



Plagiarism Policy

Title: Plagiarism Policy
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Policy overview

All current and prospective students and staff of Morling College are entitled to:

- a) Know what constitutes plagiarism; and/or
- b) Know what MC will do in cases of plagiarism

Policy purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline the process for:

- a) resolving cases of alleged plagiarism; and
- b) providing guidelines on how cases of alleged plagiarism are addressed within MC

Introduction

MC would regard the action of any student who plagiarises or misuses the work of other persons as dishonest and incompatible with the Christian standards of MC. Misuse or plagiarism includes copying the work of other persons, or presenting the work of others as their own, or presenting substantial extracts from books, articles, theses, lecture notes or any other form of media without acknowledgment of the original author. The use of such work/s with superficial changes is still plagiarism.

MC encourages cooperative learning and thus it is expected that students may discuss assignments with each other. However, unless a group task is required students should prepare their own assignments and the organisation and presentation of the assignment

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must be the student's unaided work. If you are in doubt at all about plagiarism, then consult with your lecturers for clarification.

Definition

Plagiarism is using the words or ideas of others and presenting them as your own. Plagiarism is a type of intellectual theft. It can take many forms, from deliberate cheating to accidentally copying from a source without acknowledgement. Whenever you use the words or ideas of another person in your work, you must acknowledge where they came from.

In academic writing you are expected to read, research and refer to experts and authorities, and you are expected to produce original work. However, it is important to recognise that all scholarship involves understanding, researching, and expanding on the work of others to some degree. So, it is important to learn how to reference properly, that is, how to specify clearly and precisely what your debts to others are and how to acknowledge them. Then your own contribution can be clearly identified and appreciated.

Plagiarism is to be distinguished from inadequate and/or inappropriate attempts to acknowledge the words, works or ideas of someone else, as for example when a student makes a genuine attempt to reference their work, but has very poor referencing skills.

Further information about Referencing can be found on Moodle.

Some common forms of plagiarism

- Copying, cutting and pasting text from an electronic source and submitting it as your own work
- Copying a section of a book or an article and submitting it as your own work (that is, without acknowledgement)
- Using the words of someone else and presenting them as your own
- Using the assignments of others and presenting them as your own
- Using significant ideas from someone else and presenting them as your own
- Copying the written expressions of someone else without proper acknowledgment

Procedures relating to allegations of plagiarism

MC takes all allegations of plagiarism seriously and each one will be investigated.

In any allegation of plagiarism or academic misconduct the principles of natural justice will apply and due consideration will be given to any mitigating circumstances that may have influenced the student's actions.

If plagiarism is suspected by a lecturer or reported by a third party, it will be investigated, initially by the lecturer.

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Investigations shall be concluded as quickly as practicable and normally within 7 days. Investigations may be via any medium of communication, although where possible records of such communication should be kept. On completion of an investigation a report will be given to the respective Dean and will contain the findings and recommendations in relation to the matter.

Findings from such investigation may be:

- No case to answer
- Unintentional plagiarism
- Intentional plagiarism

The student will be informed in writing of the outcome of the investigation.

No case to answer

If there is no case to answer, no action will be taken.

Unintentional plagiarism

It could be that a student unintentionally plagiarises. This could be due to misunderstanding of academic conventions or poor referencing skills.

If, after investigation, the student is found to have unintentionally plagiarised, staff will be expected to give a warning to the student and counsel him/her to prevent further occurrences. Such counselling will normally include providing information to the student about why the allegation of plagiarism was made, as well as providing advice and guidance about how plagiarism could be avoided in the future.

Intentional plagiarism

If, after receipt of the report of an investigation, there is a case to answer the student will be advised by the respective Dean in writing, of:

- (a) the nature of the information and/or evidence which led to the investigation,
- (b) the enquiries made,
- (c) the findings and recommendation(s) as to the penalty to be imposed, and
- (d) the invitation to the student to provide, within 7 days, a written submission in relation to the findings and the recommendation to be made to the respective Dean

Upon receipt of the written submission from the student, or where no written submission is received, at the expiration of the 7 day period, the respective Dean will advise the Academic Dean, in writing, of:

- the nature of the information and/or evidence which led to the investigation,

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- the enquiries made
- the findings and recommendation(s) as to a penalty to be imposed
- provide the student's written submission in relation to the finding and recommendation(s), where received

When recommending a penalty to be imposed, the respective Dean shall have regard to:

- the seriousness of the academic misconduct
- the experience of the student at tertiary level
- whether or not the student has previously been found guilty of plagiarism or any other form of academic misconduct

Penalties for plagiarism

In cases of plagiarism due consideration will be given to the student's experience of tertiary education. In general, students in the second or subsequent years will be penalised more severely than students in their first year.

