

Policy on Preventing and Dealing with Academic Writing Misconduct

1. Definitions and abbreviations

- 1.1 **Academic integrity** means honesty and responsibility in scholarship and research. It involves creating and expressing one's own ideas in coursework and published works, acknowledging all sources of information. It also implies completing assignments independently, or acknowledging collaboration (when it is required). Furthermore, it requires honesty during examinations and the accurate reporting of results when conducting research.¹
- 1.2 **Academic writing misconduct** is any action or attempted action that may result in an unfair academic advantage for oneself, or an unfair academic advantage or disadvantage for any other member(s) of the academic community. Academic writing misconduct includes, but is not limited to, unacknowledged appropriation of the work of others; altering academic documents or transcripts; falsification or fabrication of data; misrepresentation of data to gain access to materials before they are intended to be available; failure to declare conflicts of interest; failure to follow accepted procedures or meet legal or ethical requirements, or to exercise due care in carrying out responsibilities for avoiding unreasonable harm or risk to humans, animals and/or the environment; and helping anyone to gain an unfair academic advantage^{2 3}.
- 1.3 **Plagiarism** is the use of words, inventions, ideas, opinions, discoveries, artwork, images, music recordings, or computer-generated work (from any printed, digital or internet-based source, whether published or not) of another person, even if the content is openly licensed, and presenting it as one's own work without acknowledging the source. Plagiarism may be the result of intentional, inattentive or unintentional behaviour.⁴ See Annexure B for Types of Plagiarism (this is not a closed list, but examples of types of plagiarism).

Plagiarism cannot be confirmed by mere similarities between words in the source text and the borrowed text, as in the case of terminology, commonly used phrases and known facts. Plagiarism should be distinguished from other forms of academic writing misconduct, such as, but not limited to:

- collusion and fabrication or falsification of data;
- purchasing of assignments, dissertations, and theses via the Internet, or using a ghost writer and presenting this person's documents as one's own work;
- presenting the same work for more than one course or in consecutive years; and
- the re-use of one's previously evaluated or published material without acknowledgment or any kind of indication.

¹ Office of the University Ombudsperson, Michigan State University, 2018. [Online] <https://msu.edu/unit/ombud/academic-integrity/What%20is%20Academic%20Integrity.html>, Retrieved 29 March 2018.

² Berkeley University of California. <http://sa.berkeley.edu/conduct/integrity/definition>. Retrieved 6 August 2018.

³ University of Oxford. <http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/personnel/cops/researchintegrity/#d.en.54059>. Retrieved 6 August 2018.

⁴ University of Oxford. <https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/guidance/skills/plagiarism?wssl=1>. Retrieved 7 August 2018.

⁸ The South African Labour Guide. <https://www.labourguide.co.za/warnings1.1>

- 1.4 **Acknowledgment** is the use of references in academic writing to indicate the source of previously expressed ideas or published material and the details of the publication.
- 1.5 **Good Academic Writing** refers clearly and consistently to the sources used; bears evidence of individual and independent thinking on and processing of existing knowledge; and includes citations and paraphrases that are correct and just versions of the contents of the source text.
- 1.6 **First Written Warnings** are warnings for very minor offences, when it is seldom necessary to embark on additional disciplinary procedures.
- 1.7 **Final Written Warnings** are documents that immediately follow on a First Written Warning when firmer action is demanded due to the First Written Warning being disregarded, or because the offence was repeated, additional offences occurred and/or the offence (first or recurring offence) is considered serious enough to deserve disciplinary action firmer than a First Written Warning⁸.

2. Background

Academic integrity is the moral code of academia and the foundation of academic excellence. It requires honest as well as responsible scholarship and is an expression of personal integrity and honesty. Upholding the practice of academic integrity is, therefore, a reflection of individual, personal and professional integrity.

