What is academic misconduct?

Any action that may create an unfair advantage over others, e.g. plagiarism, cheating, misrepresentation, etc. See examples at: http://libguides.wits.ac.za/plagiarism_citation_and_referencing.

What is Plagiarism?

Wits’ official definition of plagiarism is “the unjustified taking of the ideas, thoughts and writings contained in a particular source and submitting it as if the ideas, thoughts and writings are your own, whereas in fact they are not”. Plagiarism can be a copyright infringement if the moral rights of authors are negatively affected.

To avoid plagiarism –

- When using others’ works (e.g. printed, electronic, images, films, logos, music, multimedia, etc.) in your own work, you must always acknowledge them, even if the material is free.
- If you take direct text from someone else’s work, you must use quotation marks (or indent 5 spaces, if more than 40 words) and acknowledge the source in your in-text citation and reference list. If you paraphrase, you do not need to use quotation marks but you must still give proper acknowledgment.
- Get permission, when necessary (e.g. when using images, long quotations or extracts, multimedia clips, or for adaptations, translations, digitisation, etc.)

How are copyright infringement and plagiarism dealt with at Wits?

You will be strictly disciplined in terms of the Wits Disciplinary Code. Authors/publishers may also take civil/criminal action against you. The law provides for a fine up to R5000 per infringement (i.e. for each item copied illegally) and/or up to 3 years imprisonment for the 1st conviction. The maximum fine and/or imprisonment penalty for a 2nd conviction is R10 000 and/or 5 years.

Remember – ignorance of the law is no excuse. Become ‘copyright correct’ today!

Useful websites:

- Wits Copyright Information: http://libguides.wits.ac.za/Wits_Copyright_Guidelines
- Copyright & Related Issues: http://libguides.wits.ac.za/Copyright_and_Related_Issues
- Plagiarism, Citation & Referencing Styles: http://libguides.wits.ac.za/plagiarism_citation_and_referencing
- Open Access, A2K & Scholarly Communication: http://libguides.wits.ac.za/openaccess_a2k_scholarly_communication
- Open Educational Resources: http://libguides.wits.ac.za/Open_Educational_Resources
- Scholarly Research & Related Resources: http://libguides.wits.ac.za/Scholarly_Research_Resources
- Subject LibGuides: http://libguides.wits.ac.za/browse.php

For information or advice:

Mrs Denise Nicholson
Scholarly Communications Librarian
1st Floor Werfenwolfer Library

Tel: 011 717 1929
Fax: 011 717 1946
Email: Denise.Nicholson@wits.ac.za

www.wits.ac.za

The Library
Scholarly Communications & Copyright Services Office

Copyright & Plagiarism
Ignorance of the law is no excuse!