

Plagiarism Guidelines for Composition Instructors

Instructors are encouraged to speak with the Assistant Director of Composition/Student Concerns for help with cases of suspected plagiarism.

	Plagiarism Examples	1st Nine Weeks of Semester Course of Action Recommendations	Weeks Ten and Beyond Course of Action Recommendations
Level 1 Handled “in house”	Error Carelessness Misunderstanding of plagiarism Correctable in revision Teachable moments	Instructors should provide instruction on what is and is not plagiarism within the first nine weeks of the semester. <i>Recommendation:</i> no need to file a report with the Office of the Dean of Students (ODOS). Hold an individual conference with student to clarify plagiarism and the consequences of a repeat offense. Student may revise assignment (perhaps for a reduced score).	By this time, students should have instruction on proper citation and documentation practices. <i>Recommendation:</i> no need to file a report with the ODOS. Handle the situation still as a teachable moment, with revision opportunities (again, perhaps for a reduced score) or through punitive grading as indicated on the course syllabus.
Level 2 Reportable to DOS ¹	Small sections of “patch writing” Paraphrase without attribution Repeat offenses of Level 1 Instructor firmly believes that student knows what he/she is doing is wrong	Still teachable moments, but reportable <i>Recommendation:</i> send a report to the DOS. Instructor may fail the student’s paper ^{2, 3} .	Moves to Level 3 <i>Recommendation:</i> depending on instructor’s syllabus, the student may fail the paper or the class ² .
Level 3 Report to DOS	Egregious acts of plagiarism Obvious academic dishonesty Paper purchased or “borrowed” Paper Mill essay Major parts lifted without documentation Translated foreign article Large amounts “patch written” Faking citations, sources, or quotes Taking or stealing a paper from a friend, organization, or from a local database of essays	<i>Recommendation:</i> Instructor may fail student’s paper. Student may fail the class depending on policies the instructor set in place on the syllabus that was handed out the 1 st week.	<i>Recommendation:</i> fail student in the class. No longer a “teachable moment” in the current semester ⁴ .

Notes

¹If you fail the student's paper, or if you fail the student in your class, you should file a report with the Dean of Students.

²You are strongly encouraged to forward information on the situation to the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities for follow up, which may include additional action as prescribed in the *University Regulations*.

³You need to clarify on your course syllabus whether a "failing grade" on a paper is the equivalent to a 60/100 score or to a score of zero.

⁴Even if you have determined that a student has failed, you must allow the student to attend class.

Other concerns

Educate

Have the plagiarism discussion *early and often*.

Deter

Create plagiarism-resistant assignments and make sure students know that you will report cases of plagiarism.

Rehabilitate

In some cases you have the option to ask the student to rewrite the assignment (for the same or for a reduced grade).

On SafeAssign

SafeAssign, a "plagiarism prevention" service, is available to instructors through Blackboard. While the SafeAssign page on the ITaP website claims that instructors do not need to obtain consent from students to use SafeAssign, a FERPA page states that this policy is under review. In the past, the Dean of Students office has used other plagiarism detection programs in isolated plagiarism cases—to little benefit.

The ICaP program does not endorse any plagiarism prevention service. Instead, we advocate creating assignments that are "plagiarism resistant" and focusing on the writing *process* (instead of just the *product*).