

Academic Integrity Handbook

Including sections
on academic integrity policy,
plagiarism, fabrication, collaboration
and the UA Code of Conduct

*“A people without reliable news is,
sooner or later,
a people without the basis of freedom.”*
Harold J. Laski,
English political scientist, 1925

**School of Journalism
The University of Arizona**

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Truth Matters

It is vitally important that you reread the following information about academic integrity every semester. Habits of accuracy, completeness, fairness and integrity will serve you well as a student, a working journalist or even if you don't remain in journalism. You should be aware, if you are not already, that any student found violating the rules will face consequences ranging from a reduced grade or failing grade on the assignment to failing the course and suspension or expulsion from the School of Journalism, or even the University of Arizona. Ignorance of the rules is not an acceptable excuse.

Journalism: Writing Without Footnotes

National headlines about Jayson Blair, Stephen Glass and Jonah Lehrer have amply demonstrated that the journalism profession has a significant problem with plagiarism and fabrication. So does higher education. Educators are dismayed at the number of students who plagiarize, especially from internet sources. According to the UA Dean of Students' office, 75% of college students admit to some form of cheating.

The School of Journalism has a zero-tolerance policy for violations of academic integrity. We have produced this handbook so that students will understand fully what constitutes plagiarism, fabrication and falsification, and how to avoid them in their reporting and writing.

Proper attribution in journalistic writing is different and often more difficult than in other types of writing. For one thing, we don't have footnotes or endnotes to rely on. For another, we frequently are writing on deadline and under difficult conditions. That makes it all the more important that journalists keep track of their notes, sources, inspirations and ideas.

In a national study in 2013 commissioned by the American Copy Editors Society, the authors of "The Truth and Nothing But" cited research showing that nearly all the plagiarists of the last two decades said their plagiarism was "inadvertent." This is no excuse. Good journalists – and good journalism students – must understand how to protect themselves and the public by using correct attribution.

In photography and multimedia, the presence of digital editing software has made the manipulation of images easier than ever. In 2015, the World Press Photo Contest, a prestigious international event, had to disqualify up to 20% of entries because of improper manipulation, including adding or removing content from images. World Press Photo issued [a new code of ethics](#) requiring that entrants "must ensure their pictures provide an accurate and fair representation of the scene they witnessed so the audience is not misled." Some editing of images is permitted under professional standards to enhance balance and quality, but the addition or removal of content from an image constitutes a form of fabrication. Plagiarism and fabrication betray the public trust in journalists' independent pursuit of the truth. They destroy credibility not only with the public, but also with the faculty, students, fellow reporters and editors – to say nothing of your own self-worth.

Finally, they carry severe consequences in the profession. A veteran reporter for the St. Petersburg Times, when forced to resign over her plagiarism, posted this on the newsroom bulletin board:

Twelve years of dedicated journalism down the drain because of a stupid mistake. It will be easier for me to live with myself knowing that the truth is known. But I hope my mistake will serve as a lesson to others. I have let the Times down. I have let myself down. But most of all, I have let the profession down. And for that, I am truly sorry.

– Quoted from “The Unoriginal Sin,” by Roy Peter Clark, Washington Journalism Review, March 1983, reprinted by the Poynter Institute, July 28, 2000.

School of Journalism Academic Integrity Policy

The journalism school subscribes to the UA’s Code of Academic Integrity. Prohibited conduct covers all forms of academic dishonesty, including cheating, plagiarism, fabrication and facilitating academic dishonesty by others. The Arizona Board of Regents also prohibits this as academic misconduct: <https://public.azregents.edu/Policy%20Manual/5-308-Student%20Code%20of%20Conduct.pdf>

Complete details of the university policy and procedures can be found at the Dean of Students’ website: <https://deanofstudents.arizona.edu/policies/code-academic-integrity>

Journalism Examples

In addition to the university’s academic integrity policy, journalism has unique ethical standards and practices. We consider the following violations of academic integrity:

