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Responsible Research: Conducting Research with Integrity

Responsible Research is a publication of Washington State University's Graduate School, and the Office of Research, and is part of WSU's initiatives to advocate for high ethical standards and academic integrity among graduate students. This publication is inspired by similar efforts at peer institutions and the Office of Research Integrity in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Graduate students constitute an integral part of the academic fabric of WSU, and the primary goal of the Graduate School is to promote the professional growth of graduate students and develop intellectually honest scholars and effective researchers. This newsletter, which will be published and posted online each semester, will present various issues related to academic and research integrity to guide graduate students in their studies and research endeavors.

The first newsletter focuses on plagiarism, an often confusing concept for students. The articles present definitions of plagiarism, some background, best practices on preventing plagiarism, the ways that WSU addresses the problem, and resources for students to use to avoid plagiarism in their work. The WSU Web site on plagiarism, www.wsulibs.wsu.edu/plagiarism, coordinated by Distance Degree Library Services, is highlighted as one of several excellent resources for students if they have any questions about plagiarism or the University's policies. Our hope is for graduate students to gain a better understanding of plagiarism, how to avoid it, and the related consequences.

—Patricia Sturko, Associate Dean, Graduate School

Responsible Research: *It's Up to You*



Howard Grimes

As the Vice President for Research and Dean of the Graduate School, one of my top priorities is to make sure that Washington State University remains an institution that fosters research integrity, and one where our graduate students are actively engaged in the creation of such. As a plant biochemist myself, I know the benefits and challenges that come with the research process. But the reliability of scientific knowledge depends on collaboration among researchers, and these interactions thrive on trust and integrity.

Plagiarism is the theme of this inaugural issue of the *Responsible Research* newsletter. Every semester we will distribute one of these publications, each with a different theme, to all graduate students at WSU. With these newsletters the Office of Research and the Graduate School hope to create awareness of important research issues and help graduate students develop as independent scholars and researchers. I urge you to discuss the following material with your peers and faculty mentors. Integrity and ethical situations are, by definition, complex and “gray,” and discussion often helps make the issues more concrete and clear. And as graduate students make the transition from readers to scholars and publishers of materials for others to read, it is imperative that they understand plagiarism and how to write in ways that reflect their independence.

In our fast-paced world, where technology advances rapidly, and we can access information at the click of a mouse, research integrity and plagiarism have become more complex. It is important for all of us to redefine the boundaries between honest mistakes, negligence, and deliberate misconduct. Science and research are social institutions where even non-scientists are interested in assessing the validity of our claims. Everyone involved is accountable to a broader society that benefits from our work. As you learn the norms of your disciplinary field, it is critical that you also learn the ethical standards inherent in these disciplines. Communication is a key part of this process. Ask questions and question the answers.

Howard Grimes

Vice President for Research and Dean of the Graduate School

Reinforcing a



Culture of Academic Integrity

WSU: University of Integrity

The WSU community holds fast to high ethical standards, and values its reputation as a university that fosters integrity. As a public, land-grant and research institution of distinction, Washington State University's mission is to enhance the intellectual, creative, and practical abilities of the individuals, institutions, and communities that we serve by fostering learning, inquiry, and engagement. We aim to create, through our work and our relationships, an environment that cultivates individual virtues and institutional integrity. This mission is most likely to be achieved when faculty, staff, and students take responsibility for upholding the full scope of these values (www.wsu.edu/StrategicPlanning).

WSU Policy and Standards on Plagiarism

Similar to any other research university, WSU prohibits plagiarism and considers it a form of academic dishonesty. Plagiarism is a violation of WAC 504-26-202, Acts of Dishonesty. WSU defines plagiarism as “presenting the information, ideas, or phrasing of another person as the student's own work without proper acknowledgement of the source.” The full definition of plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty may be found at www.conduct.wsu.edu.

WSU's policy for handling plagiarism cases involves two steps—an initial hearing and review. The hearing occurs between the instructor and the student. If the student admits to the act, the instructor assigns an outcome congruent with the published course policy, and reports it to the Office of Student Conduct. If the instructor is unable to meet with the student, or the student disputes the allegation, the instructor provides the evidence and recommended sanctions to the student and the Office of Student Conduct. The student then has 21 days to request the second step—a review by members of the Academic Integrity Hearing Board, who are responsible for making a separate and independent decision on whether or not the student has violated the academic integrity policy. The board also reviews whether the outcome proposed by the instructor is fair and just. The written decision of the board may not be appealed. For more information visit www.conduct.wsu.edu.

