




## Avoiding Plagiarism

Know what plagiarism is:  
ignorance will not excuse a violation.

Intentional plagiarism is deliberate copying or use of another's work without credit. Unintentional plagiarism can result from not knowing citation standards, from sloppy research and poor note-taking, or from cutting and pasting of electronic sources.

Additionally, failure to proofread and verify all components of your paper from cover page to reference page can also result in unintentional plagiarism. Both intentional and unintentional plagiarism are violations of The University of Texas at San Antonio Student Code of Conduct.



## Additional UTSA Resources:

### The Writing Center

ATTN: Marguerite Newcomb  
Main Campus: HSS 3.03.08 or HSS 2.02.22  
210-458-5336  
DT Campus: FS 4.432  
210-458-2753

### Student Judicial Affairs

Main Campus: UC 2.02.18  
210-458-4720

### Honors Alliance (Student Organization)

ATTN: Charlin Jones  
Main Campus: UC III Honors Alliance Office  
210-458-7273

### The Graduate School

1604 Campus: M.S. 4.01.50  
210-458-4330

### Tomás Rivera Center

Learning Assistance  
Main Campus: UC 1.01.02  
210-458-4694  
DT Campus: Durango Bldg. 2.114  
210-458-2838

### UTSA Library

Main Campus: JPL 2nd Floor  
210-458-4570  
ATTN: Stefanie Wittenbach  
Assistant Dean for Collections

*(Updated 04/08)*

*Information is subject to change without notice and was provided by the Office of Student Judicial Affairs, UTSA  
[www.utsa.edu/osja](http://www.utsa.edu/osja) and 210-458-4720*

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This publication is not the official statement of University discipline policies and procedures. The official policies are stated in the UTSA Student Code of Conduct.



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## Information Guide for Students

The University of Texas at San Antonio  
Office of Student Judicial Affairs  
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San Antonio, Texas 78249

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Fax: 210-458-4715  
[www.utsa.edu/osja](http://www.utsa.edu/osja)





## What is Plagiarism?

Plagiarism means using another's work without giving proper credit. You must put others' words in quotation marks and cite your source(s). You must also give proper citations when using others' ideas, even if those ideas are paraphrased in your own words.

**WORK** includes original ideas, strategies, research, art graphics, computer programs, music, and other creative or written expression.

**SOURCE** includes published and unpublished works:

- books, magazines, websites, movies, photos, plays, digitized media and newspapers
- class lectures, handouts, speeches, other students' papers and more

### Misperceptions about Information on the Internet

- Some students view all information on the Internet as common knowledge simply because it is free, publicly shared, widely available, and indeed, quite "common." Nevertheless, the language, ideas, and work in electronic sources, even those without an identifiable author, must be cited.

## Meeting the Demands of University Level Academic Work

To avoid plagiarizing unintentionally:

- keep accurate notes when doing research
- educate yourself on university plagiarism policies
- master the procedure for citing sources
- learn to paraphrase without borrowing the language or structure used in an original source.

To avoid the temptation to plagiarize intentionally:

- Visit The Writing Center where staff can help you edit a paper or plan an essay. For more information on the services at The Writing Center at UTSA, link to: <http://www.utsa.edu/twc/>
- Visit your instructor during office hours and ask questions in class to clarify course requirements or instructions for assignments.
- Avoid procrastinating assignments to the point where desperation sets in. Plan time to outline, write, and revise a paper/essay.
- Consider the consequences of plagiarism before you try passing off the work of another as your own. Missing a deadline or receiving a low score will not tarnish your academic record in the same way that sanctions from Student Judicial Affairs will.

## Distinguishing Common Knowledge from Original Work

**Do I need to cite facts that everyone knows (i.e., common knowledge)?**

Facts can be viewed as common knowledge if they are generally known and widely established. The term "common knowledge" implies that the audience and the author have agreed on certain facts, so accepted common knowledge might vary depending on your audience. For example, dates referring to well known events can be viewed as common knowledge.

Be wary, however, when treating information as common knowledge. When making this judgment, consider whether the information is both widely known and undisputed. While some facts may be viewed as common knowledge, the presentation of those facts is considered the unique work of an author. Again, when using the language or words of another, you must properly acknowledge his or her work.

**\*\*Student Tip: Read your syllabus carefully and note the style of citation listed and check out the guide at the UTSA Library.**

