

## INFO SHEET: PLAGIARISM

This is a translated summary of the "Merkblatt Plagiat" intended for use by international exchange students only. All native speakers of German must read the original document.

### What is Plagiarism?

According to the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, 7<sup>th</sup> ed. (2009),

to plagiarize means "to commit literary theft" and to "present as new and original idea or product derived from an existing source" (Merriam-Webster's *Collegiate Dictionary* 11<sup>th</sup> ed.; 2003; print) and involves two kinds of wrongs. Using another person's ideas, information, or expressions without acknowledging that person's work constitutes intellectual theft. Passing off another person's ideas, information, or expressions as your own to get a better grade or gain some other advantage constitutes fraud. (52)

For an in-depth explanation (with examples) of different forms of plagiarism ("Repeating or Paraphrasing Wording," "Taking a Particularly Apt Phrase," etc), see *MLA Handbook* 56–58.

### What does that mean for my paper?

For term papers as well as bachelor and master theses you are expected to base your arguments on (or argue against) and frame your work within the existing literature on your topic. It is crucial that you can show your familiarity with canonical texts and your ability to research the current scholarly state of the art. Hence, each paper will necessarily refer to numerous other texts.

To adhere to the standards of academic integrity and to make sure your paper's originality will not be doubted, it is essential that you cite properly, indicate each single source and mark all quotes (direct and indirect) clearly as such. Whether you directly quote from other texts (books, articles, online material etc) or paraphrase and summarize them, it is your duty to make sure no original thought by someone else can be mistaken in the context for your paper for your own. (Make sure to differentiate between facts such as "the civil war lasted from 1861 to 1865," which do not need a source, and original ideas, thoughts, statements, and evaluations like "it was the greatest tragedy in US history," which do need a source!)

### Please note:

For your paper to be graded "not passed" due to the detection of plagiarized passages in your work, it is of no consequence whether the plagiarism (in part or total) was the result of negligence or intention. It is your responsibility to familiarize yourself with the guidelines on academic writing.

### **Legal Context**

For more information on the definition of plagiarism as well as useful literature (mostly Germany) please visit [Portal Lehre](#).

There you will also find the respective regulations concerning plagiarism in ASPO and LASPO (Art. 29 / 3 + 4 in [LASPO- / ASPO-Version from July 2015](#) / Art. 27 / 3 + 4 in [LASPO- / ASPO-Version from August 2009](#)). These regulations state that the sanctions students face in cases of plagiarism include that the examination will be graded as “not passed.”

### **How do I avoid plagiarism?**

We advise you to closely read the respective style guides given by each department before starting to work on your paper as they define clearly how to use sources and how to cite properly.

The university also offers several workshops and tutorials on academic writing (see [Servicezentrum innovatives Lehren und Studieren](#) and [Kompass – Tutoren- und Mentorenprogramm](#)).

If you have specific questions, do not hesitate to contact your lecturer!