Plagiarism

All universities—including VIU—have high ethical standards regarding plagiarism. Students are expected to complete their own research using their own thoughts and analyses. Anyone caught plagiarizing at VIU, for example, can face a range of consequences: from failing the assignment, to failing the course, to being excused from the school, these consequences are serious in nature.

*Don’t plagiarize!* At VIU we value the ideas of our students and want students to feel comfortable doing their own research. Below are the basic rules on plagiarism which were taken from the *APA Publications Manual, 6th Edition*. For more details, refer to the APA manual or schedule a coaching session with the WRMC.

What is Plagiarism?

Many people think plagiarism is only copying and pasting someone else’s work and claiming it as their own; this is true. However, plagiarism also extends to the following actions:

- Paraphrasing someone else’s work without giving credit
- Taking someone else’s ideas without giving credit
- Borrowing too many of someone else’s ideas—even if cited—with little or none of your own input or analysis
- Using your old ideas as new research

What Can You do to Avoid Plagiarism?

There are several different ways to avoid plagiarism, and many times they are as simple as planning your research in advance. Below are some steps you can follow to avoid plagiarism:

- **Write your paper in advance!** Students often plagiarize because they wait until the last minute to begin their assignments and have no time to research or write.
- **Decide what you want to write when you start your paper.** Make an outline—in your own words—that includes your thesis and topic sentences. That way, you have your own thoughts already on paper.
- **Let your outside sources support your ideas.** After you create your outline and decide what you want to argue, let your sources help you, not speak for you.
- **Remember to cite as you write.** Some people cite after they write their papers. This may result in writers forgetting to attribute something to the original author.
- **Highlight everything you quote, paraphrase, or copy—even if you provide a citation.** You can do this by highlighting the text with your mouse and clicking on this button: [highlight button]. If, at the end of the writing process, you see that 1/3 or more of your paper is highlighted, you may want to consider adding some more original research or thoughts.
- **Meet with your instructor and ask him to submit your draft on turnitin.com for you, if he uses that website.** You can schedule a meeting and look at the “originality report” together. If the originality number is over 30%, you may need to add more original thoughts, research, or analyses.