



Plagiarism in Publications: All about Being Fair!

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Abstract

Upholding the highest standards of publication ethics is critical for ensuring the integrity of scholarly work, maintaining public trust, and advancing knowledge responsibly in academia. Plagiarism, defined as intellectual theft, is a significant ethical issue that undermines these principles. There are many forms of plagiarism, including direct, self, mosaic, and accidental plagiarism. Plagiarism is prevalent across the globe, but the problem is worse in developing countries due to numerous factors, such as social and economic conditions and lack of knowledge. The digital age has further exacerbated the situation, as easy access to artificial intelligence and online content facilitates plagiarism. To combat this problem, it is essential to recognize the importance of originality and the consequences of plagiarism, including damage to one's professional reputation, legal repercussions, and loss of credibility and trust. Educational institutions and publishers can play a crucial role in promoting a culture of fairness by implementing clear guidelines, providing training on ethical research practices, and enforcing strict consequences for violations. By encouraging an environment that values honesty, transparency, and respect for intellectual property, the academic community can uphold high ethical standards and contribute to the evolution of knowledge with integrity.

Keywords

- ▶ academic integrity
- ▶ citation practices
- ▶ ethical standards
- ▶ originality
- ▶ plagiarism

Introduction

In the realm of academic publishing, upholding the highest standards of publication ethics is of paramount importance.¹ This ensures the integrity of the scholarly record, maintains public trust, and advances knowledge responsibly and ethically. Plagiarism is a critical misconduct and ethical issue encountered in academia. The term plagiarism is described as “the act of plagiarizing,” which derives from the Latin word *plagiarius*, which means “kidnapper.”^{2,3} Oxford University describes plagiarism as presenting someone else's work or ideas as one's own without proper acknowledgment, whether the original material is published or unpublished, in any form (manuscript, printed, or electronic).⁴ This includes material generated using artificial intelligence unless prior

authorization is given, such as to compensate for a student's disability.^{5,6} Plagiarism also encompasses reusing one's own work without citations.⁴ Whether intentional or unintentional, it involves the copying of text, ideas, images, or data. Plagiarism is not limited to the misappropriation of words, it constitutes intellectual theft.

Plagiarism takes various forms, each with its own unique characteristics. The common types of plagiarism include direct, self, mosaic, accidental, paraphrasing, source-based, copy-and-paste, and global plagiarism.^{7–9} Incomplete citations are also a form of plagiarism. Self-plagiarism can be further classified as duplicate publication or salami slicing.^{10,11} There is a rising trend of academic dishonesty in higher education, which is largely driven by technological advancements.¹² The ease of

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accessing information online facilitates plagiarism and unauthorized collaboration, where individuals work together on a project without permission, violating rules that require individual effort.¹³

Of fundamental importance is that academic dishonesty contributes to the challenge of maintaining academic integrity. This study reviews the various types of plagiarism, the impact of plagiarism, tools for detection, best practices for avoidance, and how to foster a culture of fairness. Before this, however, a differentiation is made between information that requires citation and information that does not, followed by a discussion of the importance of originality and integrity.

Common Knowledge versus Information That Requires Citation

Common knowledge refers to information that an average, educated reader would accept as reliable without needing to look it up.¹⁴ This includes facts that are widely recognized and found in multiple credible sources, typically at least five. However, the definition of common knowledge can vary depending on the audience, as different groups may have varying levels of familiarity with certain information. Therefore, it is important to consider the context and audience when determining whether information is common knowledge or requires citation to avoid plagiarism.

Key Categories of Common Knowledge¹⁵

Key categories of common knowledge include the following¹⁵:

- *Widely known facts*: These include scientific facts (e.g., the chemical composition of water) or historical facts (e.g., the discovery of X-rays by Wilhelm Röntgen). They do not require citations.
- *Specialized common knowledge*: This includes facts that are widely known within specific groups (e.g., the normal range of human body temperature) but do not require citation because no one person is credited with discovering them.
- *Ideas and interpretations*: Generally, these need citations unless they are very widely held. For example, specific interpretations of radiological findings usually require citation unless they are universally accepted within the field.

For example, consider the statement, “The discovery of X-rays by Wilhelm Röntgen in 1895 revolutionized medical imaging.” This information includes historical facts that are considered common knowledge in the field of radiology. However, for a layperson, this may not be common knowledge. Therefore, depending on the audience, it may or may not require citation.

