Plagiarism

What is plagiarism?

Plagiarism is using the words or work of others without acknowledging the source.

There are two types of plagiarism:

- intentional plagiarism - deliberate copying or use of another’s work without giving credit; and
- unintentional plagiarism - not citing correctly, poor research, or careless cutting and pasting from electronic sources.

Why is it important?

The CIT Student Information Guide states that students are “to complete all assessment tasks honestly without any form of cheating or plagiarism or copyright violations”.

Plagiarism is important to every student because:

- It is wrong to take or use another’s property without giving the owner credit. It may also be copyright infringement.
- The CIT’s reputation affects the value of your qualification; student’s dishonesty can make your qualification worthless.
- If you fail to meet your student responsibilities disciplinary action can occur.

Examples of plagiarism

The following extract is taken from the text book: Issues in Financial Accounting, Henderson, Peirson and Herbohn (2011)

1. “An alternative approach is to prepare financial statements to meet the specific needs of the most important, most influential or dominant group of users. The selected group would be well served by the financial statements, but the other groups would have to make do with information prepared to meet the needs of the selected group”. Henderson, Peirson and Herbohn (2011, p.35)

This is not plagiarism as quotation marks and a citation are included.
2. General purpose financial statements may not always meet the needs of a diverse group of users. An alternative approach is to prepare financial statements to meet the specific needs of the most important, most influential or dominant group of users. The selected group would be well served by the financial statements, but the other groups would have to make do with information prepared to meet the needs of the selected group. This approach may provide benefits to some users and not others.

Using these sentences in an assignment/assessment task without quotation marks and a citation is plagiarism.

3. Another approach when preparing financial statements would be to prepare them to meet the particular needs of the group of users that have the most influence. This would mean that the financial statements would meet the needs of the influential group but other users would have to work with information that may not suit their needs.

The words in the extract have been paraphrased. However, this is plagiarism as there have only been a few changes to the author’s words and a citation acknowledging the source has not been included.

4. When preparing a general purpose financial statement you need to consider the users of the information. Henderson, Peirson & Herbohn suggest that “an alternative approach is to prepare financial statements to meet the specific needs of the most important, most influential or dominant group of users” (2011 p.35). This allows the group with the most influence to receive statements tailored to meet their specific needs. However, this may mean that other group’s needs may not be met.

This is not plagiarism as it has been written in the students own words, the quotation is identified, and a citation included.

Avoiding plagiarism

Some strategies to avoid plagiarism in your assignments are:

- Plan ahead – give yourself plenty of time to complete your assignments.
- Use quotation marks when you copy word for word from textual information (print or electronic) even when you are just taking notes, and cite/reference the source.
• Paraphrase: write out the idea in your own words ensuring the information is still accurate. You still need to cite/reference the source of the paraphrased information.

• Avoid using someone else’s work with only minor changes. For example, changing a few words, reversing the sentence order, or by changing layouts or colours in images, if the work is still essentially the same you must cite/reference the source.

• Talk to your teacher if you are having difficulty completing your assignment due to circumstances outside of your control, such as an illness.

Need more help?
Contact the staff in the Library or see the Plagiarism LibGuide.

Useful Resources
Acknowledging the Source is an excellent tool explaining how to correctly cite or reference your sources. It is available from the CITSA bookshops and on the Referencing LibGuide.

View the short video clip below which talks about plagiarism and the importance of attributing the creator when using another’s work, by Nina Paley http://questioncopyright.org

Credit is Due

References