

Plagiarism

Plagiarism and violation of copyright is a very serious academic offence. Students should try to avoid it. The University upholds the principle that plagiarism in any form is unacceptable and any student found plagiarizing will be subject to disciplinary action.

Below is an excerpt from “Regulation 5 of the University’s Regulations Governing Conduct at Examination for your reference :

"A candidate shall not engage in plagiarism nor employ nor seek to employ any other unfair means at an examination or in any other form of work submitted for assessment as part of a University examination. Plagiarism is defined as the unacknowledged use, as one's own, of work of another person, whether or not such work has been published."

Put it simply, plagiarism is copying the work of another person without proper acknowledgement. There are two parts in the definition: copying and the absence of proper acknowledgement. As a result, it gives an impression to an ordinary reader that the work is the original work of the author when in fact it was copied from some others' work. The idea underlying plagiarism is very simple: if you appropriate the work of another person, you should give proper recognition to that person.

Plagiarism covers "any other form of work submitted for assessment as part of a University examination". It covers theses, dissertations, take-home examinations, assignments, projects, and other forms of coursework. It applies to both undergraduate and graduate students.

Copying does not necessarily mean copying word for word. Closely paraphrasing or substantial copying with minor modifications (such as changing grammar, adding a few words or reversing active/passive voices) is still copying for this purpose. It is not so much the form of the copying that is important, but the substance of what is copied. It does not matter what the nature of the source is. It may be a book, an article, a dissertation, a Government report, a table from the internet, a memorandum, or simply an assignment of another student or even teaching material distributed to you. The source may also be graphics, computer programmes, photographs, video and audio recordings or other non-textual material. It does not matter whether the source has been published or not."

The University of Hong Kong has published a document on plagiarism – “What is Plagiarism?”, which each student will be given a hard copy, together with the registration documents distributed by the Faculty of Social Sciences before the start of the 1st semester. The soft copy of this booklet could also be found at this website : <http://www0.hku.hk/plagiarism/page2s.htm>.

Moreover, The Graduate School has also published another booklet on plagiarism – “Plagiarism and How to Avoid It: A Guide for MPhil and PhD Students”, which is also applicable to the MATPP programme. In this booklet, apart from the information and details on “what constitutes plagiarism”, “the common form of plagiarism”, “what is proper acknowledgement” etc...it also contains some self-test exercises for you to test your knowledge about plagiarism. This booklet could be viewed and downloaded at the website : <http://www0.hku.hk/gradsch/web/resources/plagiarism.pdf>

Students are highly recommended to read the above-mentioned booklets on plagiarism. If students still have doubt on plagiarism, they could also consult their course teachers or dissertation supervisors for guidance.