Issues and Recent Developments

Academic honesty and responsible conduct in research remain significant issues at Washington State University. Graduate schools, in general, provide a formative environment for the next generation of researchers, and Washington State University's Graduate School and the Office of Research are committed to maintaining high standards of integrity in scientific research. We recognize that institutional and governmental policies may not be enough to address this issue, so we also look to education and open discussion. At a time of ever-evolving technology, quick transfers of information, and heightened pressures on faculty and students to produce impactful and publishable findings with a quick turn-around, there is a renewed emphasis on the responsible conduct of research.

According to the Council of Graduate Studies Web site, www.cgsnet.org, there is a growing concern across all academic institutions to educate graduate students, postdoctoral fellows, and technicians of the ethical requirements of research, the policies and regulations that govern research in the United States, and science norms. Consequently, researchers will be ready when complex ethical issues arise and need to be identified and assessed. In order to help graduate students and faculty develop and enhance these skills, the Council of Graduate Studies recommends creating model programs that integrate responsible conduct of research into its very foundation.

—Jane G. Payumo, doctoral student, Individual Interdisciplinary Program

Federal Rules on Research Misconduct

The increasing controversy surrounding research misconduct in the scientific community, and the lack of consistent agency policies, has stimulated proposals for a more uniform, government-wide policy. On December 6, 2000, the government implemented a process to respond to research misconduct through the Federal Policy on Research Misconduct, proposed and published by the Office of Science and Technology Policy. This policy addresses behavior that affects the integrity of research records and establishes procedural safeguards for handling allegations of misconduct. The policy was the result of several consultations with federal agencies and policy makers.

Who is covered?

The policy applies to all research funded by federal agencies, including intramural research, research conducted or managed by contractors, and research performed at universities.

Definitions

Research misconduct is defined as fabrication, falsification, or plagiarism in proposing, performing, or reviewing research, or in reporting research results (www.ostp.gov).

- Plagiarism includes the appropriation of another person's ideas, processes, results, or words, including those obtained through the confidential review of others' research proposals and manuscripts, without giving appropriate credit.
- Research misconduct does not include an honest error or honest differences of opinion.
- Fabrication involves making up results and recording or reporting them.
- Falsification involves manipulating research materials, equipment, or processes, or changing or omitting data or results so that the research is inaccurately represented in the research record.

What is involved in charges of research misconduct?

- Significant departure from accepted practices of the relevant research community.
- Committed intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly.
- Allegations proven by a preponderance of evidence.

Who has implemented the policy?

Eleven agencies have implemented the federal policy, including:

- Department of Defense
- Department of Health and Human Services
- Department of Labor
- Department of Transportation
- Department of Veterans Affairs
- Environmental Protection Agency
- National Aeronautics and Space Administration
- National Endowment for the Humanities
- National Science Foundation
- Smithsonian Institution

The Department of Energy has published a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking and five other departments (Agriculture, Commerce, Education, Interior, and Justice) have reported that their policies have been drafted and are undergoing internal review.

For a more detailed discussion on the important provisions of this federal policy, visit www.onlineethics.org.

—Jane G. Payumo, doctoral student, Individual Interdisciplinary Program



Pursuing Excellence

Plagiarism Versus Copyright Infringement

Attaining excellence in graduate studies requires academic integrity—the ethics of scholars. But a common pitfall is not realizing when you are using the words or ideas of someone else and passing them off as your own. The name for this is “plagiarism.” The word comes from the Latin “plagiate,” which means “to kidnap.” Graduate students should avoid plagiarism because it is unethical and violates the Student Code of Conduct. Whether by accident or by intention, committing plagiarism may result in failing a course, acquiring a poor academic record or reputation, expulsion from school, or the loss of employment opportunities.

Plagiarism is often confused with copyright infringement; but sometimes one occurs to the exclusion of the other. Copying materials without permission may be copyright infringement. If you use copied material and don’t identify the source, it is plagiarism. When copying the material applies as fair use, it is not copyright infringement. For more information about copyright infringement and fair use, visit **publishing.wsu.edu/copyright**.

