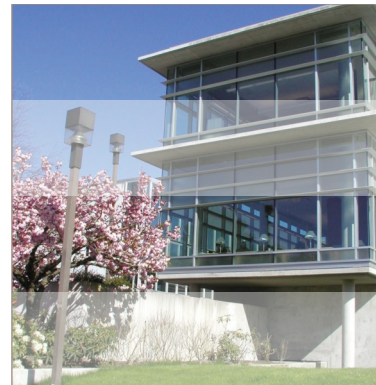


# BCIT STUDENT GUIDE TO PLAGIARISM

BRITISH COLUMBIA  
INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

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This guide is intended to help students understand plagiarism, a form of copyright violation. Students are also encouraged to discuss the topic with their instructors to gain a clear understanding.

## Plagiarism and BCIT Policy

BCIT Student Academic Integrity & Appeals Policy 5104 describes plagiarism as prohibited behaviour.

### “2.1 Plagiarism

Academic integrity requires that persons do not falsely claim credit for the ideas, writing, or other intellectual property of others, either by presenting such works as their own or through impersonation.” (*BCIT Academic Integrity and Appeals Policy*, Number 5104, 2009, p.3)

Plagiarism may be **inadvertent** if the student does not have the appropriate research skills or knowledge to paraphrase and cite their information sources correctly. Or, it may be **deliberate** if the student knowingly presents someone else’s work as their own.

Common examples of plagiarism would include:

- > Omitting placing quotation marks when citing exact words from a published source,
- > Paraphrasing without documenting your source,
- > Copying from a source without proper acknowledgement, or
- > Buying a paper from a research service or fellow student.

Confirmed acts of inadvertent or deliberate plagiarism can result in serious disciplinary action.

## HOW TO AVOID PLAGIARISM

To avoid plagiarism, you must cite your source whenever you describe or quote a topic, theory, data, drawing, image, or opinion that belongs to someone else. Examples would include:

- > Direct quotations from a source,
- > Paraphrasing i.e. rearranging or slightly altering words conveying a specific message found in a source,
- > Statistics, graphs or drawings from a source,
- > Information taken from electronic sources such as the Internet as well as print books and journals, and
- > Copying and pasting from another source.



### CONTACT INFO

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Remember that the only thing from another source that you do not have to credit is **common knowledge**. Common knowledge is information considered to be factual and / or ideas that are generally known by everyone within a subject discipline. Common knowledge can be found in many sources such as text books and reference works. Common knowledge would also include conclusions that anyone could reach. If you are in doubt about whether or not topics and ideas are considered to be “common knowledge” for your course subject material, you should check with your instructor.

Examples of common knowledge include:

- > Proverbs and expressions such as *Actions speak louder than words*,
- >  $e=mc^2$ ,
- > Vancouver gets a lot of rain in the winter.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF COMPETENT RESEARCH SKILLS

Knowledge and use of competent research skills will help you avoid inadvertent plagiarism. Here are some ideas to keep in mind when conducting your subject material research:

- > Use reliable information from academic or scholarly sources. When you use academic sources, you'll start to recognize common knowledge.
- > In your note taking, document your source for content where you have paraphrased.
- > Learn how to paraphrase. Paraphrasing is legitimate in writing papers when the source is cited.
  - > Paraphrasing is using your own words to convey someone else's ideas and information in an original way.
  - > Paraphrasing is usually more detailed than a summary, which is often concentrated on a main idea.
  - > You know that you have understood the meaning of the original work when you are able to explain it in your own words.
- > Know the style and rules of citation that your instructors want you to use.
- > Include a citation at all times when you use someone else's ideas, words or data.
- > Record your sources as you do your research and include all of them in your bibliography or reference list. It is time consuming and difficult to go back later.
- > Familiarize yourself with the common knowledge in your field. When in doubt, consult with your instructor.
- > Evaluate your information sources for accuracy, currency, objectivity, authority and completeness of content.
- > Always use quotation marks if you are using someone else's exact words.
- > Ask a Librarian for assistance with research.

## FURTHER INFORMATION

The Library offers research skill classes. You can discuss this with your instructor. The Library has published a number of [Research Guides](#) which are available in print and on the Library Web site at [www.lib.bcit.ca](http://www.lib.bcit.ca). These include:

[APA Style Guide](#)

[MLA Style Guide](#)

[CBE Scientific Style](#)

[Citation Builders and Style Guides](#)

[Evaluating Web Sites](#)

[Research Tips](#)

Here are a few books that are available in the BCIT Library:

***Research Papers*** by William Coyle and Joe Law, Longmans, 2005.

LB 2369 C65 2005

***Form and Style*** by Carole Slade, Houghton Mifflin, 2003.

LB 2369 C3 2003

***Student Guide to Research in the Digital Age*** by Leslie F. Stibbins, Libraries Unlimited, 2006.

ZA 3075 S74 2006

To find more titles, search the [Online Catalogue](#) using the **keywords** plagiarism or research or report writing.