

Hong Kong Baptist University

Avoiding Plagiarism

by

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I INTRODUCTION

1. INTELLECTUAL HONESTY

As students of Hong Kong Baptist University, you are investing a great deal of time and money in acquiring an education. So it is worthwhile to ask: What exactly does a good education mean to you? Does it just mean acquiring a body of established ‘knowledge’, or is there more to it?

Frankly speaking, it would hardly be worth your while to attend a university just to turn yourself into a ‘storehouse’ of other people’s knowledge and ideas – a computer can do that far better than you ever can. No, the most valuable thing that you can learn in the university is how to educate and improve your *mind*, that part of you which no machine can replace in terms of its capacity for comprehension, evaluation and creativity, and its ability to solve problems and discover new knowledge. What is the use of acquiring knowledge which your mind can only copy mechanically, but not comprehend, evaluate, apply or extend?

If you really want to develop your mind, one absolutely essential condition is that you should approach the task with complete *honesty and integrity*. You will never learn anything of value through dishonest means. Intellectual cheating is cheating of the mind – not just other people’s but your own. It prevents your mind from ever achieving anything through genuine intellectual effort, and therefore from growing and reaching its full potential.

2. WHAT IS PLAGIARISM?

The most common form of intellectual dishonesty is plagiarism. **Plagiarism** means **taking someone else’s words or ideas and passing them off as your own**. You could call it a form of intellectual ‘theft’, but in a sense it is even worse than theft. When you steal someone else’s property, you acquire it dishonestly, but you would not want to parade it in front of others. When you plagiarize someone else’s words or ideas, you not only steal them from their rightful owners, but you present them to other people (your teachers, classmates, and other readers) as if they were your own words and ideas, and you try to take credit for them. It is *doubly* dishonest – stealing what belongs to others, and pretending to be more intelligent and knowledgeable than you really are, or to have done work that you haven’t actually done.

Plagiarism is, unfortunately, something which can be found (to varying extents) at all levels in the world of education, because we are dealing with knowledge and ideas, and these are much more easily ‘borrowed’ than physical objects. You can find it in schools, where some students copy from their classmates’ homework or from books and other sources. You can find the same thing among some university students, who should know

better as they are more mature. You can even find it among people who are supposed to be professionals (academics, scientists, scholars), though much more rarely.

Here, for your amusement, is a sentence from the *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* (Longman, 1987), given as an example under ‘plagiarize’: ‘Half the ideas in his talk were plagiarized from an article I wrote last year’. And here is a sentence from a completely different English dictionary (published in Shanghai in 1997), also under ‘plagiarize’: ‘Half the ideas in his talk were plagiarized from an article I wrote last year’. A coincidence, perhaps?

3. THE TEMPTATION TO PLAGIARIZE

The temptation to plagiarize is probably greater than the temptation to steal. One reason has to do with need. In a (relatively) affluent society like ours, most students do not feel the need to steal anything. But the temptation to plagiarize may arise every time a student has to submit an assignment, project or thesis, especially just before the deadline. It is always easier to appropriate other people’s ideas and words and pass them off as your own, than to think of and write up your own ideas. A second reason has to do with the ease of committing the offence. Theft is usually not that easy (don’t ever try to steal a book from the library!). But most people believe that it is much easier to get away with plagiarism, as long as they do not plagiarize from the most obvious sources.

4. WHAT KIND OF PEOPLE COMMIT PLAGIARISM?

Some of the people who commit plagiarism know exactly what they are doing. They are fully aware that they are taking words and ideas from other people and trying to pass them off as their own, and they know that this is wrong. But through a lapse of moral judgement, and the pressure of meeting deadlines and so on, they choose to take this dubious way out. To such people, we can only say: *don’t do it*. If they cannot be persuaded by moral and intellectual arguments, then they should think of the consequences when they are caught. Make no mistake about it: plagiarism is a serious offence, and the penalties can be severe (see Part V).

But, either through ignorance or carelessness, many students who commit plagiarism apparently do so without realizing that what they are doing constitutes an unethical act and a punishable offence. This may stem partly from their early education and cultural background, rather than personal dishonesty. In certain traditional modes of education, it is considered desirable to memorize and regurgitate large chunks of information or text, and all ‘knowledge’ is regarded as common property, freely available for copying by whoever needs it. (Perhaps the editor of the dictionary cited above felt this way?) This attitude is, however, incompatible with modern conceptions of higher education, which emphasize intellectual integrity and originality.