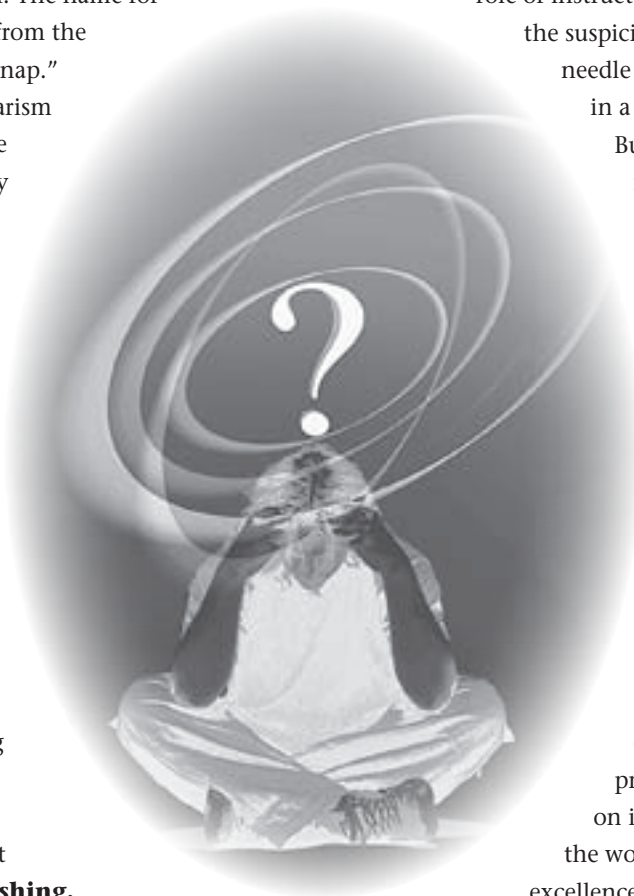
Students should understand that copyright infringement is a violation of federal law and may result in civil or criminal sanctions. Plagiarism is generally a matter of ethics in academic

research and writing. All universities prohibit plagiarism as a violation of honor or conduct codes.

Graduate students often teach classes and in taking the role of instructor must investigate plagiarism when the suspicion arises. It can be like looking for a needle of unquoted, unacknowledged works in a haystack of essays and term papers. But instructors will usually know the more blatant cases when they see them. Identifying plagiarism is getting easier every day through technology and the tools it provides. There are many resources to find software that recognizes and flags plagiarism. Some Web sites that may be helpful in detecting plagiarism include **www.ncusd203.org/central/html/where/plagiarism_stoppers.html**; **turnitin.com/static/home.html**; and **www.plagiarism.org**.

Original research and original composition are the medals of a professional. Let your research stand on its own merits without “kidnapping” the work of others. Strive for academic excellence by crediting those who support your conclusions. Some day you may see your name and works cited in the research of others and share the honor.

—Marc Lindsey, WSU Copyright Specialist



A Student's View: Cyber Plagiarism

For many of us, going online has become a daily routine. The Internet has expanded our opportunities for communication and has supported the processes of inquiry and academic activities. With the Internet, we are able to complete our work with less effort. Just visit a search engine, type the topic you need to research, and in a few seconds you have hundreds of references from diverse sources such as scholarly journals, lecture notes, and books. Carole George (Carnegie Mellon University Libraries 2006) and colleagues, in their research paper entitled, "Scholarly Use of Information: Graduate Students' Information Seeking Behavior," found that most graduate students describe the Internet as extremely useful, their primary method of searching, or the next step in the research process after meeting with advisors.

Internet drawbacks

In 2002, Rutgers University Professor Donald McCabe conducted a study among 18,000 students, 2,600 faculty members, and 650 teaching assistants on 23 campuses across the country. The study confirms that Internet plagiarism is prevalent among college and university students.

While the Internet makes the work of others readily accessible in the research process, it also makes it easy to plagiarize. John Barrie, software developer, and president of iParadigms, monitors online plagiarism. He says that the Internet is more than a source of research information; it is "a 1.5 billion-page searchable, cut-and-pastable encyclopedia" (www.wsjclassroomedition.com/archive/02dec/EDUC.htm).

Besides making it convenient to cut and paste the work of other researchers found online, the Internet also offers opportunities to buy and sell assignments, papers, and reports. A proliferation of ghostwriting services, so-called "paper mills," sells essays, term papers, and other forms of homework assignments. Prewritten works have also been purchased on eBay.

What does this mean for students?

Anyone who uses text and/or ideas from someone else's work posted on the Internet and does not properly acknowledge the source commits plagiarism. In addition, students who purchase essays and term papers off the Web and submit them as their own engage in academic dishonesty and fraud.

The growing concern about Internet plagiarism has led to the development of software to combat this problem and Web sites such as www.turnitin.com and www.plagiarism.org. The consequences for this type of academic dishonesty are severe.

Students caught plagiarizing may receive a failing grade, revoked degree, loss of a job, and/or a ruined reputation. In addition, of course, there may be legal consequences.

"The illegal use of text content is a form of copyright infringement," says Marc Lindsey, copyright specialist at Washington State University. Using copyrighted material without permission is copyright infringement. If a student breaks copyright law, it is an offense that may cause a student legal trouble. He adds, "There is a misconception on the Internet that everything is in the public domain. That is not true. The Internet is like a worldwide library. Everything is copyrighted unless it is in the public domain or you get permission from the creators to use their words or ideas."

End note

We are in graduate school to develop a mastery of our chosen disciplines. As graduate students, we are expected to respect others' intellectual property. We should not abuse the resources and technological ease of the Internet for unethical and improper means.

