Department of Chemistry, Imperial College – Plagiarism Policy

The Department and College take plagiarism very seriously. All work submitted as part of the requirements for any examination (including coursework) of Imperial College London must be expressed in your own words and incorporate your own ideas and judgments.

Plagiarism is the presentation of another person’s thoughts, words or graphics/art work as though they were your own. This includes e.g. copying text, figures, schemes and graphs from another source such as a book, an academic article/paper or the internet without acknowledging it explicitly. Plagiarism must be avoided, with particular care in coursework, essays and reports written in your own time. Note that you are encouraged to read and criticise the work of others as much as possible. You are expected to incorporate this in your thinking and in your coursework and assessments. But you must acknowledge and label/cite your sources.

Direct quotations (i.e. anything that is "copy-pasted") from the published or unpublished work of others, from the internet, or from any other source must always be clearly identified as such. A full reference to their source must be provided in the proper form and quotation marks used. This means you must provide the citation directly after information is given and, in the case of figures/schemes/graphs indicate explicitly in the caption that this has been taken from the literature: e.g. “Figure taken from ref. X” or “Scheme adapted from ref. Y”. Remember that a series of short quotations from several different sources, if not clearly identified as such, constitutes plagiarism just as much as a single unacknowledged long quotation from a single source. Equally, if you summarise another person’s ideas or judgments, figures, diagrams or software, you must refer to that person in your text (and in the case of figures/schemes/graphs in the caption of the corresponding graphic), and include the work referred to in your reference list. Please see ‘addendum 3’ (below, ‘How to correctly reference material’) for examples of how to correctly reference material. If in doubt, ask for advice from academic staff in the Department about the appropriate use and correct acknowledgement of other sources in your own work.

The direct and unacknowledged repetition of your own work which has already been submitted for assessment can constitute self-plagiarism (see also ‘addendum 2’: ‘Plagiarism in the context of MSci Research Reports’, below). Where group work is submitted, this should be presented in an approved manner. You should therefore consult the supervisor of the group assignment, your tutor or another member of academic staff if you are in any doubt about what is permissible. You should be aware that you have a collective responsibility for the integrity of group work submitted for assessment.

The use of the work of another student, past or present, constitutes plagiarism. Where work is used without the consent of that student, this will normally be regarded as a major offence of plagiarism.

Plagiarism will not be tolerated in the Department and if it is detected in a student’s work presented for assessment, it will be reported, together with the evidence, to the course supervisor, Head of Teaching Section and the Director of Undergraduate Studies who will take appropriate action which may result in an allegation of plagiarism/cheating. Cases of suspected plagiarism/cheating will be dealt with by the College Registry under the College’s Examination Offences Policy. The penalty for proven cases can vary from loss of marks to expulsion from the College.

NB. This policy is adapted from the College’s policy: http://www3.imperial.ac.uk/registry/exams/examoffences (accessed 12.08.2010).

ADDENDUM 1: Plagiarism in the Context of Laboratory Work:

Having discussions about experiments and experimental write-ups/reports with a lab partner or other colleagues, postgraduate demonstrators or staff does not constitute plagiarism and is encouraged. However, copying someone else’s lab book or lab write-up/report (by manually re-typing or by cut-and-pasting) and submitting this as your work constitutes plagiarism. Similarly, presenting someone else’s spectra (whether obtained as an e- or hard copy) as your own constitutes plagiarism.
In order to ensure that you do not plagiarise, the sharing of lab books and lab write-ups/reports (whether as e- or hard copies) is forbidden by the Department – you must neither send nor receive these documents. You should therefore never directly use a colleague’s lab book or lab write-up/report as a source for writing your own.

It is normal practice for pre-recorded spectra to be issued for some experiments; these should be referenced accordingly. In certain circumstances, such as when an experiment has failed, an academic staff lab coordinator may authorise you to use spectra recorded by another person in order for you to interpret these data for inclusion in your lab write-up/report. This must only be done with the express written permission of the academic staff lab coordinator and this authorisation must be included in your lab report and cited appropriately.