The present handbook is designed to help you avoid the common pitfalls of plagiarism and maintain your intellectual integrity.

II HOW TO AVOID PLAGIARISM

1. BASIC PRINCIPLES

1.1 ‘Words, words, words’

The dictionaries are full of words, and words are common property. This sentence itself is made up of words which can all be found in any English dictionary – and yet the sentence is not common property. This is because words are not used in isolation, but are put together by the writer, and the resulting phrases and sentences are products of his mind. An idea may be quite commonplace: for example, the first sentence in this paragraph contains a perfectly common idea, which most of you will have thought of at one time or another. Yet the way the idea is expressed, with those particular words in that particular arrangement, is entirely the writer’s own, and it is possible that no one else has written exactly the same sentence before.

The first lesson you will need to learn about plagiarism is this: **you cannot just copy the words that someone else has written and pass them off as your own writing.** If, for some reason, you want to quote the exact words used by an author, you should put them in quotation marks, and acknowledge the source properly (see Section 2 below on how to cite publications). Other than that, *every sentence that you write will have to be your very own.*

1.2 Common Knowledge

While it is obvious that, if you ‘borrow’ someone else’s *words* without acknowledgement, it constitutes a straightforward case of plagiarism, it is not always so clear-cut when it comes to *ideas*.

If it were possible to list everything that an average person ‘knows’, much of it would almost certainly belong to the realm of what may be called ‘common knowledge’. It is not easy to define with absolute precision what is common knowledge and what is not, but most of us have no problem telling them apart most of the time. ‘Common knowledge’ includes all easily accessible facts or beliefs which are known and shared by many people, and which are not attributable to any single source.

Here are just a few examples:

- Pure water boils at 100 degrees Celsius at sea level;
- President John F. Kennedy was assassinated in Dallas on 22 November, 1963, apparently by Lee Harvey Oswald;
- The first man to climb Mount Everest and return alive was Edmund Hillary in 1953;

- Chinese (Putonghua) is the language with the largest number of native speakers in the world, and English the largest number of non-native speakers;

and so on and so forth.

If you are satisfied that what you are referring to in your written work is part of common knowledge, you need not acknowledge its source. This is so even if this knowledge can be found in reference books and other publications.

1.3 What Needs to Be Acknowledged

In the course of your writing, if you make use of an idea, observation or discovery which belongs to someone else and which is not part of common knowledge, academic integrity demands that you acknowledge its source.

There are several reasons for doing this. Firstly, honesty. You should not give the impression that a particular idea or discovery is your own when in fact it is not. Secondly, fairness. Whoever conceived that idea or made that discovery deserves to be given due credit for it. Thirdly, accountability. Readers have a right to know the source of your information, so that they can evaluate its reliability and check it if they wish to.

The type of content that requires acknowledgement in your writing includes not only other people's ideas, observations and discoveries, but also facts and figures which you have obtained elsewhere and which are not part of common knowledge. For example, while it is common knowledge that English has the largest number of non-native speakers in the world, an actual figure, such as 350 million, is someone's estimate (one of several in fact), and the source should be duly cited. Or if you reproduce a map or chart showing the distribution of native and non-native English-speakers in the world, it is not your own work and should also be acknowledged.

One common misconception among students is that, as long as they paraphrase or re-write what they have read elsewhere, then it is not really plagiarism, and they can legitimately pass the ideas off as their own. That is to say, they have a narrow view of 'plagiarism' as applying only to the literal (or near-literal) copying of someone else's words. This notion is unjustified. Words are merely vehicles for ideas, and it is just as possible to steal the ideas without stealing the words. To take a different kind of example, if you take a musical theme from the movie 'Titanic' which is originally scored for pipes, and re-arrange it for the guitar, can you call it your own? (If you try to publish it under your name, you will certainly be sued!)