- Failing to quote accurately, word for word, what a news source writes or says
- Failing to credit a news source when using an exact quotation
- Copying sentences or paragraphs from a publication or source without putting them in quotation marks and attributing them to that publication
- Using the source’s own words too closely when paraphrasing
- Using a source’s ideas or thoughts without attribution
- Making up sources
- Making up quotes
- Making up other information
- Staging video scenes
- Using other people’s video, images or audio without permission, or any other copyright violation
- Turning in other’s video, images or audio as if it were your own work
- Excessive digital manipulation of photos, video or audio that changes the content or meaning
- Quoting friends, family, roommates or other acquaintances you know, rather than finding independent sources, and failing to disclose that you know the

- sources. This constitutes a conflict of interest and improper cutting of corners
- Collaborating with other students without specific permission and guidance from your instructor
 - Cheating on tests and quizzes
 - Submitting the same story, report or research paper to fulfill assignments for two different classes, without prior permission from both instructors
 - Turning in as a new assignment all or part of a story you have written for a previous class or any other news media without prior permission from the instructor. This includes text, visual, audio or graphic platforms. This also includes work performed as an intern
 - Submitting a story written for a class to any other news media as fulfillment of an internship without prior permission from the instructor
 - Any violation of journalistic norms and codes of ethics

Best Practices to maintain professional and academic integrity

Plagiarism

The UA's academic integrity policy defines plagiarism as representing the words or ideas of another as one's own.

The Modern Language Association says plagiarism is:

- Failure to attribute quotations or another person's ideas
- Failure to enclose borrowed language in quotation marks
- Failure to put summaries and paraphrases in your own words

Roy Peter Clark of the Poynter Institute identifies common opportunities for journalistic plagiarism. It can occur when reporters:

- Lift background information verbatim from previously published clips
- Include wire service copy in their stories without attribution
- Borrow information from other publications or the Internet
- Copy information from other reporters without permission

It is worth noting that all plagiarism/fabrication/falsification is not intentional. Journalists (including student journalists) work under conditions that are generally far from ideal. But even when it isn't intentional, it still is wrong and can get you a failing grade or fired. One way to think about plagiarism goes back to the word's origins: Plagiarism derives from the Latin verb *plagiare*, which means "to kidnap or abduct."

Preventing Plagiarism

Take good notes

In the rush to meet deadlines, it is easy to lose track of who said what or which words are direct quotes. Make it easy on yourself: clearly and fully identify the source and the quote.

Put your notes away

To keep from inadvertently copying your source information too closely, write your first draft without using notes. Then double check your accuracy before writing the next draft.

Treat the Internet like any other source

Information that you Google is not in the public domain, as students commonly assume. When using quotes, ideas or visuals from a site, use the same attribution standards that apply to print or broadcast sources or personal interviews.

When in doubt

If you are not sure whether attribution is necessary, it is.

Rewrite, rewrite

Regardless of the source – past stories from the library, the wires, other publications or news releases – get in the habit of putting everything in your own words.

Watch the clock

Leave yourself ample time to fact-check, proofread and polish your work.

Be honorable

Plagiarizing is being dishonest with the public. It is stealing intellectual property from someone. It is also stealing from yourself – your opportunity to learn, your reputation among your peers and your own self-respect.

Attribution

At its most basic, plagiarism is a failure to understand attribution, or the acknowledging of the source of information used in news stories or academic papers.

What Needs Attribution

Here are the primary types of information that need attribution:

- Another person's actual spoken or written words
- A paraphrase of another person's spoken or written words
- Another person's ideas, opinions or theories
- The source of any facts that you didn't personally witness
- The source of any statistics, graphs or drawings
- Accusatory, opinionated, unsubstantiated or controversial information, especially in crime or accident stories.

You don't need to attribute:

- Facts that are on record or are general knowledge: The Tucson City Council meets Monday nights.
- Information you observe: The protesters paraded through campus.

