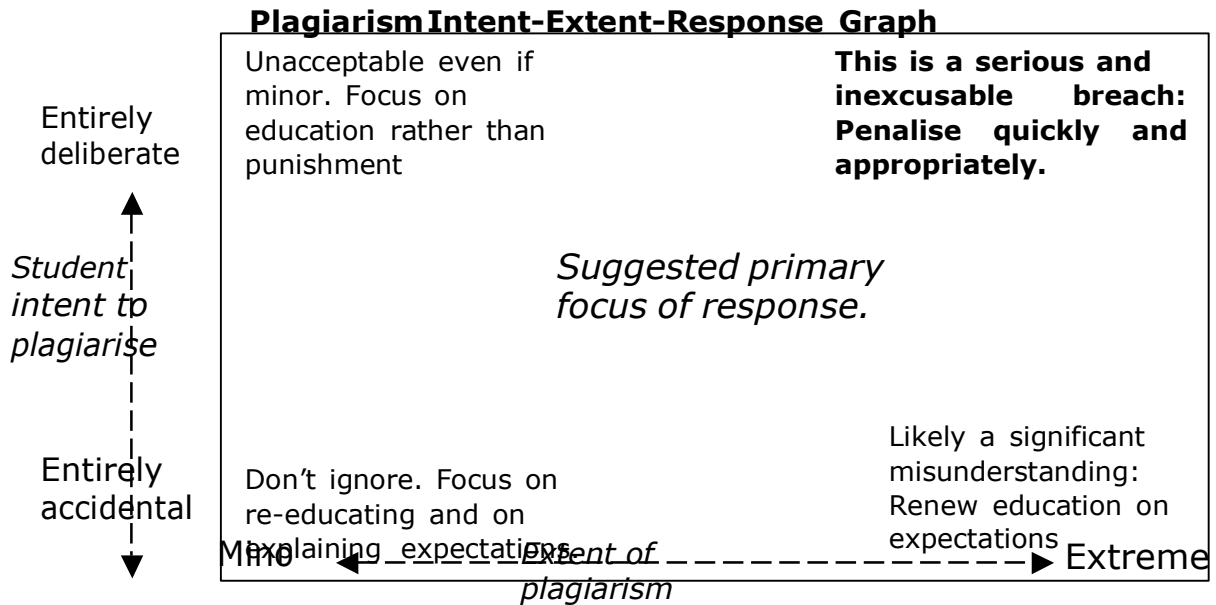
The main part of this booklet relates to good academic practice but it is important that you are aware of what is unacceptable. Academic misconduct is a very serious offence and can lead to a range of penalties from reduced grade to expulsion. There are formal processes to deal with academic misconduct. These are described in the University calendar (2009, page 235) and University policies on the web site (<http://policy01.otago.ac.nz/policies/index.html>). Information is also available regarding student appeals procedures (<http://www.otago.ac.nz/study/regulations/studentappealscouncil.html>).

Academic Misconduct

The Australian Universities Teaching Committee refers to an ‘intent to cheat continuum’. This is quite helpful as it puts the problem into a useful context.



A very useful diagram has been devised by Devlin.



Devlin, M. (2). *Strategies to minimise ?? higher education*. Centre for the Study of Higher Education, The University of Melbourne.

The response to a case of academic misconduct is likely to take this into account and range from an educative approach to severe penalty.

The following list contains the most common forms of academic misconduct. Only if you are aware of them will you be able to avoid them.

Plagiarism

Defined by the Concise Oxford Dictionary as, ‘the act or an instance of plagiarizing’. ‘Plagiarizing, take and use (the thoughts, writings, inventions, etc. of another person) as one’s own. To pass off the thoughts etc. of (another person) as one’s own’. This is probably the easiest academic misconduct to fall foul of. Anything you present will be regarded as your own work so any ideas or facts that you acquire from other sources **MUST** be acknowledged as such. Deliberately cutting and pasting from a journal article or book, without acknowledging the source, including the internet, is plagiarism. Making extensive use of an article, but acknowledging the source is not plagiarism (but neither will it create a good impression). Using old notes can create a problem. You may, unintentionally, use material that you do not attribute because you have forgotten where the information comes from. This would still be plagiarism. So, always keep a track of your sources, even in your notes.

Collusion

assisting someone to gain advantage by unfair means or receiving such help yourself. There can be confusion here, especially if you have been asked to work as a group. At what point does teamwork and collaboration become collusion? If you have any doubt then ask your tutor to clarify what is required.