This then is the second lesson you must learn about plagiarism: **it is not acceptable to paraphrase someone else's idea and call it your own**. As long as the idea itself does not originate from you (and assuming it is not part of common knowledge), you must acknowledge its source properly. This includes ideas which you have read about in one language (such as Chinese) and which you make use of in your writing in another language (such as English, or vice versa).

1.4 Forms of Plagiarism

Most people tend to associate plagiarism only with published (or printed) sources. Though this was traditionally the most common form of plagiarism, the source itself is, strictly speaking, irrelevant. Every time you ‘borrow’ someone else’s words or ideas and pass them off as your own – from whatever source and in whatever medium – you have committed an act of plagiarism.

Straightforward examples of plagiarism from non-published or non-printed sources include the taking of words or ideas without acknowledgement from:

- a talk;
- a radio or TV programme;
- a website on the Internet;
- other students’ assignments or notes, etc.

Of these, the Internet has become (by far) the favourite source for those looking for a ‘quick fix’, and radically changed the face of plagiarism. We’ll need to say something more about it in the next section.

1.5 Internet Plagiarism

The popularization of personal computers and the Internet in recent years has brought about a major revolution in the way knowledge is disseminated in the world today. Never before has so much information been made available so freely and easily – literally, at our fingertips. Search engines make it possible to instantly retrieve any amount of information on virtually every topic under the sun – from ‘throat singing’ to ‘head hunting’. It would not be an exaggeration to say that never in the history of the world has learning been made so easy and accessible.

Unfortunately, it would also not be an exaggeration to say that never in the history of the world has plagiarism been made easier, or the temptation to plagiarize greater. Unlike in the past, present-day plagiarists no longer have to search laboriously in the library for books and particular passages containing the information they need. They do not even have to copy the materials by hand – all they have to do is to copy as much text as they want from the Internet, and paste it onto their assignments, with or without minor changes. Teachers have noted with increasing concern the rising incidence of Internet plagiarism among students at all levels, a practice which has now become endemic, and far and away the most widespread form of plagiarism today.

Because the temptation is so great and the offence so easily committed, we urge all students to be especially on their guard against succumbing to Internet plagiarism. Like all other forms of plagiarism, it deprives them of the learning that they should be doing at the university, and ultimately they are cheating themselves more than they are cheating their teachers. What’s more, the very ease of Internet plagiarism makes it relatively easy to spot. It is not that difficult for a teacher to notice the differences between the language (vocabulary, grammatical structure and style) as well as the intellectual content of a text which has been copied and pasted onto a student’s assignment or project, and the student’s

own work. All that the teacher has to do when suspicions of plagiarism arise is to call up the students concerned and ask a few follow-up questions on the suspect texts: their answers will quickly betray the fact that these texts are not their original work. There are other ways of detecting Internet plagiarism too, including the use of search engines to look for particular strings of words or sentences. There are commercial plagiarism–detection software applications (such as Turnitin) which can detect plagiarism by searching for “present and archived” information on the Internet, commercial databases of journal articles and periodicals, and even assignments previously submitted by other students. These applications are now in use by many academic departments in HKBU. In short, the Internet may have made plagiarism easier and more widespread, but it has also brought greater risks, both to the students’ intellectual development and to themselves personally.

1.6 Grey Areas

Team work and group discussions are something of a ‘grey area’ with respect to the issue of plagiarism. Suppose you participated in a group discussion where ideas were freely exchanged. If you want to use some of the ideas arising from the discussion in your assignment, how should you acknowledge them? It is not always easy to decide where a particular idea has come from, especially after it has been shaped and reshaped by a group of people, including yourself. So there are no hard and fast rules here. But if you are clear that the idea originated from someone else, then academic integrity requires you to acknowledge it, even if only in the anonymous form of ‘The view has been expressed that...’ or ‘I have come across the idea that...’

If your assignment is a product of team work, this fact should be clearly established at the beginning, and what follows should not be misrepresented as solely your own work. Sometimes the division of labour is so clear-cut that it may be possible for you to identify precisely those parts which are essentially your own.

2. HOW TO CITE PUBLISHED SOURCES

The basic principle, then, is to acknowledge whatever words or ideas contained in your work which are not your own, and to cite the sources from which you have taken them. There are well-established conventions on how to cite published sources. These may differ slightly from discipline to discipline, and some departments may have laid down their own rules and practices. Students are advised to consult their own departments for guidance on citation practices in their respective disciplines.

