# ETH Zurich Citation Guidelines

The scientific fields taught at ETH Zurich use different citation styles. Therefore, you should acquaint yourself with the mandatory conventions of your department or research group.

The guidelines below provide a general overview of the main rules of handling sources and the intellectual property of others.

## Scientific integrity

Whether studying or researching, the fundamental values and principles of scientific integrity[1] must be adhered to when writing scientific papers and publications. Good scientific practice[2] includes, for instance, transparency in the identification of sources, avoiding plagiarism, correct citation and paraphrasing, and honesty in the declaration of authorship. Thus, it is essential to distinguish one's own work from the work of others.

## The importance of citation

Scientific papers build on findings of others. Any third-party work must be identified as such in a scientific text, otherwise it can be regarded as plagiarism[3]. Citation, through the indication of the original source, thus ensures the comprehensibility and reproducibility of research results [4].

Content from your own previously published or submitted scientific work that is used in publications or performance assessments must also be cited to avoid self-plagiarism.

## Citation techniques

### Direct quotation

In a direct quotation, content is taken from a source verbatim and – in the case of written text – placed in quotation marks (except for block quotations). After the direct quotation the following source information is provided:
– the name(s) of the author(s) (if not already mentioned in an introductory sentence)
– the publication date of the source
– the number of the page where the original quotation appears

The complete references are listed in the bibliography. These references are formatted differently depending on the citation style.

### Paraphrasing

In a paraphrase, text written by another author is rendered in one's own words. This involves rephrasing the third party's intellectual property and changing the sentence structure, while conveying all the relevant information. The meaning of the original text and its keywords are retained. New information not contained in the original text and your own commentary on the paraphrase must be clearly distinguished from the paraphrase. The following information is provided at the beginning or at the end of the paraphrase:
– the name(s) of the author(s)
– the publication date of the source

The complete references are listed in the bibliography. These references are formatted differently, depending on the citation style.

### Summary

In a summary, the essential points and central ideas of a text are reproduced in a shorter form in one's own words. The following source information is provided at the beginning or at the end of the summary:
– the name(s) of the author(s)
– the publication date of the source

The complete references are listed in the bibliography. These references are formatted differently depending on the citation style.

[1] ETH Zurich Guidelines on scientific integrity (Integrity Guidelines) (RSETHZ 414).
[2] Further examples of good scientific practice may be found on the Scientific integrity website:
ethz.ch/en/research/ethics-and-animal-welfare/research-integrity
[3] Art. 7, Procedure in the event of scientific misconduct (RSETHZ 415).
[4] Art. 4, Basic principles of scientific integrity, Integrity Guidelines (RSETHZ 414).

## Important terms

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| Sources | Sources comprise consulted material that was produced by others or in one's own previous work. Sources can include texts, images, graphics, code, interview data, etc. |
| Bibliographical references | The term "bibliographical references" refers to the abbreviated references in the text as well as the listing of the complete source information in a bibliography. The latter contains only the sources used in the text. |
| Citation styles | Citation styles[5] are rules for the presentation and structure of references and the bibliography. They differ depending on the scientific field, publisher, and journal. |
| General knowledge | General knowledge does not require citation. It refers to knowledge that is publicly available in many sources and is neither new, unusual nor controversial. It also includes knowledge that is viewed as basic knowledge within a particular scientific field. Similarly, standard formulations do not require citation. |

## Plagiarism

Plagiarism is defined as the complete or partial adoption of a work without citing the source or authorship. Plagiarism can take many forms, e.g., translation plagiarism, self-plagiarism, plagiarism of structure, or citation plagiarism.

Submitting the work of another author under one's own name, even with the permission of the original author (a.k.a. collusion), is not permitted and will result in consequences for both parties.

A special form of plagiarism is ghostwriting, where a person submits a work under their own name that was written by a third party as a commissioned work.

## Generative artificial intelligence

Output created by generative artificial intelligence cannot be attributed to any author. Because the output is not reproducible or reliable, it does not constitute a citable or citation-worthy scientific source[6]. If tools based on artificial intelligence are used, they must be declared or identified transparently. Failure to declare the use of such tools amounts to ghostwriting.

Authors of Bachelor's, Master's and doctoral theses must sign a declaration of originality stating whether generative artificial intelligence tools were used in their work. In this context, an individual agreement with the supervisor is decisive as to whether AI must be declared or not.

## Disciplinary measures

Plagiarism, ghostwriting, and the unauthorised, undeclared use of generative artificial intelligence technology constitute deception of the readership with regard to the origin of the text and may invoke disciplinary proceedings as per the ETH Zurich Ordinance on Disciplinary Measures of 10 November 2020[7]. Detailed information on disciplinary proceedings and jurisdiction is provided on the Disciplinary affairs website[8].

## Further information

The ETH Library's Prevention of Plagiarism website[9] provides detailed information on the topic as well as contacts. Advice on the use of generative artificial intelligence technology can be found on the Plagiarism and generative Artificial Intelligence (genAI) website[10].

*The content of these guidelines was developed by the ETH Library in consultation with Academic Services (Education Legislation) and the Scientific Integrity Office.*

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[5] Examples of citation styles: APA, Chicago, Harvard, IEEE, etc.
[6] library.ethz.ch/prevention-of-plagiarism

[7] SR 414.138.1
[8] ethz.ch/staffnet/en/teaching/academic-support/disciplinary-affairs
[9] library.ethz.ch/prevention-of-plagiarism
[10] library.ethz.ch/en/researching-and-publishing/scientific-writing-at-eth-zurich/plagiat-und-kuenstliche-intelligenz-ki