Common knowledge includes foundational knowledge specific to a field of study. For instance, radiology students might not need to cite that magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) is a noninvasive imaging technology used to view organs and structures inside the body, as it is basic knowledge within that discipline. However, when stating a fact or

number, it is no longer common knowledge. For example, consider the statement, “According to the latest study, the sensitivity of MRI in detecting breast cancer is approximately 95%, while mammography’s sensitivity is around 87%.” This statement is not common knowledge for any audience and includes detailed statistics that require citation.

The Importance of Integrity and Originality

Integrity refers to a person’s honesty and strong moral principles that are adhered to consistently, regardless of the circumstances. In the academic context, integrity involves upholding the highest standards of honesty, trustworthiness, and ethical behavior. This means conducting research and presenting findings truthfully, avoiding plagiarism, and giving proper credit to the original sources of information. Integrity also encompasses a commitment to fairness, transparency, and accountability in all academic endeavors. By maintaining integrity, individuals and institutions build foundations of trust and respect, which are essential for the credibility and advancement of knowledge. However, the understanding of the factors that influence academic dishonesty varies.¹⁶ For example, a person’s employment status, history of prior cheating, and lack of awareness significantly influence dishonest behaviors.^{12,16}

Originality in academic work is crucial, as it drives innovation, critical thinking, and the advancement of knowledge. It contributes to the academic community by providing new insights, challenging existing paradigms, and promoting intellectual growth. Originality not only enhances the credibility and reputation of researchers but also builds trust within academic and broader communities. It ensures that academia remains a dynamic and evolving field, constantly pushing the boundaries of what is known and understood.

Failing to produce original work can have serious repercussions. Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty undermine the integrity of the academic process, leading to a loss of credibility and trust. Such actions can result in severe academic and professional consequences, including the retraction of published papers, damage to one’s reputation, and potential legal ramifications. Moreover, reliance on unoriginal work stifles creativity and innovation, preventing the development of new ideas and solutions. Ensuring originality is therefore essential for maintaining ethical standards and fostering progress in academic research and education.

Types of Plagiarism

Original work is the cornerstone of academic integrity and fosters creativity, innovation, and trust. When a work is not original, it not only discredits the author but can also lead to serious academic and professional consequences. Throughout history, there have been notable cases of plagiarism across various fields, demonstrating that it is not a new problem, but rather a persistent challenge. The different forms of plagiarism are presented in the follow list^{17,18} and are summarized in ► **Table 1**. Understanding these types

Table 1 Types of plagiarism

Type of plagiarism	Description
Direct plagiarism	Word-for-word transcription of someone else's work without attribution and without quotation marks
Self-plagiarism	Reuse of significant portions of one's own previously published work without acknowledgment
Mosaic plagiarism	Taking phrases, sentences, or paragraphs from multiple sources and piecing them together without proper attribution
Accidental plagiarism	Neglecting to cite sources or unintentionally paraphrasing without attribution
Paraphrasing plagiarism	Rewriting someone else's ideas or information in one's own words without proper credit
Source-based plagiarism	Incorrect attribution or citation of a source, including citing nonexistent or misquoted sources
Incomplete citation	Citing a source but leaving out significant information, making it difficult to find the original source
Copy-and-paste plagiarism	Copying large chunks of text from a source without attribution
Global plagiarism	Taking an entire piece of work written by someone else and passing it off as one's own

of plagiarism helps in avoiding plagiarism and maintaining academic and professional integrity.

- **Direct:** This is the word-for-word transcription of a part of someone else's work without attribution or quotation marks. It is the most blatant form of plagiarism and is easily detectable.
- **Self:** This occurs when a person reuses significant portions of their own previously submitted or published work without acknowledging that it has been used before. This is problematic in academic and professional settings, in which originality is expected for all works submitted.
- **Mosaic:** Also known as patchwriting, this involves taking phrases, sentences, or paragraphs from multiple sources and piecing them together to create a new text, often without proper attribution. This type can be harder to detect, as it mixes copied material with original writing.
- **Accidental:** This happens when a person neglects to cite their sources or unintentionally paraphrases a source without attribution. Despite the lack of intent, this is still considered plagiarism.
- **Paraphrasing:** This occurs when a person rewrites someone else's ideas in their own words but fails to properly credit the source. Even when expressed using different wording, the ideas are still sourced from another person.
- **Source based:** This involves the incorrect attribution or citation of a source. It can include citing a nonexistent source, misquoting a source, or attributing ideas to the wrong source.
- **Incomplete citation:** This type of plagiarism occurs when a person cites a source but leaves out significant information, making it difficult or impossible to find the original source.
- **Copy and paste:** Similar to direct plagiarism, this occurs when large chunks of text are copied and pasted from a source without attribution. It is common in the digital age, where there is easy access to online content.
- **Global:** This happens when someone takes an entire piece of work written by someone else, such as an article, paper, or even a book, and passes it off as their own.

