SECTION 1:
DEFINITIONS AND CONSEQUENCES OF PLAGIARISM

As you complete your college education and enter the workplace, you will frequently write essays and other documents, deliver speeches, make presentations, and create any number of different projects. In doing so, you'll often rely on the words and ideas of others (writers, speakers, coworkers, etc.) to provide you with information you need to make yourself well-informed and convincing.

An essential part of using these other sources of information is recognizing that the words and ideas from these sources belong to someone else and that you are just borrowing them. In other words, you must respect *their* intellectual property rights to the words and ideas *you* use. You do so by using these sources responsibly and honestly and by giving the sources credit for what you borrow and use in your own work. Doing so is called documentation of sources. Using sources in this way will make you a more convincing and respected student and employee, and it will help you avoid plagiarism.

What is plagiarism?

According to the *IVCC Student Handbook*, "Plagiarism - comes from the Latin word *plagiare*, which means 'to steal.' Therefore, plagiarism is a form of cheating. Plagiarism is defined as using the words or ideas of another as one's own either on purpose or unintentionally. This includes, but is not limited to, copying whole, portions or the paraphrasing (rewording) of passages or information from any source in any academic exercise (written or oral) without giving credit to the author or source using an appropriate citation style. Students must be able to prove that their work is their own" ("Academic Integrity").

As the definition points out, plagiarism is a type of cheating, or stealing. As such, plagiarism is considered academic, intellectual, and professional dishonesty. It's important to point out that plagiarism is often considered an academic problem only, something that would only happen in a research paper. However, plagiarism actually can happen in *anything* you write, present, or create, either for a class or on the job: a research paper, speech, PowerPoint presentation, poster, drawing, report, letter, or any other project.

What would be considered plagiarism?

Plagiarism of words: You would be guilty of plagiarism if you presented someone else's exact words as if they were your words—exact words without quotation marks or documentation

Plagiarism of ideas: You would also be guilty of plagiarism if you put someone else's ideas into your own words and then presented the ideas as though they were your own—paraphrased or summarized ideas without documentation.

Self-plagiarism: Especially in an academic setting, you may be guilty of self-plagiarism if you turn in all or even part of something you wrote or presented for another assignment or different

class as though it is new material—submitting old work when a teacher has asked for new work (unless you have permission from that teacher to do so).

What are the consequences of plagiarism?

Because plagiarism is a form of cheating and stealing, the penalties for plagiarism can be quite severe. As noted in the *IVCC Student Handbook*, teachers at IVCC can enforce any of the following consequences ("Academic Integrity"):

- Failure of any assignment, quiz, test, examination or paper, project or oral presentation for the work in which the violation occurred.
- Lower grade.
- Involuntary withdrawal from the course.
- Failure of the course.
- Report extreme cases of academic dishonesty (such as, but not limited to, collusion among a number of students, selling or providing papers or repeated violations of academic dishonesty, etc.) directly to the Vice President for Academic Affairs for disciplinary action.
- Other sanctions as determined by the faculty member. The sanction will be put in writing and signed by the student, faculty member and the Dean.

Clearly, plagiarism can have serious consequences for your academic career, damaging your credibility as a student and negatively affecting your academic standing. However, plagiarism and its penalties are not limited to your education.

Once you have a job, the penalties for plagiarism are extremely serious, as well, and may include receiving a reprimand, losing the trust of a boss or co-workers, hurting your chances of promotion (and, with it, higher pay), and even being fired or facing a lawsuit or fine. Unfortunately, the news is full of stories of professionals who are guilty of plagiarism and suffer the consequences.

How can you avoid plagiarism?

You *can* avoid plagiarism and its consequences, and you *can* use sources correctly. To do so, you must determine to be honest and to ask questions if you are not sure how to use sources properly or if you have any concerns about plagiarism in your work. Your instructor in any course should be the first person you ask, but you have a number of other resources, too, linked from this tutorial.

In addition, you should be familiar with common documentation styles and with how to quote, paraphrase, and summarize sources effectively in your paper or other project. Sections 2-3 of this tutorial cover these topics:

- Section 2: Common Formats for Documenting Sources
- Section 3: Correct Integration of Source Material