This Policy on Preventing and Dealing with Academic Writing Misconduct contributes to instilling the values of academic integrity, scientific discourse, high standards, and ethics in all academic endeavours. Academic writing misconduct and plagiarism are serious concerns and are subject to strict corrective action.

3. Guiding principles

This policy is founded on a commitment to academic integrity, academic honesty, and excellence in teaching and learning, and the submission/presentation of credible research findings and outputs. Academics (including students) show their respect to the knowledge economy by contributing to it and guarding it, as well as not exploiting it. Staff and students of the UFS are committed to producing academic work that adheres to scholarly standards in the accurate citation of sources, appropriate collection and use of data, and transparent acknowledgment of the contribution of others to their ideas, discoveries, interpretations, and conclusions^{5 6}.

The policy is based on the five core values of the UFS⁷, namely Superior Scholarship, Human Embrace, Institutional Distinctiveness, Emergent Leadership, and Public Service. Superior Scholarship and Institutional Distinctiveness are pursued through academic integrity, and plagiarism must be seen against this backdrop, rather than in isolation. High standards for academic integrity are grounded in the belief that:

- students and staff are inherently honest and wish to learn and distinguish themselves;
- academic integrity is an expression of personal integrity and honesty;
- academic integrity will manifest in everyday academic work, for instance, in:

⁵ <https://college.harvard.edu/academics/academic-integrity>. Accessed 7 August 2018

⁶ <https://www.ufs.ac.za/about-the-ufs/ufs-in-focus/vision-mission-and-values>. Accessed 7 August 2018

⁷ University of the Free State. 2018. <https://www.ufs.ac.za/about-the-ufs/ufs-in-focus/vision-mission-and-values>. Accessed 7 August 2018

- referencing and learning how to reference;
- ethical decision-making;
- honourable collaborative relationships;
- authorship of academic work; and
- guarding one's academic footprint.

The similarity detection software that is freely available at the University of the Free State is Turnitin. The use of this similarity detection software does not take away the role of the lecturer, supervisor or examiner in checking for and identifying any suspected cases of plagiarism. Turnitin is not reliable as similarity detection software when dealing with languages other than English. It is merely software used to detect primary sources and to indicate if plagiarism might have occurred. This again emphasises the importance of the role of lecturers, supervisors and examiners in detecting and identifying cases of plagiarism.

4. Policy

The UFS undertakes to ensure, as far as possible, through teaching and learning programmes and capacity development workshops (among other things) to inform academic authors about what is meant by plagiarism and how to avoid it. The emphasis will fall on excellent academic writing practices and sound research methodology and practices.

4.1 Didactic and developmental mechanisms adopted by the UFS to prevent, detect and deter plagiarism and academic writing misconduct include:

- 4.1.1** the compulsory information literacy module (which focuses on all forms of academic dishonesty or misconduct) for all first-year students and students joining the UFS mid-course;
- 4.1.2** research methodology courses for senior students;
- 4.1.3** warnings to avoid plagiarism in study guides, and pop-up messages when students sign into the university system;
- 4.1.4** assignment briefing sheets containing warnings against plagiarism and all other forms of academic dishonesty or misconduct;
- 4.1.5** the declaration of originality which is to accompany each assignment;
- 4.1.6** Library Services, the Centre for Teaching and Learning, and the Postgraduate School present skills development opportunities, where students are actively taught the necessary skills for academic writing, citations, and attribution; and
- 4.1.7** similarity detection software (Turnitin), which is available (prior to official submission of material) to the general student population and staff on the UFS system.

Resolving concerns over possible plagiarism or academic writing misconduct calls for informal and formal communication between academic staff and students to ensure compliance with this policy.

4.2 Academic Writing Misconduct Register:

The university will keep a central record of academic writing misconduct as part of the Directorate for Student Discipline and Mediation (DSDM) database. The central record will take the form of an Academic Writing Misconduct Register (referred to hereafter as the register) in which each transgression by a student or employee, as described in the policy, will be recorded. Each incident will be recorded against either a student number or a staff number. Included will be a description of the incident, the measures taken (First Written Warning, Final Written Warning, or any other disciplinary action taken) and the applicable subject code or academic journal.