Precise details of form need not concern us unduly here. The crucial point is that any idea or discovery which you have borrowed from elsewhere ought to be acknowledged in your writing, and that sufficient details should be provided for readers to identify the source, and to follow it up if they wish to. Here are some general guidelines on how to cite different types of published sources:

- (i) Books: provide name of author, title of book, publisher, year and place of publication, and page number(s) where the idea or quotation is found. For

example: Steven Pinker, *The Language Instinct* (New York: Harper Collins, 1994), 28.

- (ii) Articles in edited books: provide, in addition to the above, the title of the article or chapter, and the name of the editor of the book. For example: K.P. Mohanan, 'The Organization of the Grammar', in John A. Goldsmith (ed.), *The Handbook of Phonological Theory* (Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1995), 24.
- (iii) Articles in journals: provide name of author, title of article, title of journal, publisher, date and place of publication, volume, issue and page number(s). For example: Matthew Y. Chen, 'Competing Sound Changes', in *Journal of Chinese Linguistics* (Berkeley: Project on Linguistic Analysis, June 1992), 20:2:194. [NB. The last item means 'Volume 20, No. 2, page 194'.]
- (iv) Articles in newspapers: provide name of author (if known), title of article, name of newspaper, place of publication, date of issue, page number(s). For example: Editorial, *South China Morning Post* (Hong Kong), June 4, 1999, 30.
- (v) Websites on the Internet: provide name of author (if known), title of article, date of article, full http address of website. For example: Hong Kong Education Department, 'Medium of Instruction Policy for Secondary Schools', 21-3-98, http://www.info.gov.hk/ed/dept/moi/med-i_e.htm.

It would generally be too cumbersome to provide all these details in the body of the text itself. Therefore, the preferred practice is to give only the author's last name and the page number(s) in brackets in the appropriate place in the text, e.g. (Pinker, 28), and furnish the full bibliographical details either in a footnote at the bottom of the page, or in the 'Bibliography' (or 'References') section at the end of your article. Different disciplines may adopt different practices, so seek the advice of your tutor/supervisor.

One further note: If you cite an author whom you did not read first-hand, but only through a 'second-hand' reference in the work of someone else, you should acknowledge both the original and the intermediate sources. This is to avoid giving the impression that you have read the original and extracted the reference directly from it, when in fact you have not. For example: Rod Ellis, 'Can syntax be taught?', quoted in William Rutherford, *Second Language Grammar* (Longman, 1988), 26.

III AN ILLUSTRATION

1. EXAMPLES OF PLAGIARISM

Given below is an excerpt from the book *The Meaning of It All*, by the Nobel Prize-winning scientist Richard Feynman:

- 1.1 What is science? The word is usually used to mean one of three things, or a mixture of them. I do not think we need to be precise – it is not always a good idea to be too precise. Science means, sometimes, a special method of finding things out. Sometimes it means the body of knowledge arising from the things found out. It may also mean the new things you can do when you have found something out, or the actual doing of new things.

[Richard P. Feynman, *The Meaning of It All* (Reading, Mass.: Perseus Books, 1998), 4-5.]

After reading the above passage, if a student wrote something like the following paragraph without acknowledgement, he would definitely be guilty of plagiarism:

- 1.2 The word ‘science’ is usually taken to mean one of three things. Firstly, it may mean a special method of finding things out. Secondly, it may refer to the body of knowledge resulting from what is found out. And thirdly, it may mean the new things people can do when they have found this knowledge.

Notice that the student has merely cut or changed a few words here and there from the original text. Basically, it is still Feynman’s writing, not that student’s. And nowhere does he mention that the main idea in this paragraph actually came from Feynman’s book.

Now, what about the following attempt:

- 1.3 The word ‘science’ is often loosely used with one (or more) of three possible meanings. Firstly, it may refer to a special method of investigation and discovery; this we may call the ‘scientific method’. Secondly, it may mean the body of knowledge which results from this method of investigation, that is, ‘scientific knowledge’. Lastly, it may also refer to what can be done with this type of knowledge, i.e. ‘technology’.