The next section elaborates on a type of plagiarism that is common in today's academic environment.

Unmasking Self-Plagiarism

In academia, self-plagiarism is more prevalent than is recognized. Duplicate publication and salami slicing are two forms of self-plagiarism.¹⁰ The first occurs when there is significant overlap between two studies by the same author(s). No new hypotheses or superior statistical power are presented, which means that the studies essentially share the same data. Salami slicing entails submitting multiple articles derived from the same dataset.¹⁹ These unethical practices often stem from authors' motivations, such as boosting publication numbers for career progression and increasing citation counts. However, they come at a cost—distortion of the literature, a skewed database, an influx of literature without genuine scientific advancement, and a waste of reviewers' and editors' time and resources. Moreover, readers may perceive data as originating from unique samples and may potentially misinterpret the significance of the findings. Detecting such practices can tarnish authors' reputations and jeopardize their careers, leading to disciplinary actions by journals, including submission bans. It is our duty to uphold strict ethical standards and raise awareness about unethical practices.¹¹ In some cases, duplication or data segregation can be legitimate when more than one study is genuinely warranted. However, authors should transparently disclose their data sources and the relationships between studies, leaving no doubts in the minds of editors and readers. Journals may request that authors disclose and submit copies of closely related manuscripts that are published, submitted, or accepted elsewhere.

Global Perspectives on Plagiarism

Plagiarism in developing and developed countries arises from different causes and challenges. In developing nations, economic constraints, lack of resources, and inadequate training exacerbate the issue, with cultural norms like nepotism complicating efforts to maintain integrity. In developed countries, plagiarism is often linked to personal gains, such as career advancement or competition pressures, with severe consequences for those caught. Studies, such as those by Kadayam Guruswami et al, highlight these differences,

showing a lack of resources in developing countries and high-profile misconduct cases in developed ones.¹⁶

Plagiarism in Developing Countries

Avoiding plagiarism and maintaining academic integrity in developing countries presents significant challenges due to a combination of social, economic, cultural, educational, and institutional factors.^{16,17,20} Cultural norms that tolerate unethical behavior, alongside an academic system that emphasizes rote learning, contribute to a lack of understanding and enforcement of plagiarism standards. In addition, many researchers in these regions receive inadequate training in scientific writing and research ethics and are thus unaware of what constitutes plagiarism and how to avoid it. The pressure to publish, driven by institutional demands and career advancement needs, often leads to compromised research practices. Furthermore, a lack of access to modern plagiarism detection tools and limited regulatory oversight allow unethical practices to go unchecked. These factors collectively undermine the integrity of academic and scientific work, making it essential to implement comprehensive educational programs and robust regulatory frameworks to uphold research standards and ethical practices.

The following are several factors that contribute to compromised integrity and plagiarism in developing countries^{21,22}:

- **Economic constraints:** Limited resources and economic hardships can create an environment in which corruption and unethical practices are seen as necessary for survival or advancement. These include bribery, embezzlement, and other forms of corruption.^{23–27}
- **Weak institutional frameworks:** Developing countries often have weaker legal and regulatory frameworks, which can lead to inadequate enforcement of laws and regulations. This lack of oversight can allow unethical behavior to go unchecked.
- **Political instability:** Political uncertainty or instability can undermine efforts to establish and maintain integrity. In unstable governments, enforcing ethical standards and transparency may become a lower priority. While political instability can occur anywhere, it is more common in developing countries.²⁸
- **Cultural factors:** In some cultures, practices such as nepotism or favoritism may be deeply ingrained, making it challenging to establish merit-based systems and fair practices.²⁹
- **Lack of education and awareness:** A lower level of education and awareness about the importance of integrity and ethical standards can contribute to their erosion. This is particularly true in areas where education systems are underdeveloped.
- **Limited access to information:** In environments where access to information is restricted, it can be difficult to hold individuals and institutions accountable for unethical behavior.
- **International influence and pressure:** Developing countries sometimes face pressure from international corporations

or governments that may not prioritize integrity in their dealings. This external influence can exacerbate internal challenges.