The register will be confidential and access to it will be granted by request via the prescribed form as designed and amended by the DSDM from time to time.

To fulfil the duties mentioned above, the cooperation of the following parties is important:

4.3 Faculties (deans)

Faculties undertake to:

- 4.3.1** inform all staff of this policy and any amendment to it;
- 4.3.2** have a strategy in place, along with support materials, to demonstrate to students and staff how citing and referencing are done;
- 4.3.3** provide staff and students with access to relevant self-study materials pertaining to academic writing requirements and the use of similarity detection software;
- 4.3.4** ensure that identified incidents of plagiarism or academic writing misconduct are reported to the DSDM;
- 4.3.5** ensure that staff members who are expected to serve on ad-hoc academic writing misconduct committees are provided with the necessary support and training;
- 4.3.6** ensure that course guides contain information on this policy and accompanying support materials; and
- 4.3.7** ensure that the following are included in the Faculty Rule Book regarding this policy:
- 4.3.8** The mark penalties the faculty has determined for Level Two offences (see section 6.3.1.2), as well as the conditions under which exam entrance will be denied as a result of Level Two offences (see section 6.3.1.2).
- 4.3.9** The university's suggested acceptable similarity index percentage for similarity detection software reports is 10%. However, faculty-specific adaptations of this percentage may occur. Any deviations must be motivated and reported to the DSDM to ensure uniformity.
- 4.3.10** Clear information to students on how similarity detection software will be used to initiate disciplinary action by the university.
- 4.3.11** The provision of information on the requirements for citation and the referencing style applicable to the faculty concerned, or specific disciplines in the faculty.

4.4 Staff

Regarding students, university staff members undertake to:

- 4.4.1** support student learning by teaching them the norms and practices of good academic writing, including referencing;
- 4.4.2** encourage academic integrity in students' writing;
- 4.4.3** identify instances of plagiarism, as well as the original source/s involved in the plagiarism;
- 4.4.4** report all incidents of confirmed plagiarism and/or academic writing misconduct to the DSDM;
- 4.4.5** advise students on the potential consequences of academic writing misconduct;
- 4.4.6** ensure that they are well acquainted with assessment policies, practices and supporting software (e.g. Turnitin) and programmes.

Regarding their own work, staff members will⁸:

- 4.4.7** conduct themselves according to the highest standards of integrity;

⁸ Queensland University. Staff Code of Conduct. http://www.mopp.qut.edu.au/B/B_08_01.jsp?view=print. Accessed 7 August 2018.

4.4.8 show respect for the work and scholarship of others through proper acknowledgment of their authorship and/or their contributions or material used in research and/or a publication; and

4.4.9 avoid plagiarism and/or academic writing misconduct in their teaching and research.

4.5 Students

Students are expected to:

4.5.1 abide by all the directives of this policy, the Assessment Policy, Faculty Rule Books, course guides, specific and general regulations, and assessment requirements;

4.5.2 be able to apply the applicable referencing system used by their department or faculty to their academic work and seek assistance if unsure of appropriate citation and referencing methods in their disciplines;

4.5.3 submit only their own work for any form of assessment, except where the work of others is appropriately acknowledged, or where the assessor/moderator requires, or has given prior permission for, group or collaborative work to be submitted;

4.5.4 include a declaration that the work submitted is their own work when submitting academic writing for recognition or credit;

4.5.5 familiarise themselves with how to use the similarity detection software provided by the university through the resources made available on the Student Portal; and

4.5.6 include a plagiarism report (**Digital Receipt** and the section: **Originality report** of the **Current View on Turnitin**) with the submission of all assignments, practical reports, dissertations, and theses. In the event of the similarity index being higher than what has been set as acceptable per this policy and/or the Faculty Rule Book's prescribed ranges, students will be required to motivate why the similarity index is higher.