You will agree that this is much better than 1.2. The student has made a genuine attempt to avoid copying the original. He has expressed the main idea basically in his own words, and in fact added some pertinent elaborations. However, he has still failed to acknowledge that the basic idea is not his, but Feynman’s. He gives the impression, whether deliberately or unwittingly, that the points made are all his own. So this student

too is guilty of plagiarism, though less blatantly than the first. He has ‘stolen’ someone else’s ideas, though not his words.

2. ACCEPTABLE PRACTICE

Now, what would constitute an acceptable use of someone else’s ideas? One option, of course, is to quote the original passage literally, with proper acknowledgement (as in 1.1 above). But this option should not be over-done. Used too frequently, direct quotations can be taken as a sign of mental laziness, and they give no indication that the writer has really understood and assimilated what he is quoting. An essay filled to the brim with quotations is hardly an essay – it is more like an anthology.

A better option, in most cases, would be to rephrase the idea *in your own words* and set it in an appropriate context, not forgetting to acknowledge its source. Taking the passage in 1.1 again, here is an example of how this can be done:

- 2.1 How can we define the term ‘science’? Different people have different answers. A simple yet comprehensive definition was given by the Nobel Prize-winning physicist, Richard Feynman. He points out (Feynman, 4-5)¹ that the word ‘science’ is often loosely used with one or more of three possible meanings. Firstly, it may refer to a special method of investigation and discovery (which we may call the ‘scientific method’). Secondly, it may mean the body of knowledge which results from this method of investigation (that is, ‘scientific knowledge’). Lastly, it may also refer to what can be done, or what has in fact been done, with this type of knowledge (in other words, ‘technology’).

¹Richard P. Feynman, *The Meaning of It All* (Reading, Mass.: Perseus Books, 1998).

How is this better than 1.3 (and needless to say, 1.2)? Firstly and most obviously, it gives due credit to the author from whom the main idea of the paragraph was taken, and provides all the necessary information about the source. Secondly, this writer has successfully integrated Feynman’s idea into an appropriate context, which is clearly set out in the first two sentences of the paragraph, so that it reads like part of an organic whole, rather than something tagged on. Thirdly, the basic idea may be Feynman’s, but the words are the writer’s own. He shows clearly that he has understood the given idea, and written about it in his own way without being glued to the original text.

It is not all that difficult to produce something like 2.1, even though it does take a little more thought and effort than 1.2 and 1.3. But then, that is the whole point of any academic exercise – to learn how to think, and to do so honestly.

IV SOME ACTIVITIES

Understanding plagiarism is not, basically, a matter of acquiring a particular set of facts or rules. It involves, first and foremost, an understanding of the ethical and intellectual issues behind taking someone else's work and calling it your own. But it also involves learning how to make proper use of other people's ideas and assimilate them into your own writing, giving credit where it is due. Now that you have seen an illustration of how to do it and how not to do it, here are a couple of activities for you, to make sure that you have fully understood this.

Activity I

Read the following extract from *The Language Instinct*, by the American psycholinguist Steven Pinker:

1. Linguists repeatedly run up against the myth that working-class people and the less educated members of the middle class speak a simpler or coarser language. This is a pernicious illusion arising from the effortlessness of conversation. Ordinary speech, like colour vision or walking, is a paradigm of engineering excellence – a technology that works so well that the user takes its outcome for granted, unaware of the complicated machinery hidden behind the panels. Behind such 'simple' sentences as *Where did he go?* and *The guy I met killed himself*, used automatically by any English speaker, are dozens of subroutines that arrange the words to express the meaning. Despite decades of effort, no artificially engineered language system comes close to duplicating the person in the street.

[Steven Pinker, *The Language Instinct* (New York: Harper Collins, 1994), 28.]

Given below are four examples of how students might make use of the above passage in their writing. In groups, discuss the merits or demerits of each example.

2. It is a myth to say that working-class people speak a simpler or coarser language than the rest of society. This impression is due to the effortless nature of conversation. Ordinary speech works so well that the user takes its product for granted, not noticing the complicated 'machinery' behind it. Any ordinary speaker of English can make 'simple' sentences like *Where did he go?* and *The guy I met killed himself*, but many subroutines are needed to arrange these words to express the meaning. Even after many years of

effort, no artificially engineered language system comes close to duplicating the average speaker of a language.

