

## Writing With Integrity

As a Christian institution, Liberty University holds its students to high standards for ethics, both personal and academic. Academic honesty at Liberty means that all work students complete is entirely their own (except as dictated by specific assignment guidelines), both in examination settings and in papers. *The Liberty Way Student Honor Code* section on “Academic Honor” defines and discusses three areas of academic misconduct: academic dishonesty, falsification, and plagiarism.

As defined in *The Liberty Way*, academic misconduct refers to conduct that undermines the academic integrity of Liberty University. Academic dishonesty, falsification, and plagiarism violate the *Student Honor Code* and the standards of academic integrity required of all Liberty students. **Academic dishonesty** involves students’ attempts to improve their academic standing, and/or others’ standing, through dishonest means. **Falsification** occurs whenever any misrepresentation of the truth takes place in connection with course work. The act of **plagiarism** occurs when failing to give credit by citing others’ words, ideas, art/visuals, or information used in papers, projects, or any assignments prepared for a course.

Academically honest students in no way attempt to take credit for another’s words, ideas, or research. Rather, they represent both their own thoughts and those they cite with integrity, accuracy, and respect. Such students do not twist another’s words, use another’s research without proper citations, or steal information from other students’ work.

## Academic Honor

### Academic Dishonesty

**Academic dishonesty** involves students’ attempts to improve their academic standing, and/or others’ standing, through dishonest means. This includes such violations as unauthorized collaboration on assignments or assessments, copying work or allowing others to copy your work, and submitting previously graded work without permissions. Students who assist in any form of academic dishonesty are also held responsible along with the student who accepts such assistance. The complete list of actions that are considered forms of academic dishonesty are detailed in [The Liberty Way](#).

### Falsification

Falsification occurs whenever any misrepresentation of the truth takes place in connection with course work. This area of academic misconduct includes providing false information, altering documents, citing non-existent sources in papers, referencing sources that were not cited or consulted, and various forms of falsifying and distorting data used in assignments. The complete list of actions that are considered forms of falsification are covered in [The Liberty Way](#).

## Plagiarism

*The Liberty Way* lists three broad areas that fall under the heading of “plagiarism.”

- omitting quotation marks or other conventional markings around material quoted from any source
- paraphrasing, summarizing, or quoting a passage from a source without referencing the source
- purchasing/acquiring material of any kind and representing it as one’s own work; replicating another person’s work and submitting it as one’s own work

Defining the terminology used in discussing plagiarism helps students resist the act of intentional plagiarism, as well as avoiding the more common act of unintentional plagiarism. Direct **quotations** use the specific and exact language from another source in your own work. Quotations must be marked with parenthetical citations or footnotes and placed in quotation marks (“”). **Paraphrasing** encompasses the reading of a specific passage from another source and then conveying its meaning in the writer’s own words. A paraphrase must be marked with a parenthetical citation or footnote to credit the original source of the passage. (See [Writing Aid on Effective Paraphrasing](#).) A **summary** involves giving a recap of the main ideas and arguments in an outside source. If summarizing an entire source with a general overview in your own words, simply give credit to the author in the bibliography or “References” page according to your discipline’s style guide. When summarizing a specific passage, you must include a parenthetical citation or footnote after your summary.

### Omitting Quotation Marks

- **Obvious Plagiarism:** A student quotes directly from a source without setting the quotation off with proper punctuation (“”) and without citing the source. **Always** give credit to source material where credit is due!
- **Less Obvious Plagiarism:** A student remembers to punctuate all the longer quotations in a paper but forgets that quotations of only a few words also require quotation marks. A specific phrase that clearly comes from a particular source (e.g., “crucified with Christ”) always needs quotation marks.
- **Hidden Plagiarism:** Thinking that he has paraphrased a source, a student sets off the source material with only a citation, when he actually quoted the text and needed quotation marks as well. Even if you think you’ve put everything in your own words, refer to the source and check to make sure no exact phrases were used. Missing required quotation marks constitutes plagiarism.

### Paraphrasing Specific Passages

- **Obvious Plagiarism:** A student summarizes a key argument that can be traced to a few specific passages but forgets to use a citation. If in doubt, **always** use citations. Simply having a source on your bibliography is not sufficient.
- **Less Obvious Plagiarism:** A student thinks he is summarizing a whole source, but he actually refers only to the introduction, which contains the main arguments. After you have written your summary, look back at the source and make sure you have not echoed any language or sequence of sentences unknowingly. If so, include a citation.
- **Hidden Plagiarism:** A student remembers hearing a specific phrase in the past and thinks it would fit well in the paper. In this case, Google the phrase and if it draws thousands of

hits, it's likely a common expression that would not need citing. If Google sends you to a particular source or set of sources, though, you need to cite it.