4.6 Centre for Teaching and Learning

The Centre for Teaching and Learning undertakes to:

4.6.1 make online academic writing courses and resources available on the Student Portal (the online academic writing course will have an automated self-assessment requirement for lecturers to refer students to; assessment results may then be accessed via the Student Portal); and

4.6.2 support the implementation of similarity detection software and the updating of its database.

4.7 Postgraduate School

The Postgraduate School undertakes to offer workshops, consultations, and online resources on academic writing.

4.8 Legal representation in disciplinary proceedings at any level

4.8.1 No legal representation will be allowed for any Level One disciplinary/developmental proceedings and/or actions.

4.8.2 Should a student be charged with a Level Two transgression and he/she requires legal assistance, the following procedure must be followed:

4.8.2.1 The student and his/her proposed legal representative should submit an application to explain why they believe that the matter necessitates the intervention of a legal professional.

4.8.2.2 The application mentioned in (I) above should be submitted within five (5) days of the student having been issued with a Notice to Appear, and no less than five (5) days before the hearing by the ad-hoc committee.

4.8.2.3 The matter must immediately be escalated to the DSDM, which will act in an advisory capacity to the relevant faculty, school, unit, etc. and which will decide whether legal

representation should be allowed. The DSDM will hold an advisory seat on the ad-hoc departmental plagiarism committee if the student is assisted by a legal representative during the disciplinary proceedings.

4.9 Procedures and guidelines

Where incidents of plagiarism or any form of academic writing misconduct are confirmed, two complementary types of measures may be employed by the university:

Developmental measures, which are concerned with plagiarism and focus on didactic processes.

Disciplinary measures, which are concerned with repeated and serious plagiarism and academic writing misconduct and focus on the student's academic record and status on campus.

4.9.1 Detection of Plagiarism⁹

Plagiarism has traditionally been detected by teaching staff who manually verified the originality of work submitted for assessment. Detection can occur through academics' detailed knowledge of specific subjects and the related literature. Cases can also be detected through other means, such as unexpected increases in grades achieved by the student and inconsistencies in the style of the work, including variations in language use or ability.

Staff members may also make use of electronic methods for detection or indication, such as web-based similarity detection software. Students can use similarity detection software to check their draft papers for inadvertent plagiarism.

4.9.2 Plagiarism at undergraduate level (including students registered for short courses, diplomas, certificates, and structured postgraduate degrees)

Students at undergraduate level, including those doing short courses, diplomas, and certificates, who transgress this policy will be dealt with as per the processes outlined in the Levels of Plagiarism referred to in section 4.10.

4.9.3 Plagiarism at postgraduate level (Honours, Master's and Doctoral Students)

Postgraduate studies may either be structured or research-intensive, which may require anything from mini-dissertations to full theses to be submitted. Research papers are often the end product of postgraduate research.

Supervisors are expected to review drafts of students' work and to request students to submit final documents through similarity detection software (e.g. Turnitin) to identify potential plagiarism. Preventative and remedial action should be taken by supervisors on any draft work (either structured or research-focused) presented by students, before submission for examination.

All mini-dissertations/dissertations/theses on postgraduate level are submitted through Student Academic Services. In turn, Student Academic Services will submit the work to an examiner to have the submission assessed.

Should the examiner detect plagiarism after a final submission has been made, the examiner will provide a report on the alleged plagiarism to Student Academic Services, who in turn will bring the matter to the attention of the DSDM. The matter should be dealt with according to either Level Two or Level Three offences under section 6.3.1, depending on the seriousness of the plagiarism after review by the DSDM.

⁹ Fintan Culwin and Thomas Lancaster. 2017. Plagiarism, prevention, deterrence and detection. The Higher Education Academy.