3. In his book *The Language Instinct*, Steven Pinker points out that working-class people and the less educated members of the middle class are wrongly regarded as speaking a simpler or coarser language. ‘Ordinary speech’, he says, ‘like colour vision or walking, is a paradigm of engineering excellence – a technology that works so well that the user takes its outcome for granted, unaware of the complicated machinery hidden behind the panels.’ He points out that, behind such ‘simple’ sentences as *Where did he go?* and *The guy I met killed himself*, are dozens of subroutines that arrange the words to express the meaning. ‘Despite decades of effort, no artificially engineered language system comes close to duplicating the person in the street.’ (Pinker, 28)
4. However familiar language may be in our everyday lives, and however easily we all seem to be able to produce it, language is anything but simple. Even the sentences produced by the less educated members of our society are far more intricate than we think, and involve a complicated ‘machinery’ which far exceeds our expectations. For example, sentences such as *Where did she go?* and *The girl I met killed herself* may look simple, but actually require dozens of ‘steps’ to generate. The kind of linguistic system that the average speaker of a language possesses is far more complicated than any artificially engineered language system that has yet been devised.
5. All of us have grown up speaking one or more languages. Language has become such a familiar part of our everyday lives, and most of us seem to be able to produce it so effortlessly, that we tend to forget that language is actually a very complicated phenomenon. As the famous psycholinguist, Steven Pinker, rightly points out (Pinker, 28), even the supposedly ‘simple’ language spoken by the less educated is highly complex. He gives, as an illustration, ‘simple’ sentences like *Where did he go?* and *The guy I met killed himself*, which any ordinary speaker of English can produce automatically, but which require dozens of linguistic ‘subroutines’ to generate. Pinker observes that the linguistic system – the ‘machinery’ so to speak – behind the production of even such apparently simple sentences far surpasses any artificially engineered language system in complexity and intricacy.

Activity II

Read the following extract from *The Price of a Dream*, about the original idea that motivated Dr Muhammad Yunus to found the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh, the first ‘poor people’s bank’ in the world. After that, write a paragraph making use of whatever

ideas you find useful in it, as part of an essay about efforts to combat poverty in the world. Remember to make proper acknowledgements, and to integrate the borrowed ideas organically into your own writing.

6. 'The myth that credit is the privilege of a few fortunate people needs to be exploded,' explains Muhammad Yunus, the founder of the Grameen Bank. 'You look at the tiniest village and the tiniest person in that village: a very capable person, a very intelligent person. You have only to create the proper environment to support these people so that they can change their own lives.'

.... Here was a twentieth-century economist, one of the most highly respected voices in world development, arguing that the best (in fact, the only) way to combat the world's most entrenched poverty was to create the conditions whereby millions of tiny entrepreneurs scattered in hundreds of thousands of villages and small towns could support themselves through self-chosen pursuits.

[David Bornstein, *The Price of a Dream* (Dhaka: University Press, 1996), 20-23.]

V THE COST OF PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism is a form of academic dishonesty, and is therefore viewed by all teachers and educational authorities as a serious offence, and with good reason. A plagiarist is in effect attempting to obtain a scholastic grade by fraud, as well as to make a mockery of education itself. There are severe penalties in place at the university regarding the submission of plagiarized work by students.

The gist of these penalties is as follows:

Taught Undergraduate/Postgraduate Studies by Coursework

- (i) If academic dishonesty is found in respect of subject based assessment, an 'F' grade will be assigned to the subject.
- (ii) For more serious or repeated cases, the student concerned will be given an 'F' grade for the subject and more stringent disciplinary action will be taken.

Postgraduate Studies by Research

- (iii) If academic dishonesty is found in the submission of a thesis/dissertation, the Board of Examination could fail the student concerned and allow for a re-submission of work or terminate the candidacy of the student concerned.

For details regarding official policies and procedures, please refer to the Appendix of this handbook.

VI CONCLUSION

Penalties or no penalties, the ultimate loser in any case of plagiarism must surely be the individual who commits it. More so than the ‘duped’ party (a teacher, editor, or whoever), it is the culprit who is cheated – cheated (by himself) out of a real education, out of a chance to learn or discover something new, and at the same time losing his own sense of integrity and self-respect (not to mention the respect of others).

