

AVOIDING PLAGIARISM IN ACADEMIC WRITING

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Abstract: Plagiarism undermines scholarly integrity and the credibility of research. This article analyses definitions, common types, and root causes of plagiarism, and presents evidence-based strategies to prevent it in academic writing. Emphasis is placed on correct citation practices, paraphrasing techniques, use of plagiarism-detection tools, institutional policy, and pedagogical approaches that foster academic honesty. Practical recommendations for authors, instructors, and institutions are provided to reduce incidents and to respond constructively when misconduct occurs. The article concludes with policy implications and directions for future research into evolving challenges such as AI-generated text. [1, p.][2, p.][3, p.]

Keywords: plagiarism, academic integrity, citation, paraphrasing, Turnitin, COPE, policy, prevention, pedagogy, AI.

Аннотация: Плагиат подрывает академическую честность и доверие к исследованиям. В статье рассматриваются определения и основные виды плагиата, причины его возникновения и практические стратегии предотвращения в академическом письме. Особое внимание уделено правилам цитирования, техникам перефразирования, использованию средств обнаружения заимствований, институциональным политикам и практикам обучения, способствующим честности. Даны рекомендации для авторов, преподавателей и вузов по снижению числа нарушений и конструктивному реагированию на них. Также обсуждаются политические последствия и перспективы исследований в условиях роста ИИ-генерированного текста. [2, p.][5, p.]

Ключевые слова: плагиат, академическая честность, цитирование, перефразирование, Turnitin, COPE, политика, профилактика, педагогика, ИИ.

Annotatsiya: Plagiat ilmiy halollikka putur yetkazadi va tadqiqotlarning ishonchliligini pasaytiradi. Ushbu maqolada plagiat ta'riflari, keng tarqalgan turlari va sabablariga hamda akademik yozuvlarda undan qochish strategiyalariga bag'ishlangan. To'g'ri iqtibos keltirish, parafriz qilish texnikalari, plagiatni aniqlovchi vositalardan foydalanish, institut siyosatlariga va o'qitish yondashuvlari ko'rib chiqiladi. Mualliflar, o'qituvchilar va tashkilotlar uchun amaliy tavsiyalar beriladi, shuningdek, sun'iy intellekt tomonidan yaratilgan matnlar kontekstidagi yangi chaqiriqlar tahlil qilinadi. [1, p.][3, p.]

Kalit so'zlar: plagiat, akademik halollik, iqtibos, parafriz, Turnitin, COPE, siyosat, profilaktika, pedagogika, Sun'iy intellekt.

Introduction

Plagiarism — presenting another's words, ideas, or data as one's own without proper acknowledgement — remains one of the most persistent threats to academic integrity across disciplines [1, p.]. Definitions vary slightly between institutions but share the core feature of misattribution: intentional or unintentional appropriation of intellectual property without correct citation [2, p.]. Increased digital access to published material and the rise of internet

repositories have made copying easier, while emergent tools such as generative AI have introduced new complexities in distinguishing original from non-original authorship [5, p.].

Beyond ethics, plagiarism damages the credibility of authors and institutions, distorts the scholarly record, and wastes resources when fraudulent work must be corrected or retracted [6, p.]. Causes of plagiarism are multifactorial: lack of skill in paraphrasing and citation, poor time management, cultural misunderstandings about authorship, pressure to publish, and inadequate instruction in academic writing and research methods [2, p.]. Institutions therefore must adopt both preventive and remedial strategies that combine clear policies, instruction in source use, assessment design that reduces temptation and opportunity, and detection technologies used fairly and pedagogically [3, p.][4, p.].

This paper examines definitions and types of plagiarism, summarizes empirical and policy guidance, and offers practical strategies for students, instructors, and institutions. Emphasis is placed on evidence-based approaches: teaching citation and paraphrase skills, integrating writing support early in curricula, using similarity-detection tools as formative not solely punitive measures, and developing institutional policies aligned with international best practices (e.g., COPE, WPA, UNESCO). The article concludes with a set of actionable recommendations and identifies gaps for future research, especially regarding AI-related textual generation and cross-cultural understanding of academic authorship. [2, p.][3, p.][5, p.].

This is a narrative-review and synthesis drawing on institutional guidance documents, peer-reviewed literature, policy statements, and practical resources from recognized authorities (WPA, APA, COPE, UNESCO, leading universities, and Turnitin). Sources were selected for relevance and trustworthiness; where possible, guidance documents and systematic overviews were prioritized to ground recommendations in established best practice [2, p.][3, p.][5, p.].

Main Body — Results & Discussion

1. Definitions and types of plagiarism

Plagiarism has been defined broadly as presenting someone else's language, ideas, or other original material without adequate acknowledgement [2, p.]. Common types include verbatim copying (word-for-word), mosaic plagiarism (patchwriting — patching together phrases from sources), improper paraphrase, self-plagiarism (reusing one's previous work without disclosure), and idea plagiarism (using concepts without attribution). Institutions often also include appropriation of multimedia or code. The WPA statement highlights that not all incidents are deliberate and emphasizes educational responses alongside sanctions [2, p.].

2. Causes and contextual factors

Empirical studies and institutional reviews point to multiple contributory factors: limited academic writing instruction, students' misunderstanding of citation norms (especially international students from differing academic cultures), time pressure, and “publish or perish” culture for researchers [13, p.][19, p.]. The surge of digital resources has created both opportunity and temptation, while automated paraphrasing tools and generative AI have complicated detection and attribution [5, p.]. Addressing root causes therefore requires pedagogical investment as much as enforcement.