—Jane G. Payumo, doctoral student, Individual Interdisciplinary Program

Tips for Success

Writing Center Services

Helping students become aware of the discourse conventions practiced by their specific academic discipline helps them learn to cite sources correctly. Washington State University's Writing Center helps students avoid plagiarizing by making available citation resources commonly used in various disciplines and by offering guidance in using those resources effectively. In addition, the Writing Center helps students synthesize material from external sources with their own emerging ideas. The Writing Center does not police plagiarism, but supports students in learning how to avoid unintentional plagiarism.

An extensive explanation of plagiarism, academic honesty, and intellectual property may be found at www.wsulibs.wsu.edu/plagiarism/policy.html. This site is a result of collaboration between Washington State University's Writing Center, the Department of English, the Center for Teaching, Learning, and Technology, and the WSU Libraries. The site offers a link to the current WSU Academic Honesty Policy, provides definitions of terms related to citation and documentation, offers a short tutorial to practice quoting sources, summarizing, and paraphrasing, and provides the cultural and historical context for how academics define plagiarism.

Tips for TAs

- In order to diminish the possibility that students will plagiarize work in the classroom, educate them about plagiarism at the beginning of the semester. Give students a clear definition, explain how to avoid plagiarism, and state the specific consequences incurred when a student plagiarizes. Insert a statement about plagiarism and how it will be handled in the syllabus. Encourage students to visit the Standards of Conduct Web site at www.conduct.wsu.edu.
- Plan to use different assignments every semester. Small changes in assignments will make it nearly impossible for students to use file papers from other students who have written and handed in the same assignment.
- Vary the types of resources students are allowed to use for their works cited.
- Vary the audience that the paper is directed toward and/or vary the role the writer plays in relation to that audience.
- Vary the rhetorical mission of the paper (i.e., using the information to persuade, teach, or entertain).
- Papers that call for reporting information are the easiest to plagiarize. Adding a personal or reflective component that asks students to synthesize experience with critical analysis makes it harder for students to copy someone else's work.
- Have the students perform short writing assignments throughout the term (these need not be graded) so you can get a sense of each student's writing style and proficiency. Then, when the students are asked to write something longer, more complex, and involving research materials, you will have a sense of each individual student's "voice" and writing abilities; this may help you make determinations about plagiarism.
- Have students write at least two drafts of a paper so that you can see it evolving.
- Have students photocopy or print out the sources they use and turn them in with the last draft of the paper.
- Assign parts of the paper in stages and have the student synthesize the stages in the final draft. A paper written in stages requires students to show their work throughout the process. Also, if students are unaware that the paper is being assigned in stages ahead of time, they will be unable to work backwards from a pre-existing draft.

—Lisa Ann Johnson-Shull, Washington State University Writing Program



Resources

Graduate students often need help with making their work accessible to others, organizing research, reviewing forms unique to them as graduate students (such as thesis, dissertation, research proposal, graduate admissions essay), paraphrasing and quoting appropriately, and checking citations. WSU provides several ways to improve writing skills and prevent plagiarism:

1. Consult your professor and research advisor for help.
2. Enroll in any of the writing, reading, and research workshops offered by the Student Advising and Learning Center, www.salc.wsu.edu.
3. Complete a writing tutorial at the WSU Writing Center. Visit www.wsu.edu/~wprogram/openlab.html for more information.
 - Graduate Writing Center: www.writingprogram.wsu.edu/units/writingcenter/gpwc/.
4. Consult these resources:
 - WSU Plagiarism Site: www.wsulibs.wsu.edu/plagiarism.

Send us your feedback!

What do you think of this newsletter?
E-mail us at respresearch@mail.wsu.edu.

Upcoming Issue: Research with human subjects.

- “How to Organize Your Thesis” by Professor John W. Chinneck: www.sce.carleton.ca/faculty/chinneck/thesis.html.
 - “Helpful Hints for Writing Class Papers” by Paul Brians: www.wsu.edu/~brians/general_handouts/helpful_hints.html.
 - “Writing Guidelines for Graduate Papers” by Gregg B. Jackson: www.gwu.edu/~gjackson/writingguidelines.PDF.
5. Consult these books:
 - *The Columbia Guide to Online Style* 2nd edition. Janice R. Walker and Todd Taylor. Columbia University Press 2006.
 - *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* 6th edition. Joseph Gibaldi. Modern Language Association of America 2003.
 - *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* 5th edition. American Psychological Association 2001.
 - *Theses and Dissertations: A Guide to Planning, Research, and Writing*. R. Murray Thomas and Dale L. Brubaker. Bergin & Garvey 2000.

Some ideas/language credited to www.cgsnet.org