Those of you who avoid plagiarism by conscientiously acknowledging the sources of all the ideas that you have borrowed are to be congratulated on doing the right thing. But take heed of this advice. If someone shows you how to borrow money legitimately instead of stealing it, this does not mean that you are thereby encouraged to borrow whenever you can and as much as you can. Remember that you should borrow only when you *need* to, and not just because loans are freely available.

When you write, do not forget that a borrowed idea (however good) is still a borrowed idea, and a piece of writing full of only borrowed ideas does not speak well for the quality and originality of the writer’s mind. If you come across a good idea or observation which is stimulating and insightful, or which is essential to the topic you are writing on, by all means use it (with proper acknowledgement). But, at the end of the day, you must realize that it is the quality of *your own* thoughts that counts, and not the thoughts of those whom you cite. And it is only through *having* your own thoughts – stimulated by the thoughts of others if you like – that you can grow intellectually.

So, cite other people’s ideas if you need to, but do so wisely and selectively, and always properly. Above all, *trust yourself*. In all the ‘great thoughts’ that you will ever read about, none is more fundamental than that true success comes only with self-reliance.

APPENDIX

Procedures Governing Student Academic Integrity

Any student who commits an act of academic dishonesty would have violated academic integrity and would therefore be subjected to academic disciplinary actions.

Academic dishonesty behaviour includes plagiarism, submission of material(s) for assessment which is not the student's own work, and, the use of fabricated or copied data for assessment.

Taught Undergraduate/Postgraduate Studies by Coursework

If academic dishonesty is suspected in respect of subject based assessment:

- i) the faculty member concerned should report to the Head of Department/Programme or Course Director.
- ii) the Department/Programme/Course will investigate the case with the student concerned.
- iii) if the charge is established, an 'F' grade will be assigned to the subject.
- iv) the Department/Programme/Course will report the case, in writing, to the Academic Registrar (for undergraduate courses)/Director of the Graduate School (for taught postgraduate courses) via the Dean of Faculty/School.
- v) the Academic Registrar/Director of the Graduate School will inform the Quality Assurance Committee (QAC).
- vi) the QAC will report to the Senate.

For more serious or repeated cases:

- i) the Department/Programme/Course should follow the procedures i) - iv) above.
- ii) the Department/Programme/Course should refer the case to the Panel on Disciplinary Cases as appointed by the Student Affairs Committee (SAC) for deliberation and more stringent disciplinary action would be taken.
- iii) the Director of Student Affairs will notify the Academic Registrar/Director of the Graduate School, in writing, of the action meted out. The Academic Registrar/Director of the Graduate School reserves the right to re-open the case, if necessary.
- iv) the Academic Registrar/Director of the Graduate School will inform the QAC.
- v) the QAC will report to the Senate.

Appeal: The student may submit an appeal to the Department/Programme/Course and the normal appeal procedures established by the University will be followed. Further appeal actions should be directed to the Academic Registrar/Director of the Graduate School. For more serious cases, the appeal should be directed to the Academic Registrar/Director of the Graduate School who will appoint an independent appeal panel to review the case. The decision of the appeal panel shall be final.

Postgraduate Studies by Research

If academic dishonesty is found in the submission of a thesis/dissertation:

- i) the Board of Examination could fail the student concerned and allow for re-submission of work or terminate the candidacy of the student concerned.
- ii) the Chair of the Board of Examination will report the case, in writing, to the Committee on Graduate Studies (CGS) via the Dean of Faculty/School.
- iii) the CGS will inform the QAC.
- iv) the QAC will report to the Senate.

Appeal: The appeal should be directed to the Director of the Graduate School, within 5-7 days, and an independent panel will be convened to review the case. The decision of the appeal panel shall be final.

Note: Any student found to have conducted academic dishonesty can be excluded from participating in the end-of-semester teaching evaluation (TE) for the subject concerned. The Department/Programme/Course should inform the Academic Registry, in writing, of this request at least 1 week before the commencement of the TE exercise.

Procedures Governing Student Academic Integrity