- Fabrication** falsifying factual information, literally to invent a story. There have been some famous cases of researchers making up the statistics to ensure they fit the 'facts'. When the truth comes out resignation and academic obscurity result.
- Cheating** deliberately breaking examination (or other forms of assessment) rules, e.g. by taking unauthorised notes into an examination.
- Personation** getting someone else to do a piece of work and handing it in as your own, or producing a piece of work for someone else to hand in as their own. Often it is fairly easy for a marker to spot due to style or content.

Internet sources Whilst Internet sources are perfectly acceptable you do need to use a great deal of caution. Much work available, especially on the 'rent an essay' type of sites, is of poor quality and dated. Supposed 'learned articles' may not be peer reviewed and their provenance suspect. If you do use web-based sources be sure to reference them correctly.

Good academic practice

There are many sources of information which outline good academic practice. **The Student Learning Centre** (<http://hedc.otago.ac.nz/hedc/sld.html>) is a good place to start. They run workshops on:

- Managing Your Time and Planning Your Semester.
- Effective Learning.
- Essay Writing.
- Pre-writing Writing and revising.
- Essay writing for students from a non-English speaking background.
- Effective Reading.
- Note-taking and Note-making.
- Improve your Writing.
- Referencing.
- Oral Presentation Skills.
- Examination Series.
- Essay Writing for Exams, Exam Preparation and Revision, Exam Technique, Exam Panic.

On line tutorials are also available on:

- Managing your learning.
- University libraries.
- Effective reading.
- Essay writing.
- Making oral presentations.
- Preparation for exams.

There are many useful texts which claim to be able to improve your learning technique. A browse in the central library section 'learning and study skills' would be worthwhile. Some useful suggestions for good practice:

Abbreviations

The general rule is to spell out the words the first time they are used followed by the abbreviated form in brackets. Thereafter the abbreviated form may be used, thus Ministry of Health (MoH). Common medical abbreviations may be used **providing** they are unambiguous. If a lot of abbreviations are used a glossary should be provided. This should be placed either immediately after the contents page or in an appendix.

Appendix

Use this for essential material that does not fit in the main body of text, e.g. questionnaires, raw data. Do not include photocopies of articles. Always ensure the content of any appendix is referred to in the main text.

Assignment length

If you are given a specific length (e.g. 2000 words) convention allows a leeway of +/- 10%. Above or below this limit may result in penalties (e.g. lower grade).

Context

Make sure you are able to present your work in context. This may require a discussion with your tutor. Often you need to focus on a particular aspect but it is important that the wider context is reviewed. A common fault is to take a too narrow approach, particularly in the clinical context.

Deadlines

Work should be submitted by the prescribed time. Late work can be failed or may lead to the failing of Terms. It is your responsibility to submit the work on time. If you are having problems see your tutor in advance and discuss the situation. It may be possible to gain an extension if the reasons are compelling.

Page numbering

Is usually a good idea. If you are using a word processing package use the header and footer facility to put your name on each page.

Presentation

It is always helpful if your work is legible. If possible use a word processor. Use A4 paper typed on one side only. **REMEMBER TO KEEP A COPY FOR YOURSELF.**

Proof reading

Allow yourself plenty of time for proof reading. If you have concerns about your standard of English get a colleague or friend to proof read your work and use this as an opportunity to improve your language skills.

Spelling/grammar

With the advent of spell and grammar checks there is little excuse for spelling mistakes and poor grammar. Do remember that spell checks are fallible and Microsoft grammar can be a bit quirky. Take care with the language settings. Whilst variations on Standard English are perfectly acceptable (e.g. US English), moving between languages within a document is not. Choose one style and stay with it.

Colloquialisms, offensive language (i.e. not just vulgar but also sexist or racist), over complex sentences, sweeping statements and exaggerations should all be avoided.

Standard of English

If you are concerned about the adequacy of your English, support is available from the University. English as a second language support from www.olc.ac.nz or dyslexia from www.otago.ac.nz/disabilities.

Style

Most departments have some form of house style. This may be a relatively informal one developed over the years or a more formal style. Ensure you are aware of what is expected.

Tables and figures

These can be very useful and save a lot of words. Do make sure you refer to them in the text and don't try to put too much information into one table. It is usually better to use two clear tables than one complex one.

Referencing or citation systems

There are many referencing systems available. The software programme 'Endnote' allows you to choose from over 300 different ones. Fortunately you do not need to know them all, just the ones commonly used in your area of study.

Why a reference system?

Anyone reading your work (including yourself at a later date) should be able to track down your sources. Any work you have accessed and used must be attributed to the author allowing the reader to put the material in context and judge its contribution to the argument. Work that is not referenced is assumed to be your own. Unfortunately, if it is found to be someone else's work and it is not referenced then it is *plagiarism*, a very serious academic offence.