- **Resource mismanagement:** Due to limited resources, there might be mismanagement or inefficient use of available resources, which can further impede efforts to uphold integrity.
- **Social inequities:** Prevalent social and economic inequalities can lead to a sense of injustice and disillusionment, which might prompt unethical practices as a means of leveling the playing field.
- **Inadequate whistleblower protection:** Lack of protection for those who report unethical or illegal activities can discourage individuals from speaking out against corruption and malpractice.

Plagiarism in Developed Countries

Plagiarism is not confined to developing countries; it is also pervasive in developed nations. It not only damages the reputations of individual authors but also has a detrimental impact on broader academic and professional communities.³⁰ In developed societies, plagiarism undermines the credibility of institutions, breeds distrust in scholarly publications, and ultimately hampers the advancement of knowledge and innovation.³¹

Notable cases highlight the severe consequences and widespread impact of such unethical behavior. For example, Martin Luther King Jr. was found to have plagiarized significant portions of his doctoral dissertation at Boston University.³² An investigation revealed that King had copied from other scholars' works without proper citations, which tarnished his academic reputation.

Another prominent example is the case of Paul McCrory, a leading concussion expert whose work shaped much of the sports world's policies on head injuries.³³ McCrory resigned from his role as chair of the Concussion in Sport Group following multiple allegations of plagiarism. Investigations revealed that he had plagiarized work from various sources, including a *Washington Post* journalist and the author of a book on traumatic brain injury in children and adolescents. These findings led to the retraction of several of his articles and significant damage to his professional reputation.

The implications and consequences of plagiarism are discussed in the subsequent sections.

Ethical Implications

Plagiarism severely undermines the ethical standards of academic and professional communities and affects authors in the following ways³⁴:

- **Compromises integrity:** Engaging in plagiarism or being the victim of it tarnishes an author's reputation. Academic and professional integrity is fundamental to credibility and trustworthiness. Once a person's integrity has been compromised, it is challenging to regain the respect of peers and the public.
- **Erodes trust:** Trust is a cornerstone of academic and professional relationships. Plagiarism erodes this trust,

leading to a loss of confidence in the author’s work and the associated institutions. This distrust can extend to colleagues, funding bodies, and publishers.

- **Impacts originality:** For authors whose work is plagiarized, it can be disheartening and demotivating. The theft of their intellectual property diminishes the value of their original contributions and deters them from pursuing further innovation and creativity.

Legal Consequences

Plagiarism can also result in significant legal repercussions for authors, as follows:

- **Copyright infringement:** Plagiarism and copyright infringement are distinct, though they may overlap. Both involve the improper use of someone else’s work, but they differ in nature and consequences. Plagiarism is an ethical violation, whereas copyright infringement is a legal violation that occurs when a copyrighted work is used, reproduced, or distributed without the permission of the copyright holder. Plagiarism focuses on the misattribution of ideas, while copyright infringement concerns the unauthorized use of a specific expression, such as text, images, or music. In some cases, both can occur simultaneously, such as when a work is copied without permission and claimed as one’s own. While plagiarism violates ethical standards, copyright infringement can lead to legal consequences, including fines and lawsuits. **►Table 2** summarizes the key differences between plagiarism and copyright infringement. Plagiarism may involve the unauthorized use of another’s copyrighted material, leading to copyright infringement lawsuits. Authors found guilty of this can face substantial fines and legal fees. In severe cases, they may also be required to pay damages to the original creator.³⁵
- **Retractions and career damage:** Publications that are found to contain plagiarized material are often retracted.³⁶ This not only discredits the specific work but also damages the author’s overall career. Retractions are publicly recorded and can have long-lasting negative impacts on an author’s professional trajectory.
- **Employment consequences:** In academic settings, plagiarism can lead to job termination, loss of tenure, and exclusion from professional associations. For students, it can result in expulsion and a permanent mark on their

academic records, affecting their future career opportunities.

- **Funding and grants:** Authors found guilty of plagiarism may lose current and future funding opportunities. Granting agencies and sponsors are unlikely to support researchers with a history of unethical behavior.