First offence: Depending on the nature of the offence, a substantial reduction, or awarding of a zero, or request for a resubmit for an assignment (where an assignment is resubmitted it can only gain a Pass), as well as a notation on the student's file

Second offence: Graded as Fail for the unit a notation on the student's file together with a formal warning, in writing, by the respective Dean of the likelihood of exclusion if the student offends again

Third offence: Graded as Fail for the unit and the student is requested to show cause why they should not be excluded from MC.

A student excluded from one unit of study, award or degree for plagiarism or academic misconduct shall not be permitted to transfer any internal advanced standing to another course of study at MC. Fees paid for the course, award or degree shall be foregone.

How to avoid plagiarism

Be aware of what constitutes plagiarism

- The best way to avoid plagiarising is to know what it is and how to avoid doing it. Many students plagiarise unintentionally as a result of not knowing how to acknowledge or incorporate sources of information, or from careless note-taking or 'cutting and pasting' of electronic sources.

Learn how to acknowledge information sources

- Students must ensure their assignments are referenced correctly. Referencing allows the student to acknowledge the contribution of other writers in their work.

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Whenever students use words, ideas or information from other sources in assignments, those sources must be cited and referenced.

Plan the work

- Students should plan ahead and begin writing their assignments well before they are due. Leaving work until the last minute doesn't give the student enough time to read, digest, form their own ideas and write information in their own words. When students rush to meet a tight deadline, they are more likely to plagiarise unintentionally or succumb to the temptation to 'cut and paste' information directly from electronic resources.

Learn how to incorporate the work of others

- In addition to knowing the rules for referencing sources, and knowing what to reference, students also need to understand how to effectively integrate material in their writing. Knowing how to quote correctly from a source, and how to paraphrase and summarise the words and ideas of others can help students avoid plagiarism.

Acknowledge all sources

- Books are not the only sources that require acknowledgement. Any words, ideas or information taken from any source requires a reference. Reference when using words or ideas from:
 - books and journal articles
 - newspapers and magazines
 - pamphlets or brochures
 - films, documentaries, television programs or advertisements
 - web pages or computer-based resources
 - letters or emails
 - personal interviews
 - diagrams, illustrations, charts or pictures

Why reference?

- Referencing is a way to provide evidence to support the assertions and claims in student assignments. By citing experts in the field, students are demonstrating the extent of their reading and research. Referencing is also a way to give credit to the writers from whom the student has borrowed words and ideas.
- References must be accurate, allowing readers to trace the sources of information used. The best way for a student to reference accurately is to keep a record of all the sources used when reading and researching for an assignment. There is no need to reference:
 - when a student is writing their own observations (for example, a report on a mission trip)
 - when a student is writing about their own experiences (for example, a reflective journal)

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- when a student is writing their own thoughts, comments or conclusions in an assignment.
- when a student is evaluating or offering their own analysis (for example, parts of a critical review)
- when a student is using 'common knowledge' (facts that can be found in numerous places and are likely to be known by a lot of people) or folklore.
- when a student is using generally accepted facts or information (this will vary in different subjects. If in doubt, the student should ask their lecturer).

The declaration that students must sign for each assignment

Whenever a student submits an assignment, they will need to sign a declaration. It reads as follows:

The following work, of which I have kept a copy, is entirely the work of the undersigned. All of the sources of ideas and expressions are duly acknowledged in footnotes, endnotes or in text references.

The academic staff will check the student's work using, for example google and other sources to ensure that this statement is true with reference to their work. If a student is found to have breached this statement, that will be considered as Academic Misconduct. Refer to the Academic Misconduct Policy for further information.

Advice about or questions regarding plagiarism or academic misconduct can be raised with the respective Dean or the Dean of Students.