

Plagiarism: pp. 67-69 of VUSC Student Handbook, 2008-09
(Adapted with permission from the Westmont College Plagiarism Policy)

Preamble

Vanguard University is a community of Christian scholars. When students join our college community, they are expected, as apprentice scholars, to search for truth with integrity and accuracy. This quest requires humility about our abilities, respect for the ideas of others, and originality in our thinking. Since Vanguard University is a Christian community, the integrity of our scholarship is rooted in the integrity of our faith. We seek to be followers of Christ in the classroom, in the library, and at the privacy of our computers. For both scholarly and spiritual reasons, then, plagiarism and all other forms of academic dishonesty are not to be pursued in the Vanguard community. In a scholarly and Christian community, each of us has a responsibility to encourage others to maintain their commitment to academic honesty. Faculty have a responsibility to educate students about refraining from academic dishonesty—in particular, plagiarism. Faculty should teach what plagiarism is, how to avoid it, and what the consequences of plagiarism are. In addition, as part of their evaluation of student assignments, they should check for evidence of plagiarism. If evidence is discovered, faculty should confront the student, apply the appropriate consequences, and report the incident to the Provost. Students have a responsibility to understand plagiarism and to learn how to avoid it. They should refuse to allow fellow students “to borrow” or to use an assignment without proper citation, encourage fellow students to do their own work, and refrain from completing assignments for their fellow students. If a student helps another plagiarize in these or other ways, he or she is equally guilty of academic dishonesty.

Definitions

To plagiarize is to present someone else’s work—his or her words, line of thought, or organizational structure—as our own. This occurs when sources are not cited properly, or when permission is not obtained from the original author to use his or her work. By not acknowledging the sources that are used in our work, we are wrongfully taking material that is not our own. Plagiarism is thus an insidious and disruptive form of dishonesty. It violates relationships with known classmates and professors, and it violates the legal rights of people we may never meet. Another person’s “work” can take many forms: printed or electronic copies of computer programs, musical compositions, drawings, paintings, oral presentations, papers, essays, articles or chapters, statistical data, tables or figures, etc. In short, if any information that can be considered the intellectual property of another is used without acknowledging the original source properly, this is plagiarism.

1. *Minimal plagiarism* is defined as doing any of the following without attribution:
 - a. inserting verbatim phrases of 2-3 distinctive words.
 - b. substituting synonyms into the original sentence rather than rewriting the complete sentence.
 - c. reordering the clauses of a sentence.
 - d. imitating the sentence, paragraph, or organizational structure, or writing style of a source.
 - e. using a source’s line of logic, thesis or ideas.

2. *Substantial plagiarism* is defined as doing any of the following without attribution:
 - a. inserting verbatim sentences or longer passages from a source.
 - b. combining paraphrasing with verbatim sentences to create a paragraph or more of text.
 - c. repeatedly and pervasively engaging in minimal plagiarism.

3. **Complete plagiarism** is defined as doing any of the following without attribution:
 - a. submitting or presenting someone's complete published or unpublished work (paper, article, or chapter).
 - b. submitting another student's work for an assignment, with or without that person's knowledge or consent.
 - c. using information from a campus file of old assignments.
 - d. downloading a term paper from a web site.
 - e. buying a term paper from a mail order company or web site.
 - f. reusing or modifying a previously submitted paper (e.g., from another course) for a present assignment without obtaining prior approval from the instructors involved.

Consequences

Minimal plagiarism. When instances of minimal plagiarism are detected, the instructor can use these situations as an educational opportunity to discuss with the student the nature of plagiarism and the values of a scholarly, Christian community. At the professor's discretion, assignments may be rewritten and resubmitted, with or without a grade penalty. Repeated instances of minimal plagiarism may, at the professor's discretion, be treated as substantial plagiarism. If the professor plans to exercise his or her discretion in cases of minimal plagiarism, procedures and consequences should be clearly described in the course syllabus.

Substantial plagiarism. For a first offense, the student typically receives a failing grade on the assignment that has been plagiarized, and a Report of Plagiarism (see Appendix D) is submitted to the Provost's Office. For a second offense, the student typically receives a failing grade in the course, and a Report of Plagiarism is submitted to the Provost's Office. For a third offense the student should be recommended for expulsion from the University. Action is taken at the discretion of the Provost.

Complete plagiarism. For a first offense, the student typically receives a failing grade in the course, and Report of Plagiarism is submitted to the Provost's Office. For a second offense, the student is typically expelled from the college. Action is taken at the discretion of the Provost.