

Citation etiquette

How to handle the intellectual property of others

(Adapted from the 'Notice on dealing with plagiarism' issued on 30 April 2007 by the Teaching Committee of the University of Zurich)

This information sheet provides an overview of the most important rules covering intellectual property. The authorship of scientific texts requires that the thought processes, methods and theories of one author may be deployed by another author only if they are clearly designated as borrowed intellectual property.

A. Basic principles

Short passages from another work may be quoted. The quote must, however, be identified and its source cited.

- 1] **Source citation:** Cite all of your sources fully and verifiably, such that anyone can check them. Follow the scientific *citation rules* usual for your discipline, together with the special rules for citing electronic sources.
- 2] **Your own work:** Differentiate clearly between your own work and that of others: always name the author(s) of work which is not your own. This applies to texts, computer codes, tables, graphics and data, even if they come from the World Wide Web.
- 3] **Word-for-word quotes:** Place borrowed text (both sentences and concepts) in *inverted commas*.
- 4] **Analogous quotes (paraphrases):** If you have rendered text in your own words or summarised it, give its source in *parentheses*.
- 5] **Secondary sources:** Identify a citation as a secondary source if you have taken it from another author without looking at the original source yourself.
- 6] **Bibliography:** At the end of your paper list all of the sources and 'intellectual mentors' you have used.
- 7] **General knowledge:** Anything which may be regarded as general or basic knowledge does not require a source citation. If the basic ideas are taken from another author, e.g. from a textbook, however, the source must be cited.

B. What counts as plagiarism?

Plagiarism is understood as the complete or partial imitation of the work of another author without citing that work's source and author.

You may not:¹

- 1] use the exact words of or ideas from another author's intellectual property (text, ideas, structure, etc.) without citing the source clearly.
- 2] use text from the internet without citing the www. address and the date you accessed it.
- 3] re-use your own written texts or parts of them in different course papers or performance assessments without explicitly identifying them as such.
- 4] translate and use a foreign-language text without citing its source.
- 5] submit work under your own name which has been written for you by someone else (a 'ghost writer').
- 6] use an extract from another author's work, paraphrase it and indeed cite the source but somewhere other than in the context of that extract (for example, the (in practice, plagiarised) source is hidden in a footnote at the end of a paper).

C. The consequences of plagiarism

Pursuant to Art. 2 Para. b of the ETH Zurich Disciplinary Code (RSETHZ 361.1) plagiarism constitutes a disciplinary violation and will result in disciplinary procedures. Detailed information regarding these procedures and their jurisdiction may be found in the ETH Zurich Disciplinary Code (RSETHZ 361.1 / www.rechtssammlung.ethz.ch).

¹ See the contribution of Prof. Christian Schwarzenegger in *unijournal* 4/2006.



Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule Zürich
Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Zurich

Citation check

- Do you know the citation conventions of your discipline? (If you are unsure, ask your supervisor early on)
- Have you placed quoted text in inverted commas and named the author(s) and source (with page numbers)?
- Have you named all of the authors of ideas you have quoted, paraphrased or borrowed?
- Have you clearly delineated other authors' intellectual property from your own and identified it as such?
- Have you listed all your sources in the bibliography?
- Have you cited all of your internet sources?
- Have you preferred primary to secondary sources?
- Have you respected formal criteria?
- Have you identified the sources of tables/illustrations/images?
- Have you signed and enclosed the Declaration of Originality?

If you can answer all 10 questions in the positive your written work should pass any electronic plagiarism test, and you may submit it with a clean conscience.