Which system?

There are two main groups of reference systems. One group uses names within the text (e.g. the Harvard system) the other uses numbers in the text (e.g. the Vancouver system). You are strongly advised to enquire of your tutor which system is preferred for their module. As a broad 'rule of thumb' the Harvard style tends to be used in social sciences, the Vancouver in medical sciences. If there is no preference stated choose the one you feel is most appropriate **and stick to it for the whole assignment**. Do not try to mix the styles. Remember though, you can change styles between different assignments, just not within assignments.

The information on the Harvard and Vancouver systems, which follows, was prepared by the Library staff, University of Otago.

Using the Harvard system

The Harvard system of citation is a type of author/date style widely used in scholarly and academic circles. There are, however, a number of variations to it. The key features of the Harvard system:

- it uses maximal capitalization
- the references are listed in alphabetical order of authors' names
- if more than one item by a specific author is cited, it is listed chronologically (earliest first) and then by letter 1999a, 1999b
- the year of publication is often (but not always) in brackets
- some systems require "..." or '...' around the title of an article or conference paper
- **CONSISTENCY is CRITICAL** with the Harvard / Author/Date style!

For more detail see: <http://www.lib.monash.edu.au/vl/cite/citecon.htm>

Citing references in the text of your paper

Generally, when using this style you are only required to list the first author's surname and year of publication (with no punctuation between). Where possible, the citation should be at the end of a sentence (before the concluding punctuation). Relevant page numbers may be included. E.g.:

- Houpt (1986) stated ... or ... (Houpt 1986).
- Coppel, Paul and Cox (2000) stated ... or ... (Coppel, Paul & Cox 2000).
- Houpt (1986) and Coppel, Paul and Cox (2000) agreed that ... or ... (Houpt 1986; Coppel, Paul & Cox 2000).

Citing page numbers:

- Houpt (1986, p. 278) stated ... or ... (Houpt 1986, p. 278).

Citing references in the reference list

Citing a journal article [print]

Author's surname, Initials. (year of publication), Title of article. *Title of the journal* [online], vol., no. Available from: URL [Accessed date]

Coppel, K., Paul, C. & Cox, B. (2000), An Evaluation of the National Cervical Screening Programme Otago Site. *New Zealand Medical Journal*, vol. 113, no. 1104, pp. 48-51.

Citing an e-journal article [online]

Author's surname, Initials. (year of publication), Title of article. *Title of the journal* [online], vol., no. Available from: URL [Accessed date]

Lasser, J., Boyd, J.W., Woolhandler, S., Himmelstein, D.U., McCormick, D. & Bor, D.H. (2000), Smoking and Mental Illness : A Population-Based Prevalence Study. *JAMA* [online], vol. 284, no.20. Available from: <http://jama.ama-assn.org/issues/v284n20/rfull/joc00268.html>. [Accessed 7 December, 2000.]

Citing a webpage

Web pages can be difficult, because it is hard to find all the information you need. If you can find the name of an author or editor, include it at the beginning. Remember - consistency is critical.

Author's surname, Initials. [if appropriate] (Last update or copyright date) [if available], Title of page. *Title of site* [online]. Available from: URL [Accessed date.]

News and Issues: Paralytic Shellfish Poisoning (PSP) *Ministry of Health* [online]. Available from: http://www.moh.govt.nz/moh.nsf/wpg_Index/News+and+Issues-Index/ [Accessed 7 December, 2000.]

Citing a book

Author's surname, Initials. (year of publication), *Title of the book*. ed. [if not the first]. Place of publication: Publisher's name

Stevens, A. & Lowe, J.S. (1997), *Human Histology*. 2nd ed. London: Mosby.

Citing a chapter of a book

Author's surname, Initials. (year of publication), Title of chapter. *In*: Editor's initials/surname. Title of the book. ed. [if not the first]. Place of publication: Publisher's name.

Houpt, J.B. (1986), Arthritic and Rheumatic Disorders. *In*: Gornall, A.G. (ed.) *Applied Biochemistry of Clinical Disorders*. 2nd ed. Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Company.

Note: (ed) becomes (eds) when there is more than one.

Reference list

References are listed in alphabetical order by author at the end of the paper.

Coppell, K., Paul, C. & Cox, B. (2000), An Evaluation of the National Cervical Screening Programme Otago Site. *New Zealand Medical Journal*, vol. 113, no. 1104, pp. 48-51.

