

PLAGIARISM GUIDELINES

Niskanen Center

June 2021

PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS

- Per the employee handbook:
 - Policy staff are expected to spend 40 percent of their time on their own research and writing
 - The quality of the Niskanen Center's work should meet the highest standards in academia: factual, well-written, intelligently analyzed, and accessible to the intended audience

ORIGINAL RESEARCH AND WRITING

- The highest standards of research and writing necessitate original work
- Plagiarism is the opposite of original work: it is the representation of another author's language, thoughts, ideas, or expressions as one's own work
 - Direct plagiarism
 - Self plagiarism
 - Mosaic plagiarism
 - Accidental plagiarism

(Source: Bowdoin College)

DIRECT PLAGIARISM

Source: Bowdoin College

- Direct plagiarism is the word-for-word transcription of another's work, without attribution and without quotation marks.
- Deliberate plagiarism of another's work is grounds for termination

SELF PLAGIARISM

Source: Bowdoin College

- Self-plagiarism occurs when you use previous work in a new publication without proper citation.
 - EXAMPLE 1: If you are using language from a commentary you previously published in a Mailchimp, you must link to your own work.
 - EXAMPLE 2 (consider context/messaging): Using language from a Niskanen report in a one-pager for a Hill office, use your discretion in determining whether to link or footnote the source.

MOSAIC PLAGIARISM

Source: Bowdoin College

- Mosaic plagiarism occurs when you borrow phrases from a source without using quotation marks, or
- Find synonyms for the author's language while keeping to the same general structure and meaning of the original
- Sometimes called "patch writing," this kind of paraphrasing, **whether intentional or not**, is not acceptable, even with proper citation
- **EXAMPLE:**
 - *"Barack and I were raised with so many of the same values: that you work hard for what you want in life; that your word is your bond and you do what you say you're going to do; that you treat people with dignity and respect, even if you don't know them, and even if you don't agree with them" (Michelle Obama, 2008).*
 - *"From a young age, my parents impressed on me the values that you work hard for what you want in life, that your word is your bond and you do what you say and keep your promise, that you treat people with respect" (Melania Trump, 2016).*
 - Hard work = success; honesty; respect

ACCIDENTAL PLAGIARISM

Source: Bowdoin College

- Accidental plagiarism occurs when a person neglects to cite their sources, or misquotes their sources, or unintentionally paraphrases a source by using similar words, groups of words, and/or sentence structure without attribution.
- Lack of intent does not absolve Niskanen authors of responsibility for plagiarism.
- We will take cases of accidental plagiarism seriously.

CAN I PLAGIARIZE SOMEONE'S IDEAS?

- Plagiarism isn't just about using someone's words. It also includes repurposing a thought or fact that is not common knowledge
- Put another way (per trademark law): A helpful rule of thumb: if you are either (a) writing prose, (b) displaying a figure, or (c) presenting an idea that isn't common knowledge which you have taken in some way from someone else, then it should be considered plagiarism if there is a "likelihood of confusion" for someone reading the work to believe it is your own rather than someone else's.

PLAGIARISM AND SOCIAL MEDIA

- Rule of thumb: Link, link, link
- It's generally okay to plagiarize yourself on social media, but don't take ideas, messaging, or quotes from other people and present them as your own.
Retweet!

AVOIDING PLAGIARISM

Original writing

- Reading source material
 - Do not copy and paste from sources
 - If building an outline of source material, cite quotes, passages, and thoughts as if it were the final draft
 - Once finished reading a source, close it, step away for a few minutes, and then paraphrase your understanding of the material after some time has passed
- Schedule time to think!
- When in doubt, link/cite!

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

- Do you understand the material thoroughly enough to write about it? If not, check with your director
- Do you have too much on your plate? Too much work won't allow you to properly digest and analyze sources

POTENTIAL CONSEQUENCES: WHAT CAN I EXPECT?

- Expectation of original work
- Violations will be handled on a case-by-case basis, in context
 - All instances of plagiarism must be reported by directors to the VP of Policy and HR
 - If you realize you made an error, notify your director so it can be corrected!
 - If someone else recognizes your error, your director will reach out to talk about the incident.
 - At a minimum, any employee found to plagiarize work **must develop a mitigation plan** to avoid repeated mistakes
- Any work published by the Niskanen Center found to contain plagiarism will be removed from the website; the author may be asked to issue an apology and/or correction
- Offenders may be subject to termination

THE END.

- More guidance from HR and clarity about sourcing our work from the upcoming Style Guide update
- Questions?