Study Skills 3: Referencing and Plagiarism

What is referencing and why is it important?

A reference is a note in your assignment which says if you have referred to or been influenced by another person’s work such as a book, website, or article. Referencing helps avoid **plagiarism.**

* Plagiarism is considered a form of cheating because you are copying someone else’s work and pretending the work of others is your own. This can be done both accidentally and on purpose.
* Plagiarism is forbidden in university assignments and could even result in someone being removed from their university course.

**When do I need to use a reference?**

The following need to be referenced:

* Direct quotations from somebody else’s work
* Facts, figures, or statistics

If you are still not sure if something you have used in your essay needs to be referenced, send your tutor a message on the VLE and they can help you decide if it needs one. But as a rule, if in doubt, reference!

**What do I need to construct a good reference?**

When carrying out research, you may find useful information to use in your assignments. It is good to make a note of *what* the information is you have found, details of *where* you found it, and *who*’s work or writing it is. This information will help you construct a good reference. You can use the table below, or make your own one, to record all of this.

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| **What information have I found?** | **Details of where I found this, and who it is by** |
| *Example: Being a vegetarian, a non-smoker, and doing regular exercise can increase life-expectancy by up to 15 years.* | Page 11 in the Journal of Sustainable Development, published in 2012. Article titled ‘Vegetarian Diets: A way towards a sustainable society’. Written by Arto Salonen and Tuula Helne. |
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