4.9.3.1 Honours degrees as defined by the General Rules of the UFS and postgraduate diplomas

Structured

As far as structured postgraduate studies are concerned, the policies and procedures are similar to those for undergraduate students. The level of seriousness, however, will be higher because of the level at which the student is studying. Procedures for transgressions pertaining to plagiarism at honours and postgraduate diploma level will thus commence at Level Two, unless the student is a repeat offender. In this case, procedures will move to Level Three offences.

Research and Research Papers

Where examiners identify potential plagiarism, they must provide a thorough report indicating the nature and extent of the potential plagiarism, and an indication of the source/s involved in the plagiarism. The offence will be viewed as a Level Two transgression, unless the student is a repeat offender. In this case, procedures applicable to Level Three offences will be followed.

4.9.3.2 Master's degrees

Structured

Plagiarism pertaining to structured master's degrees will be treated as Level Three transgressions.

Dissertations or publishable articles

Where examiners identify potential plagiarism, they must provide an in-depth report indicating the nature and extent of the potential plagiarism, and an indication of the sources involved in the plagiarism. These offences will be handled as Level Three transgressions.

4.9.3.3 Doctoral degrees

Where examiners identify potential plagiarism, they must provide an in-depth report indicating the nature and extent of the potential plagiarism, and an indication of the sources involved in the plagiarism. These offences will be administered as Level Three transgressions.

4.9.3.4 Plagiarism by academic staff

The UFS regards academic staff as capable professionals who should be aware of the nature of plagiarism and the threat it poses to both their reputation and that of the university. The university reserves the right to monitor the work of academic staff for evidence of plagiarism by any appropriate means, including the use of similarity detection software.¹⁰

Allegations of staff plagiarism will be investigated. If plagiarism is uncovered, then measures appropriate for Level Three transgressions will be enacted. Depending on the seriousness of the transgression/s, staff disciplinary procedures could also be triggered by the Disciplinary Policies and Procedures (2007) and the Disciplinary Code and Proposed Action (2011).

4.10 Levels of academic writing misconduct

Where plagiarism or academic writing misconduct is detected, it should be reported to the DSDM for determination of the level and action to be taken. The matter must be reported via the prescribed DSDM form (which can be amended from time to time) and electronically sent to sdmu@ufs.ac.za.

Depending on the results of this analysis and the policy provisions set out under the above sections, the transgression will be treated as either a Level One, Two or Three offence.

4.10.1 Level One (Minor, first offence)

4.10.1.1 Definition:

A Level One offence is an infringement of pre-publication academic conventions that involves the unacknowledged or inaccurately acknowledged use of the ideas and/or writing of others by first-year students (including students in the first two years of an extended programme).

These infringements are minor or first offences and considered to reflect unintentional behaviour.

4.10.1.2 Procedure:

The staff member who detects (or is informed of) the plagiarism must report it via the prescribed form to the DSDM, which in turn will provide advice on the action to be taken.

¹⁰ Queensland University. Staff Code of Conduct. http://www.mopp.qut.edu.au/B/B_08_01.jsp?view=print. Accessed 7 August 2018.

4.10.1.3 Measures:

Depending on the seriousness of the offence, any one or combinations of the following actions may be taken by the academic staff member:

- No consequences: The submission is marked, but the student is given a written warning (First Written Warning) that this will not be tolerated in future.
- The student will be asked to complete an Academic Writing Course assessment, after which his or her marks will be released by the lecturer.
- Failure to complete the Academic Writing Course assessment will result in the assignment mark being capped at 50%.
- A first **written warning is issued to the student and** is recorded by the DSDM in the Academic Writing Misconduct Register.

4.10.1.4 Appeal:

- Should the student wish to appeal the penalty, a written account via the prescribed form should be submitted to the DSDM, and the student must also submit a document explaining why he/she is not guilty of a Level One offence, within 10 days of the measures taken by the academic staff members.
- The DSDM can either confirm the penalty given to the student, impose a more appropriate penalty if they deem it necessary or, if they are convinced that no offence has taken place, withdraw the penalty. The decision of the DSDM on Level One offences is final.