Houpt, J.B. (1986), Arthritic and Rheumatic Disorders. *In*: Gornall, A.G. (ed.) *Applied Biochemistry of Clinical Disorders*. 2nd ed. Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Company.

Lasser, J., Boyd, J.W., Woolhandler, S., Himmelstein, D.U., McCormick, D. & Bor, D.H. (2000), Smoking and Mental Illness : A Population-Based Prevalence Study. *JAMA* [online], vol. 284, no. 20. Available from: <http://jama.ama-assn.org/issues/v284n20/rfull/joc00268.html>. [Accessed 7 December, 2000.]

News and Issues: Paralytic Shellfish Poisoning (PSP) *Ministry of Health* [online]. Available from: http://www.moh.govt.nz/moh.nsf/wpg_Index/News+and+Issues-Index/ [Accessed 7 December, 2000.]

Stevens, A. & Lowe, J.S. (1997), *Human Histology*. 2nd ed. London: Mosby.

Using the Vancouver system

The key features of the Vancouver system are that it:

- assigns a number to each reference as it is cited in the body of the text
- it uses minimal capitalization in book, journal and article titles
- journal title are not italicized
- journal titles are abbreviated according to the Medline conventions. (Available at: Med Ref ZW/1/L773/2000 or <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/tsd/serials/Isiou.html>)
- an author's initials follow the surname, without full stops or spaces
- all authors should be listed if there are 6 or fewer, but if there are more than 6 authors, list the first 3 and the expression 'et al'

For more detailed instructions, and other formats see: Uniform Requirements for Manuscripts Submitted to Biomedical Journals available at <http://www.library.otago.ac.nz/web/virtref.html>

Citing references in the text of your paper

In this system an Arabic number which appears as either a superscript figure in the text or in brackets, is allocated to each source as it is referred to for the first time. This number becomes the unique identifier for that source and if the source is referred to again the number is repeated.

E.g.: 'The antigen DNP has a homogeneous (diffuse) pattern of nuclear fluorescence.
(5)'

Citing references in the reference list

Citing a journal article [print]

Author's/Editor's surname Initials. Title of article. Abbreviated title of the journal Year of publication; Volume number(Issue number): Page numbers of article.

Coppell K, Paul C, Cox B. An evaluation of the National Cervical Screening Programme Otago site. N Z Med J 2000; 113(1104):48-51.

Citing an e-journal article [online]

Author's/Editor's surname Initials. Title of article. Abbreviated title of the journal [serial online] Year of publication; Volume number(Issue number): Page numbers of article. URL Access date.

Lasser J, Boyd JW, Woolhandler S, Himmelstein DU, McCormick D, Bor DH. Smoking and mental illness : a population-based prevalence study. JAMA 2000; 284:2606-2610. <http://jama.ama-assn.org/issues/v284n20/rfull/joc00268.html> Accessed 7 December, 2000.

Citing a webpage

Author's/Editor's surname Initials. [if appropriate]. Title of page. Title of site. Last updated or copyright date. URL Access date.

News and issues: Paralytic shellfish poisoning (PSP). Ministry of Health. Last updated 5 December 2000. http://www.moh.govt.nz/moh.nsf/wpg_Index/News+and+Issues-Index/ Accessed 7 December, 2000.

Citing a book

Author's/Editor's surname Initials. Title of the book. Edition [if not the first]. Place of publication: Publisher's name; Year of publication.

Stevens A, Lowe JS, editors. Human histology. 2nd ed. London: Mosby; 1997.

Citing a chapter of a book

Author's surname Initials. Title of chapter. In: Editor's surname Initials. Title of the book. Edition [if not the first]. Place of publication: Publisher's name; Year of publication.

Haupt JB. Arthritic and rheumatic disorders. In: Gornall AG, editor. Applied biochemistry of clinical disorders. 2nd ed. Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Company; 1986.

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- (2) Lasser J, Boyd JW, Woolhandler S, Himmelstein DU, McCormick D, Bor DH. Smoking and mental illness : a population-based prevalence study. *JAMA* 2000; 284:2606-2610. <http://jama.ama-assn.org/issues/v284n20/rfull/joc00268.html>. Accessed 7 December, 2000.
- (3) News and issues: Paralytic shellfish poisoning (PSP). Ministry of Health. Last updated 5 December 2000. <http://www.moh.govt.nz/> Accessed 7 December, 2000.
- (4) Stevens A, Lowe JS, editors. *Human histology*. 2nd ed. London: Mosby; 1997.
- (5) Houpt JB. Arthritic and rheumatic disorders. In: Gornall AG, editor. *Applied biochemistry of clinical disorders*. 2nd ed. Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Company; 1986.