Identifying Sources

When you attribute information, sources need to be fully identified. See the school's Reporter's Handbook for more details. Rules of identification include:

- Every person you interview must be fully identified in your story, generally by first name, middle initial, last name and the relevance of the source to the story: Gov. Harold P. Jenkins defended hiring his brother-in-law for the position by saying, "He was the best person for the job."
- All published sources have to be identified: The Arizona Daily Star reported.
- All Internet sources must be identified by telling the public about the individual or group that operates the site: A website sponsored by the Humane Society said.

How to use Quotations for Attribution

Journalists continually need to combine direct quotations with paraphrasing. Quotes give the public accuracy and color. Summarizing is needed to help condense long meetings, detailed interviews or complex events, issues or ideas into a story of a few paragraphs.

The mechanics of using quotation marks and attribution (he said, etc.) are available in any grammar book or journalism text. For example, *A Pocket Style Manual* by Diana Hacker gives the following example of the right and wrong way to distinguish between your thoughts and those of the source, according to Modern Language Association rules.

Original

We see conflicting pictures of the mountain lion through the eyes of hunters, rangers, scientists, wildlife managers and preservationists. Each viewpoint, like a piece of glass in a kaleidoscope, is a shard, a fragment until it is combined with the other pieces to create a total image.

– Karen McCall and Jim Dutcher, *Cougar: Ghost of the Rockies*, p. 137

Plagiarized version

McCall and Dutcher observe that we see conflicting pictures of the mountain lion through the eyes of hunters, rangers, scientists, wildlife managers and preservationists. Each viewpoint, like a piece of glass in a kaleidoscope, is a shard, a fragment until it is combined with the other pieces to create a total image (137).

Acceptable version

McCall and Dutcher observe that "hunters, rangers, scientists, wildlife managers, and preservationists" see the mountain lion quite differently: "Each viewpoint, like a piece of glass in a kaleidoscope, is a shard, a fragment until it is combined with the other pieces to create a total image" (137).

How to Paraphrase

To paraphrase properly, you have to be careful to remain faithful to the source's viewpoint, but use your own words to do so. How much use of the source's words is too much? There is no legal standard, but notice in the plagiarized example below that the MLA considers even three words in a row (see underlined below) to be unacceptable. Other authorities specify eight words. Use your best judgment, but certainly your limit should be less than one sentence.

In the case below, Hacker said that the paraphrase "is plagiarized – even though the source is cited – because too much of its language is borrowed from the source." Using some of the same sentence structure and simply substituting alternative words – children for minors, brutally for severely, and assault for attack – is not enough, Hacker said.

Original

The park [Caspers Wilderness Park] was closed to minors in 1992 after the family of a girl severely mauled there in 1986 won a suit against the county. The award of \$2.1 million for the mountain lion attack on Laura Small, who was 5 at the time, was later reduced to \$1.5 million. – Reyes and Messina, "More Warning Signs," p. B1

Plagiarized version

Reyes and Messina report that Caspers Wilderness Park was closed to children in 1992 after the family of a girl brutally mauled there in 1986 sued the county. The family was ultimately awarded \$1.5 million for the mountain lion assault on Laura Small, who was 5 at the time (B1).

Acceptable version

In 1992, officials banned minors from Caspers Wilderness Park. Reyes and Messina explain that park officials took this measure after a mountain lion attack on a child led to a lawsuit. The child, 5-year-old Laura Small, had been severely mauled by a lion in 1986, and her parents sued the county. Eventually they received an award of \$1.5 million (B1). The Boston Globe reports that Judy Hunter, a teacher at Grinnell College in Iowa, tells her students: "In a bad paraphrase, you merely substitute words, borrowing the sentence structure of the organization directly from the source. In a good paraphrase you offer your reader a wholesale revision, a new way of seeing the text you are paraphrasing. You summarize, you reconstruct, you tell your reader about what the source has said, but you do so entirely in your own words, your own voice, your own sentence structure, your own organization."