Maintaining academic and professional integrity is thus essential to upholding the value of original work and fostering a trustworthy and innovative environment.

Loss of Credibility and Trust

Plagiarism has a profound impact on the credibility of the academic community. Its detection casts doubt on the integrity of the research process and the reliability of scholarly work. This loss of credibility can have the following effects:

- **Undermines academic standards:** The discovery of plagiarized work challenges the academic standards upheld by institutions and journals. It suggests that the peer review and editorial processes are flawed, leading to questions about the validity of other published works.
- **Hinders academic progress:** The propagation of plagiarized work can stall academic progress by circulating unoriginal ideas and misleading findings. Researchers may waste valuable time and resources building on or refuting plagiarized work rather than advancing genuine knowledge.³⁷
- **Diminishes institutional reputation:** Institutions associated with high-profile plagiarism cases may suffer reputational damage.³⁸ This can affect their ability to attract high-caliber students, faculty, and funding, thereby impacting their overall academic standing.

Plagiarism also breeds distrust in scholarly publications, which can have far-reaching consequences:

- **Questioning authorship:** Repeated instances of plagiarism can lead readers and researchers to question the authenticity of published works.³⁹ This skepticism can extend to authors who have not engaged in plagiarism, unfairly tarnishing their reputations.
- **Erosion of peer review confidence:** The peer review process is a cornerstone of academic publishing. Plagiarism undermines confidence in this process, leading to doubts about the effectiveness of peer reviewers in detecting and preventing unethical behavior.

Table 2 Key differences between plagiarism and copyright infringement

Aspect	Plagiarism	Copyright Infringement
Nature	Ethical violation (not illegal)	Legal violation (governed by copyright law)
Offense against	The original author (lack of credit)	The copyright holder (unauthorized use of the work)
Scope	Applies to ideas and intellectual credit	Applies to specific expressions of ideas (e.g., text, images)
Consequences	Academic or professional penalties (no legal action)	Legal penalties, including fines and lawsuits
Focus	Proper attribution and intellectual honesty	Maintaining control and revenue from a work

- **Reduced engagement:** Distrust in scholarly publications can lead to reduced engagement with academic literature. Researchers may become hesitant to cite or rely on published studies, fearing that they are based on unoriginal or fraudulent data.
- **Impact on collaboration:** Collaborative research efforts rely on relationships built on mutual trust and respect. Plagiarism can damage these relationships, making it difficult to establish and maintain productive academic partnerships.

Therefore, maintaining rigorous ethical standards is essential to preserving the credibility of the academic community and the trustworthiness of scholarly research and publications.

Plagiarism in the Digital Age

The advent of the digital age has significantly transformed the landscape of plagiarism. With the vast amount of information readily available online, the ease of accessing, copying, and disseminating content has increased, leading to a rise in plagiarism cases across various fields.⁴⁰⁻⁴³ The following features of the digital environment have contributed to the rise of plagiarism:

- **Accessibility and anonymity:** The internet offers an unprecedented level of accessibility to information. Students and professionals can easily find articles, papers, and other resources through a simple search. This ease of access, combined with the anonymity that the internet can provide, has made it tempting for individuals to copy and paste content without proper attribution. The vast amount of digital information available also makes it challenging for educators and editors to detect instances of plagiarism without the aid of sophisticated tools.
- **Advanced detection tools:** As plagiarism has increased, so have the tools designed to combat it.⁴⁴ Software such as Turnitin, iThenticate, and Copyscape use advanced algorithms to detect similarities between submitted work and existing content across the web and databases (► **Table 3**). These tools have become essential in academic institutions and publishing houses to uphold the integrity of scholarly work. However, their effectiveness relies on proper implementation and the willingness of institutions to enforce

Table 3 Tools to find plagiarism

Tool	Description
Turnitin	Uses advanced algorithms to detect similarities between submitted work and existing content across the web and databases
iThenticate	A plagiarism detection tool commonly used in academic institutions and publishing houses
Copyscape	Detects copied content across the web, helping authors ensure originality

strict plagiarism policies. The readers can also be directed to helpful resources like <https://www.plagiarism.org/>.

