Good Scholarly Practice

Murray Cole
School Academic Misconduct Officer (SAMO)
School of Informatics
Good Scholarly Practice...

...must be followed by

- All academic staff at the University
- All students at the University
Good Scholarly Practice in Research

Suppose I submit a paper for publication. I must:

- Be clear about use of other work (including my own).
  - Citation of relevant work (publication details, url etc.) including diagrams (even if modified).
  - If using a quote then give it clearly as such, e.g., *As stated by Cole (2021)* “*It is wise to follow good academic practice. . . ”*

- Acknowledge help received.
  - Conversations/discussions that led to *significant* progress.
  - Comments from an anonymous referee that led to improvements.
  - etc.
Good Scholarly Practice in Research

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  ▶ etc.

▶ Work presented as one’s own and new really is that, and the reader can see clearly which work is claimed as such.
Purpose of this Presentation

- Give some (quick) guidance on good practice for students.
- Give examples of bad practice.
- Give links to guidance.
- Explain briefly the consequences of bad practice.
Individual Assessment

All work assessed *for credit* must be (unless explicitly specified otherwise) *your own individual work.*
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This applies to, e.g.:

- Coursework.
- Programming assignments.
- Essay submissions.
- Research proposals.
- Dissertation, etc.
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- Programming assignments.
- Essay submissions.
- Research proposals.
- Dissertation, etc.

Breaches of this rule are regarded as *academic misconduct* and are taken *very seriously* by the University.
Two Examples of Academic Misconduct

1. Copying a portion of a research paper from the internet and then editing the words.
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Myth: It is OK to have 20% copied. FALSE!
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2. Working together with another student to produce a joint program and then each customizing the code to make the solutions appear distinct.
   - This is collusion.

By all means discuss general ideas and difficulties with fellow students, but keep this at a general level well away from the solution and write the code by yourself.
Information About Academic Misconduct

Academic misconduct includes:

▶ plagiarism,
▶ collusion,
▶ falsification (e.g. faking experimental results, deliberately untrue claims)
▶ impersonation (e.g. doing the work for somebody else)

School of Informatics guidelines are at

https://web.inf.ed.ac.uk/infweb/admin/policies/academic-misconduct

which also contains links to other relevant pages, including the University information pages on academic misconduct.
Consequences of Misconduct

Three levels depending on case:

▶ Warning from School Academic Misconduct Officer.
▶ Report to College of Science and Engineering.
  ▶ College contacts the student so they can respond to the allegation.
  ▶ If necessary an interview is conducted.
  ▶ A decision is made. This can result in a reduction of marks, potentially to zero.
▶ Report to University Student Discipline Committee.
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Any accusation is a very serious charge, hence treated with great care and the rights of all are respected.

For example, if a similarity is detected, we will consider whether this is significant and not innocent or to be expected (e.g. if two people implement quicksort in Java).
Keeping to Good Scholarly Practice

Do your own work
  ▶ Ask only for legitimate help, stopping well short of solutions, do not go searching for solutions to the exercise.
  ▶ Would you feel it reasonable to ask the lecturer for a certain level of help? If not, then don’t ask anyone else either.

If in doubt:
  ▶ Consult online guidance.
    ▶ If necessary ask the person who set assignment for help on specific points relating to it.
    ▶ For a general point ask me (inf-samo@inf.ed.ac.uk).
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Publishing your solutions to coursework:

- By default you are not allowed to do this but a lecturer can give permission (on the handout).
- For the projects (UG4, MInf, MSc) the default is that you can publish unless the proposer stated otherwise (very rare).
Relax

This is not a police state and I am not out to get you!

Adopting good scholarly practice is part of your education.

▶ The vast majority of people have no intention of committing any crimes.
▶ The vast majority of students wish to follow good scholarly practice.
  ▶ Do discuss things with each other, but only to a legitimate level (eg explaining material and examples from lectures and notes).
  ▶ The response to an offer “I’ll show you my code” (or “solution”) is “No, please don’t” (unless explicitly permitted, e.g. in a team exercise).

Any Questions?
Please send them to me by e-mail inf-samo@inf.ed.ac.uk
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