Fabrication

In its policy on academic integrity, Northwestern University's Medill School of Journalism defines fabrication as "the intentional falsification or invention of information, data, quotations, or sources in an academic exercise or in a journalistic presentation. Fabrication also includes, but is not limited to, misattributing information or presenting information in an assignment that was not gathered in accordance with the course syllabus or other course outline."

The UA journalism school's (and all newsrooms') policy is simple: It is never acceptable to make up a source, quote or a fact.

Preventing Fabrication

Proper planning often is all it takes to eliminate the need to fabricate a missing fact or quote.

Organize your thoughts

Understand what you were sent to cover. Anticipate the kind of information you will need before you begin. Clearly, you have to let the facts shape the story, but if you have some idea of what you need, you can make the best use of your limited time.

Think like an editor

When you're interviewing, keep digging for hard facts, colorful details and illuminating quotes. Then evaluate not only what you have, but also what you don't have – and go get it.

Get contact information

Always ask sources for phone numbers and/or e-mail addresses, so you can contact them if you have additional questions.

Visual & Audio Editing Guidelines

Images, video and audio allow us to tell stories that can engage readers, but also pose risks for ethical breaches. In general, editing should be used to more accurately depict the reality of the scene at the time the image or video was taken. The content of the images and video should not be altered in any way that changes the overall content of the visual. Acceptable visual editing includes:

- Cropping that does not alter the overall story
- Dodging and burning
- White balancing
- Color correction that does not alter the scene

Copyright & Fair Use

The assumption for images, audio, video and writing is that the creator owns the copyright on the work, which gives the original creator legal protection to the work they created. Using their work without their permission is a violation of the law and journalism standards.

Copyright can be increasingly difficult to understand as social platforms allow for embedding of content. Just as you own the work you create, in most cases someone else owns the work you see on the internet.

It is always best to find the creator of the work you are hoping to use and get permission to use their work. Credit is not the same as permission. For more on copyright and fair use please see the library's resources on the topic at <https://new.library.arizona.edu/research/copyright>

More Information

To learn more about plagiarism and fabrication, see the university library website (<https://new.library.arizona.edu/research/citing/plagiarism>). The journalism faculty also can provide guidance.

Penalties

The School of Journalism has a zero-tolerance policy on plagiarism, fabrication and other ethical violations. In lower division courses, an academic integrity violation may, at the discretion of the professor, be treated as a “teachable moment,” not a professional felony. However, depending on the severity of the case, a violation may lead to failing the assignment, failing the class, or worse.

After lower division courses, any student who is caught violating the rules will face more severe consequences, based on the discretion of the professor. Sanctions may range from a failing grade on the assignment to failing the course, to suspension or expulsion from the School of Journalism, or even the University of Arizona. You should consult the course syllabus for additional guidance.

All violations that lead to sanctions will also be referred to the Dean of Students office, in order to provide due process for students. The referral to the Dean of Students may require the completion of an academic integrity workshop and a plagiarism awareness workshop. (<https://deanofstudents.arizona.edu/student-rights-responsibilities/workshops>)

However, if after an informal examination, a professor determines that there is insufficient proof that a student's conduct violated the journalism school's academic integrity rules, but said conduct does merit a loss of points awarded for the assignment (short of awarding a failing grade for that assignment) the professor need not refer the student to the dean's office for formal disciplinary sanctions.

You should also be aware of the UA Student Code of Conduct, designed to promote self-discipline and respect for the rights of others in the university community. Students who violate the standards of conduct outlined in the code are subject to disciplinary sanctions. The code primarily, but not exclusively, covers non-academic issues. Following are some of the types of prohibited conduct:

- Threatening behavior
- Use of false identification or documents
- False fire alarms
- Unauthorized or improper use of university property
- Stalking or discrimination against individuals or groups

The Student Code of Conduct also includes a list of sanctions that can be imposed. They range from administrative holds on student records to warnings, administrative drops from courses, probation, suspension or expulsion. Full details can be found at the following website:
<https://public.azregents.edu/Policy%20Manual/5-308-Student%20Code%20of%20Conduct.pdf>