ADDENDUM 2: Plagiarism in the Context of MSci Research Reports:

We recognise that your Introduction and Aims and Objectives sections may have substantial overlap in terms of content with your Research Proposal. Consequently, for these sections, a reasonably lenient threshold for self-plagiarism (which will be picked up by the electronic plagiarism scans that we perform on both documents) will be allowed (e.g. some identical sentences and paragraph constructions). However, wholesale verbatim transcription of multiple paragraphs should be avoided. If you think this is necessary then place the relevant text in inverted commas and insert a reference to your Research Proposal. In general, it is expected that your understanding of the project will have matured substantially during the course of the year and that such verbatim transcription will not be appropriate.

ADDENDUM 3: How to Correctly Reference Material

In a research publication or reference work you will almost always find a reference section included. The aim of this is three fold, to act as a source of background information for the interested reader, to provide original sources for specific pieces of information vital to your scientific case, and to acknowledge the efforts of others on whom you have drawn for ideas and inspiration. The most usual way of referencing a paper, book, figure or quotation in the text is to use a superscript number,¹ or number in parenthesis [1], or an author name in parenthesis (Spivey, 2001), clearly associated with the item you want to reference. The first mentioned convention (i.e. using superscripted numbers) is employed in most chemistry journals and is illustrated below, but this varies with academic discipline. If you select ‘Royal Society of Chemistry’ style within most reference managers (e.g. RefWorks) then the superscripted number style of referencing will be implemented automatically. In the reference section you must then give the full source. The source should be completely specified such that it can be located without ambiguity by the reader. Therefore, the reference list should generally contain static references such as journal papers and books; citing dynamic reference sources such as websites is discouraged as they may disappear.

If you need to cite material from a website and you cannot trace the primary source, then you should quote text directly from the website, using quotation marks around the text in question. The text must then be referenced, in the manner indicated above, to the full website URL with the date on which you viewed it indicated in parenthesis. Similarly, if you copy figures from the web, you must clearly state that this is so in the figure caption and this should also be referenced, in the manner indicated above, to the full website URL with the date on which you viewed it indicated in parenthesis.

Examples of correct citation practice are presented on the following page – always ensure that you make it clear where your work stops, and copied material starts, and that you give a sufficiently detailed reference to allow the source to be identified clearly and uniquely.
Example of how to reference materials:

**Figure 1.** Transition state MO 23 (E = -15.67 eV) of the HF-derived structure of TS1 for the enantiomerization of chiral DMAP-based biaryl showing the conjugation between the dialkylamino nitrogen and the pyridine ring (Figure taken from ref. 1).\(^\text{1,2}\)

The concept of aromaticity as applied in the modelling leading to transition structure reproduced in Figure 1 (above), has been a fundamental principle central to chemistry since its discovery.\(^3\) However, the exact manner of its discovery and precisely who first understood and described this phenomenon has been the subject of heated debate (see e.g.\(^4-6\)). Noe and Bader\(^4\) have argued that "Kekulé had seen a book, written by a little known Austrian chemist/physicist called Josef Loschmidt, in 1861, four years before Kekulé published his circular benzene structure", and they have presented a detailed analysis of the contemporary literature to support their assertions. However, Rocke\(^5\) has argued that "Unfortunately, their arguments are deeply flawed", drawing on complex linguistic nuances to question the meaning of various citations made by the protagonists in the original scientific debate. Getting to the root of the problem is of course fraught with difficulty now that over 150 years have elapsed since the period in question; however, my interpretation of the available evidence as presented in these articles is given below and closely mirrors that of Rzepa\(^6\) in a more recent critique, in which he clarifies the roles Kekulé, Loschmidt and others in this historic chapter in chemical history.

**References**

1. [http://www.ch.ic.ac.uk/spivey/?q=research](http://www.ch.ic.ac.uk/spivey/?q=research) (accessed 09.07.2010).

In the section above it is clear what the author's opinion is and where the author has drawn on sources from books, papers or the web.

The above reference list allows the reader to clearly identify the author or source of the material used in the article. In particular, it allows the reader to find the original sources (a text book, a published research paper) with ease. Note the use of Digital Object Identifier [http://dx.doi.org/...](http://dx.doi.org/...) hypertext links to facilitate this for modern primary journal articles. Note also that ALL authors are cited – do NOT use ‘et al.’ in a reference list. Note also that the article titles and full page range are cited – this information will be available to you if you have read the cited references!

**NB.** These guidelines are adapted from those developed by the Department of Physics: [http://www3.imperial.ac.uk/physics/students/ug/info/guidance/](http://www3.imperial.ac.uk/physics/students/ug/info/guidance/) (accessed 15.07.2010).