- **New forms of plagiarism:** The digital age has given rise to new forms of plagiarism. Beyond the traditional copy-and-paste method, individuals now engage in more sophisticated tactics, such as the following:
 - **Patchwriting:** Combining phrases and sentences from multiple sources to create new text without proper attribution.⁴⁵
 - **Source-based plagiarism:** Misrepresenting or fabricating sources to support one's work.
 - **Paraphrasing tools:** Using software to rephrase content while retaining the original meaning, often without giving credit to the original source.⁴⁶

The consequences of digital plagiarism can be severe, both ethically and legally. Ethically, it undermines the trust and credibility of academic and professional communities. Legally, individuals caught plagiarizing can face lawsuits, fines, and damage to their reputations. Institutions are increasingly emphasizing the importance of academic integrity and implementing rigorous training programs to educate students and professionals about the ethical use of digital content.

Education plays a crucial role in combating plagiarism in the digital age. Teaching students about the importance of original work, proper citation practices, and the ethical use of information is essential. Institutions are increasingly adopting comprehensive plagiarism policies and incorporating lessons on academic integrity into their curricula to foster a culture of honesty and respect for intellectual property.

Varying Impact of Plagiarism Across Research Paper Sections

Plagiarism in all sections of a research paper is important, but its impact can vary depending on the section. Plagiarism in the “Results” section is particularly critical because the results contribute directly to the originality and validity of the findings.⁴⁷⁻⁴⁹ Unoriginal or copied results can mislead readers and undermine the integrity of the research. On the other hand, while plagiarism in the “Methods” section may not have the same immediate impact, it is still significant. The methods must be original or properly cited to ensure transparency, allowing other researchers to replicate the experiment accurately. Proper citation in the “Methods” section is essential for maintaining the credibility and reliability of the research.

Best Practices to Avoid Plagiarism

Incorporating best practices to avoid plagiarism is crucial for maintaining academic and professional integrity.^{50,51} The following are some best practices to help ensure that your work is original and properly cited^{52,53}:

- Understand what constitutes plagiarism:
 - **Know the types:** Familiarize yourself with the different forms of plagiarism, including direct, mosaic, self, and

- accidental plagiarism. Understanding these types will help you recognize and avoid them in your work.
- *Differentiate common knowledge*: Learn to distinguish between common knowledge, which does not require citation, and unique ideas or specific data that must be credited to the original source.
 - Properly cite sources:
 - *Use citation styles*: Adhere to the appropriate citation style (e.g., APA, MLA, Chicago) required by your institution or publication. Each style has specific rules for citing books, articles, Web sites, and other sources.
 - *Use proper in-text citations and bibliographies*: Ensure every source you reference in the text is included in the bibliography or works cited page. In-text citations should be accurate and complete.
 - Paraphrase correctly:
 - *Use your own words*: When paraphrasing, make sure to rewrite the original text entirely in your own words. Simply changing a few words or rearranging sentences is not enough.
 - *Cite the original source*: Even when paraphrasing, you must credit the original author. Include a citation to acknowledge the source of the idea.
 - Use quotation marks for direct quotes:
 - *Direct quotations*: When using the exact words of a source, place them within quotation marks and provide a proper citation. This clearly indicates which parts of the text are not your original words.
 - *Limit quotations*: Use direct quotes sparingly. Rely more on paraphrasing and summarizing to demonstrate your understanding of the source material.
 - Keep track of your sources:
 - *Organize your research*: Maintain detailed notes of all the sources you consult. Use tools such as citation managers (e.g., EndNote, Zotero, Mendeley) to keep track of your references.
 - *Document every source*: Even if you are unsure whether you will use a source, document it. This practice helps ensure that you do not overlook citing a source later.
 - Conduct original research:
 - *Develop unique ideas*: Focus on generating your own insights and conclusions. Base your work on original analyses, experiments, and interpretations.
 - *Properly attribute collaborations*: If you collaborate with others, clearly acknowledge their contributions to avoid unintentional plagiarism.
 - Review and revise:
 - *Check for plagiarism*: Use plagiarism detection tools to review your work before submission. These tools can help identify sections that may need proper attribution.
 - *Revise and edit*: Thoroughly revise your work to ensure that all sources are accurately cited and that your paraphrasing is original.
 - Seek guidance:
 - *Ask for help*: If you are uncertain about how to cite a source or whether something constitutes plagiarism, seek guidance from a professor, librarian, or writing center.
 - *Educate yourself*: Participate in workshops and training sessions on academic integrity and proper citation practices.

By following these best practices, you can avoid plagiarism and contribute to a culture of honesty and integrity in academic and professional settings. The golden rule is, “When in doubt, always cite.” Best practices for avoiding plagiarism are summarized in ► **Table 4**.

