

TIPS ON DETECTING PLAGIARISM FOR FACULTY

What Is Plagiarism?

Plagiarism is using other people's words or ideas without giving proper credit to that person. When using a direct quote, quotation marks and a citation for the source are required. To avoid plagiarism credit must be given whenever the following are used:

- Another person's idea, opinion, or theory.
- Any facts, statistics, graphs, etc. that are not common knowledge.
- Direct quotations.
- Paraphrases or summaries of another's words or ideas.

Common Knowledge

Common knowledge is defined as facts, dates, events, quotations, or any information that any educated person should know. The fact that Abraham Lincoln was a President of the United States is common knowledge. No individual owns the information. It is not necessary to cite common knowledge.

Detecting Plagiarism

The following questions are intended as aids in detecting plagiarized papers. There probably will be more than one indicator. As a general rule, instructors should follow their instincts. You know the capabilities of your students.

Format:

- Is the format consistent with that commonly used? Strange formatting may indicate the material has been cut and pasted from a web document or from a paper mill.
- Does the formatting follow what was required for the assignment?
- Are the margins uneven, lines broken or page breaks included in unusual places?
- Is there a URL or article number at the end of the paper?
- Are there out-of-place words or phrases, such as "click here" or "graphic omitted"?

Style:

- Is the writing style and level consistent with the student's previous work?
- Does the quality of writing differ in various sections?
- Is the paper too professional or too scholarly for the student's level or assignment?
- Does the paper contain complex or specialized vocabulary, jargon, technical terms or other words or expressions beyond the student's level?
- Are past events referred to in the present tense or as if they are recent e.g., why isn't the Carter administration acting on this?

Content:

- Does the paper match the assignment or are portions left out?
- Is the paper way off the topic?
- Does the paper seem pieced together?
- Are there references to charts or graphics that aren't there?
- Are the sentences overly long?

Citations:

- Are all of the citations old? Require citations to be recent and up-to-date.
- Are a large number of the citations to materials that Cardinal Stritch University Library does not own or are not in SWITCH? (Most students do not use Interlibrary Loan for materials.)
- Are there references to databases that Cardinal Stritch University Library does not have? (They may have used a corporate or public library, however.)
- Does the Reference list match the citations in the text?
- Are the citations in the style being used for the class?
- Is the citation style consistent or are there mixed citation styles?
- Does the paper lack citations? A well written, highly informed paper without a single citation would be cause for concern.

Tracking Suspected Papers:

- Follow your instincts. You can gauge the level of your student's abilities.
- Use the same techniques students use – search term paper mills on the Internet.
- Type an unusual phrase or sentence into Google or Ask Jeeves.
- Search some of the online databases accessed via the Library. The material may have been copied and pasted into the paper directly from the article in an online database.

Ways To Prevent Plagiarism:

- Make the assignment clear. Be specific about your expectations.
- Specify what types of research resources are acceptable.
- Require a specific number and type of sources, some print and some online.
- Require topic proposals and have students adhere to them.
- Require outlines, multiple drafts, annotated bibliographies, and photocopies of sources.
- Require students to summarize their research verbally.
- Consult the Library when creating assignments as to what resources are available.
- Discuss plagiarism and its consequences with students. Inform students of the College/University policies regarding plagiarism.
- Discuss term paper mills. Let students know you are aware of them and that most will not meet your criteria or requirements.

What To Do If You Suspect Plagiarism:

- Visit any URLs cited as sources.
- Verify that the Cardinal Stritch University Library owns at least some of the items cited in the paper.
- Search free and for-sale term paper sites.
- Try some web search engines such as:
 1. All the Web <http://www.alltheweb.com>
 - Click on “Advanced Search”
 - From the “Select Type of Search” use “Search For” and pull down the menu to highlight “The Exact Phrase”
 - Enter your phrase
 2. Dogpile <http://www.dogpile.com/>
 - Enclose a phrase in quotation marks.
 - Click on Search.
 - This meta-search engine will look for phrases using various search engines.

3. Google <http://www.google.com/>
 - Enclose a phrase of 10 or fewer words in quotation marks.
 - Click on search.
4. Bartleby.com <http://www.bartleby.com/>
 - An online source to literature, speeches, encyclopedias and other reference sources.
 - Search for phrases using the search box.
5. Invisible Web Directory <http://www.invisible-web.net/>
 - Offers links to thousands of databases and web sites that are not indexed by a regular search.

Commonly used article databases available on the Cardinal Stritch University website:

InfoTrac Expanded Academic ASAP

- Using the Keyword search, select this option to search for words in the entire article content.
- There is no need for quotation marks.
- Type a phrase of no more than 8 words.

InfoTrac Business and Company ASAP

- Using the Keyword search, select this option to search for words in the entire article content.
- There is no need for quotation marks.
- Type a phrase of no more than 8 words.