### *Using Another Student's Work*

- **Obvious Plagiarism:** A student turns in a paper written by someone else. Another student downloads a paper from the Internet and takes credit for it. Both are cases of clear plagiarism. If you did not write your entire paper yourself, and if every source is not acknowledged and documented, you are plagiarizing.
- **Less Obvious Plagiarism:** A student's classmate makes some intelligent comments on the discussion board that he wants to explore further. He accidentally uses his classmate's ideas and passes them off as his own. For every thought you have, ask yourself where it came from. If you can trace a source, you need to cite that source.
- **Hidden Plagiarism:** A student asks a classmate to look over a paper he wrote and then rewrites his sentences exactly as the classmate suggests. Do *not* let a classmate, spouse, colleague, or friend rewrite your papers under any circumstances. Reach out to your professor for guidance or to the Writing Center for tutor review and assistance.

### When Do I Have to Document?

- When you quote directly, paraphrase, or summarize, cite it!
- When you use an idea in your work that you got from somewhere else, cite it!
- When you refer to a point your instructor made, cite it!
- When you find a source online that gives you useful background information, cite it!
- When you others look over your work, make sure they do no more than proofread!
- When you can trace the origin of your thoughts, phrases, and arguments to any location except your own brain, cite it!

### When Can I Leave Out a Citation?

- When I come up with an idea entirely on my own.
- When I do primary research and want to report the results of my study.
- When I have a thought that grows out of—but is different from—what was discussed in class, on a discussion board, etc.
- When I am talking about my paper with a friend, colleague, instructor, or family member and come to a realization I had not had previously.
- When the fact I refer to is common knowledge. Consider the following examples:
  - If your sources all assume something is true or well known, then you can too. (“Projection and displacement are common phenomena in the counseling profession.”)
  - If your next-door neighbor, spouse, and child all know something, consider it common knowledge. (“Sesame Street is a children’s television show.”)
  - If everyone in your field already knows something, treat it as common knowledge. (“Billy Graham is a well-known evangelist.”)
- **Summary:** If your idea, words, or thought cannot be traced to a specific person, place, or source, you do not have to cite it.

## Other Things to Avoid

Depending on current policy, some incidences of academic misconduct may result in no sanctions imposed, while other violations of academic integrity require more serious sanctions. Keep the following in mind as some common pitfalls to avoid:

- Over-quoting
- Parroting back your professor's lecture
- Recycling an old paper
- Citing the source on the bibliography but not in the in-text citation/footnote
- Using material taken directly from Canvas or another online source
- Using AI or online writing services to write your papers
- Citing Wikipedia, Sparknotes.com, or other questionable sites as scholarly sources

## If in Doubt...

- Cite! Better to over-cite than not to cite when you should
- Apply the feedback received from Writing Center draft reviews of your assignments that address potential plagiarism.
- Reach out to your professor if you are worried you might be plagiarizing. If you approach the professor for help with your concerns before the paper is due, there will be no penalties, and you will have a positive learning experience.
- Read the full explanation and discussion of "[Academic Honor](#)" in [The Liberty Way](#) and note the specific examples of academic dishonesty, falsification, and plagiarism to be sure you're not in violation.

## Reporting Procedure and Appeal Process/Sanctions

Depending on current policy, some incidences of academic misconduct may result in no sanctions imposed, while other violations of academic integrity require more serious sanctions. When suspected academic misconduct has been discovered or reported, *The Liberty Way Student Honor Code* details the reporting procedures and steps taken to address the potential violation. *The Liberty Way* also explains the requirements for submitting a written appeal of any misconduct claims, as well as a full explanation of the appeal process. Refer to the "Reporting and Appeal Process" section of [The Liberty Way](#) for specifics on these actions.

## References

Liberty University Division of Student Affairs. (2022). *The Liberty Way Student Honor Code 2022-2023*. Liberty University. <https://www.liberty.edu/casas/academic-success-center/wp-content/uploads/sites/28/2020/05/Comprehensive-APA-7-Reference-List-uploaded-10182022.pdf>