3. Teaching citation, paraphrasing and academic writing skills

Effective prevention starts with teaching. Guidance from APA and university libraries emphasizes active instruction in paraphrase and summary skills, demonstrating proper

quotations, and using in-text citations and reference lists correctly [3, p.][9, p.]. Specific classroom practices shown to reduce plagiarism include: scaffolded assignments that require incremental submission (outline → draft → final), requiring annotated bibliographies, in-class source-evaluation tasks, and explicit modeling of paraphrase vs. close paraphrase. Teaching faculty should use examples of correct and incorrect paraphrase and ask students to practice transforming source text into their own words while citing appropriately [4, p.][14, p.].

4. Assessment design to reduce plagiarism

Assessment design can reduce opportunities to plagiarize. Authentic, discipline-specific tasks requiring reflection, data collection, or local case analysis are harder to copy than generic essays. Randomized topics, viva voce defenses, and staged submissions (with process documentation) increase authenticity and accountability. Turnitin and other similarity reports are more effective when used formatively — as teaching tools to help students learn to interpret matches and revise drafts — rather than purely for punishment [17, p.][23, p.].

5. Use of detection tools and limitations

Similarity-detection tools (Turnitin, iThenticate, etc.) provide reports of text overlap with indexed sources; however, similarity is not identical to plagiarism and must be interpreted by a knowledgeable reviewer [23, p.]. Over-reliance on percentage thresholds is problematic because legitimate quotations and references can raise similarity scores; conversely, cleverly paraphrased plagiarized text may evade simple detection. Best practice combines tool use with human evaluation and an educational approach that shares reports with students for revision [23, p.][11, p.].

6. Institutional policy and response frameworks

Robust academic-integrity frameworks include clear definitions and graduated sanctions, transparent procedures for investigation, support services (writing centers), and educational sanctions (required workshops) as alternatives to punitive measures [2, p.][13, p.]. COPE and UNESCO emphasize the responsibilities of authors, editors, and institutions in preventing and addressing plagiarism; journals and universities should make policies publicly available and consistently applied [5, p.][3, p.]. Policies should differentiate between minor citation errors and deliberate fraud and should ensure due process.

7. Ethical considerations and cultural sensitivity

Cultural differences in notions of authorship and collaboration can lead to unintentional plagiarism. International students may come from educational traditions where rote reproduction is accepted; instructors should proactively teach attribution norms and provide formative feedback [2, p.]. Additionally, the academic community must reconcile the tension between punishment and education: restorative approaches (e.g., supervised rewriting, workshops) often lead to better long-term outcomes than immediate severe disciplinary action.

8. Emerging challenges: AI-generated text and self-plagiarism

Generative AI raises new questions about authorship and originality. Institutions are increasingly clarifying whether and how AI may be used in assignments and require disclosure when it is used. Detecting AI-generated content is difficult and may require task redesign (oral presentations, process logs) or explicit policies that permit or forbid AI-assisted text. Self-plagiarism (redundant publication) is also ethically problematic for researchers; disclosure, citation of prior work, and transparency with editors are required [5, p.][10, p.].

9. Practical recommendations

For students: Learn citation styles early (APA/other) and practice paraphrasing with supervision;[3, p.]

Use draft-based submission and similarity reports formatively;[23, p.]

Keep careful notes linking ideas to sources;

For instructors: Design assessments that demand original engagement (projects, reflections);[17, p.]

Teach paraphrase and citation using examples; return similarity reports with feedback;[4, p.]

Clarify expectations about AI and collaboration.

For institutions: Publish clear, accessible academic-integrity policies and ensure consistent application; [2, p.]

Provide writing centers, workshops, and resources for international students; [13, p.]

Use detection tools responsibly and pair them with education rather than only punitive sanctions. [23, p.]

10. Evidence of effectiveness

Studies and institutional reports indicate that combined strategies (policy + instruction + assessment design) reduce incidents of plagiarism more effectively than punitive measures alone [19, p.][25, p.]. For example, formative use of similarity reports, scaffolded writing tasks, and writing tutoring have been associated with improved student citation practices.

Conclusion

Plagiarism remains a complex phenomenon combining ethical, pedagogical, cultural, and technological dimensions. Effective prevention cannot rely on a single intervention; it requires an integrated approach that balances clear institutional policies, explicit instruction in citation and paraphrase, assessment design that prioritizes original engagement, and responsible use of detection technologies. Institutions must move beyond simplistic percentage thresholds and adopt educative responses that help students develop enduring research and writing skills. Instructors play a central role: by modeling good scholarly practice, scaffolding assignments, and using formative feedback — including similarity-report discussions — teachers turn detection tools into learning tools rather than weapons of punishment.

Policymakers and journal editors must ensure that responses to suspected plagiarism are proportionate and transparent, differentiating inadvertent errors from deliberate fraud. Restorative practices (rewriting, training) are often more effective for student learning, while deliberate and serious misconduct should trigger formal procedures consistent with due process. As AI-generated text becomes more prevalent, universities should update policies to require disclosure, specify permitted uses, and adapt assessment formats to make authorship and process visible.

Future research should evaluate which combinations of instruction, technological support, and assessment redesign yield the largest and most sustained reductions in plagiarism across diverse student populations. Longitudinal studies could clarify whether early interventions produce durable improvements in academic integrity. Finally, global scholarly communities should work collaboratively to provide consistent guidance, recognizing cultural differences while maintaining core standards of attribution and honesty. By embedding integrity into the curriculum and institutional culture, academia preserves the trust that underpins all scholarly endeavour. [2, p.][3, p.][5, p.]

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