Roles of other stakeholders:

- **Publishers** must ensure thorough plagiarism checks using advanced detection tools before publication and follow up on any reported cases of misconduct.

Table 4 Best practices to avoid plagiarism

Practice	Description
Understand what constitutes plagiarism	Familiarize with different types of plagiarism and differentiate common knowledge from unique ideas
Properly cite sources	Use appropriate citation styles and ensure accurate and complete in-text citations and bibliographies
Paraphrase correctly	Rewrite original text entirely in one’s own words and cite the original source
Use quotation marks for direct quotes	Place exact words from a source within quotation marks and provide proper citation
Keep track of your sources	Organize research and use citation managers to document all consulted sources
Conduct original research	Develop unique ideas based on original analysis and attribute collaborations properly
Review and revise	Use plagiarism detection tools to review work before submission and ensure accurate citations
Seek guidance	Ask for help from professors, librarians, or writing centers and participate in workshops on academic integrity

- **Institutional administration** should provide proper training on research ethics, offer resources such as plagiarism detection tools, and enforce clear guidelines on academic misconduct.

Roles of Stakeholders in Preventing Plagiarism

While best practices are primarily aimed at authors, other stakeholders play crucial roles. For example, reviewers should diligently check for plagiarism during the peer-review process, utilizing available tools and their knowledge. Publishers and academic institutions can play a vital role in preventing plagiarism by implementing clear guidelines, providing education about plagiarism, and enforcing consequences for violations.

- **Implementing clear guidelines:** Publishers and institutions must establish comprehensive and accessible guidelines outlining what constitutes plagiarism and the importance of academic integrity.⁵⁴ These guidelines should be prominently available to all members of the academic community, ensuring that everyone is aware of the expected standards.
- **Providing education:** Education is critical in preventing plagiarism.^{53,54} Institutions should incorporate training on proper citation practices, the ethical use of sources, and the consequences of plagiarism into their curricula. Workshops, seminars, and online courses can help students, researchers, and faculty understand the nuances of plagiarism and how to avoid it.
- **Enforcing consequences:** To uphold academic integrity, publishers and institutions must enforce consequences for plagiarism consistently and fairly.⁵⁵ This includes implementing robust plagiarism detection tools, conducting thorough investigations when plagiarism is suspected, and imposing appropriate penalties, such as retractions, loss of funding, or academic probation.

By taking these steps, publishers and academic institutions can foster a culture of honesty and respect for intellectual property, thus ensuring the integrity of academic and professional work.

Consequences if Plagiarism Is Identified after Publication

If plagiarism is identified after publication, the following consequences may occur:

- **Retraction or correction:** The paper may be retracted, or a correction might be issued. The journal publisher often takes responsibility for this.^{56,57}
- **Author's responsibility:** The author remains responsible for the integrity of their work, even after the copyright is transferred.^{37,58} The author may face professional consequences such as damage to reputation, legal actions, and bans from publishing.
- **Publisher's responsibility:** The publisher has a duty to inform the readers of the issue, retract the article if necessary, and uphold academic integrity.⁵⁹

- **Change in responsibility with copyright transfer:** Even after copyright transfer, the author remains responsible for the content, especially regarding ethical misconduct like plagiarism. However, the publisher holds the right to issue retractions or corrections.

Promoting a Culture of Fairness

To foster a culture of fairness, academic institutions and publishers must prioritize ethical research and writing practices. This includes providing clear guidelines on academic integrity, offering training in proper citation methods, and highlighting the importance of originality in scholarly work. Recognizing and rewarding original contributions encourages researchers to pursue innovative ideas and respect intellectual property. By creating an environment that values fairness and transparency, institutions can ensure that all members of the academic community are committed to maintaining high ethical standards.

Conclusion

In conclusion, maintaining academic integrity is essential for ensuring the credibility and advancement of knowledge. Avoiding plagiarism is both a moral responsibility and a legal obligation. Upholding honesty, fairness, and respect within scholarly work preserves the trustworthiness of research and ensures its ethical foundation. Each member of the academic community must be vigilant in their research practices, respecting intellectual property and contributing to a culture of integrity. By doing so, we ensure that our contributions to academia remain original, ethically sound, and legally compliant, thereby safeguarding the progress of knowledge.

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None declared.

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