

Guide on how to avoid self-plagiarism

Copying paragraphs or excerpts from your own previous exam papers, assignments or work requirements that have previously been submitted, is considered plagiarism if you have not provided this as a source.

Regulations: [Guidelines for handling cheating/attempts at cheating for exams at OsloMet - Student - minside](#)

Students in the Department of Social Work, Child Welfare and Social Policy should follow the APA style. [The Citation Compass](#) provides a good overview on how to refer to different sources. If you use a direct citation, then you refer to the source you have used. But what if you want to use something you yourself have written in the past, either your own reflections, or where you have rewritten another source?

Fortunately, it is not difficult to refer to oneself in a good way. This is a guide on how to solve this.

In this example you wish to re-use parts of a paragraph from your practice exam (or another exam) into your bachelor thesis:

In 2015, the Norwegian Psychological Association estimated that 120 000 people in Norway meet the criteria for a psychiatric diagnosis (Hansen & Brekke, 2018, p. 38). However, we cannot establish that all mental disorders lead to impaired work skills. Hansen and Brekke argue that mild disorders such as mania, temporary depression or mild social anxiety do not necessarily affect people's ability to work (Hansen & Brekke, 2018, p. 32). The report from the Norwegian Psychological Association further tells us that approximately 40,000 people have a mental disorder that affects their daily work. The report also describes that 15,000 people receive some form of follow-up from the public sector on their own or arranged by their employer (Hansen & Brekke, 2018, p. 34). There is no doubt that these individuals experience problems functioning in their work and personal lives. When I followed up with Ivar, he told me a lot about how his mental illness had made him isolated from his workmates and that they didn't trust him to "land" work tasks or invite him along for payday beer and other activities.

If you put this paragraph straight into the bachelor's thesis **without referencing the source**, which here is your practice exam, you have self-plagiarized which can be defined as cheating even if the source reference in the paragraph is in order. You have not read the sources in the section for your **bachelor's** thesis, but for the old practice exam.

To avoid self-plagiarism, cite your practice exam as the source.

Through my practice, I was able to experience that these people experience problems with functioning both in work and private life. One of those I followed up on told me a lot about how his mental illness had isolated him from his workmates and that they didn't trust him to "land" work tasks or invite him to payday beers and other activities. (Own work, 2022, p. 4).

You then have the exam paper in the bibliography:

Own work. (2022). *SOS3110 exam paper Autumn 2022* [unpublished]. Oslo Metropolitan University.

If you refer to text from the practice exam that includes references to other sources, you must change the source reference so that it shows that you have extracted the text from your previous exam paper.

The report from the Norwegian Psychological Association further tells us that approximately 40,000 people have a mental disorder that affects their daily work. The report also describes that 15,000 people receive some form of follow-up from the public sector on their own or arranged by their employer (Hansen & Brekke, 2018, referred to in own work, 2022, p. 4).

It can often look messy to have such a "double" source, especially if you are going to use the entire paragraph where Hansen & Brekke is referenced three times. It is also best academic practice to use sources that are as close as possible to the primary source because it provides the most accuracy. The recommendation here is to go back to Hansen & Brekke, if you have the source available, formulate a new text based on the source and refer to the primary source.

If you are writing an assignment where you use your full name, such as your master's thesis, and wish to reference an exam paper, you can use your full name:

Through my practice, I recognized that these people experience problems with functioning in work and private life. One I followed up on told me a lot about how his mental illness had isolated him from his workmates and that they didn't trust him to "land" work tasks or invite him to payday beers and other activities (Normann, 2022, p. 4).

You then write in the bibliography:

Normann, Kari. (2022). *SOS3110 exam paper Autumn 2022* [unpublished]. Oslo Metropolitan University