4.10.2 Level Two (Repeated or minor transgressions at a more senior academic level)

4.10.2.1 Definition:

Level Two offences are repeated or minor transgressions at a more senior academic level that may not have been intentional.

Level Two applies to any undergraduate student (including first-year students), up to and including Honours and Postgraduate Diploma students, who is suspected of plagiarism on a significant scale and/or who has committed repeated acts of plagiarism after a first written warning has been issued. It includes quoting directly or paraphrasing without proper acknowledgment of sources and resubmitting the same work, or a major section of such work, without first obtaining permission. It also includes making use of:

- data, without proper acknowledgment of sources;
- contributors, and directly formulating their inputs as one's own work;
- assistance in the form of research, statistical analysis, computer programming, or field data collection support without acknowledgment.

4.10.2.2 Procedure:

The staff member who detects (or is informed of) the plagiarism must report it via the prescribed form to the DSDM, which in turn will provide advice on the action to be taken. Thereafter refer to ANNEXURE A: Procedure for the ad-hoc Departmental Plagiarism Committees.

4.10.2.3 Measures:

The ad-hoc committee, when processing/investigating and adjudicating the alleged plagiarism, may:

- require the student to provide a detailed report on the allegations of the ad-hoc committee within 48 hours of receiving notice by email on his/her UFS4life email address and/or any other email address/es the university has on record for the student.

Failure to submit the requested report will result in the student's assignment receiving 0% (refer the student to the appropriate departments/units for information on academic writing);

- penalise the student in respect of marks awarded, or entrance to the examination (as set out in the relevant Faculty Rule Book);
- request the student to resubmit the work concerned to prove that academic writing development has taken place. Should the student be found guilty by the ad-hoc committee, a final written warning will be issued and recorded by the DSDM in the Academic Writing Misconduct Register.

4.10.2.4 Appeal:

4.10.2.4.1 Should the student wish to appeal the penalty, a written account via the prescribed form should be submitted to the DSDM as well as a submission by the student explaining why he/she is not guilty of a Level Two offence, within 10 days of the decision by the ad-hoc committee. If a member of the DSDM served on the ad-hoc committee in an advisory capacity, the appeal must be adjudicated by an independent appointment as instructed by the applicable DSDM manager.

4.10.2.4.2 The DSDM or independent appointment can either confirm the penalty given to the student, impose a penalty they deem more appropriate or, if they are convinced that no offence has taken place, withdraw the penalty. The decision of the DSDM on Level Two offences is final.

4.10.3 Level Three (Serious and/or repeated offences and/or major offences that are possibly intentional or serious enough to suggest collusion or deliberate dishonesty)

4.10.3.1 Definition:

These are serious offences, which include plagiarism at Master and Doctoral postgraduate level and repeated incidents of Honours and Post Graduate Diploma Students (except for the initial assignments, usually in the first quarter, of any taught postgraduate programmes). These offences are assigned to Level Three.¹¹

All academic writing misconduct (in respect of undergraduate and postgraduate students) will be dealt with as a level three offence.

Plagiarism of other students are assigned to this level after repeated incidents of plagiarism, or/and after a final written warning has been issued, and/or after it has been discovered that a significant part of a student's work is the result of plagiarism, and/or after other forms of plagiarism has been uncovered in his/her work. This includes plagiarism committed after a previous breaching of the policy, extensive quoting directly from sources, and paraphrasing without acknowledging sources in dissertations, publishable articles or research-related texts.

4.10.3.2 Procedure:

The staff member who detects (or is informed of) the offence reports it to the DSDM for it to be dealt with at a formal disciplinary hearing as per Annexure B of the General Rules for Students.

¹¹ Plagiarism Policy S2003/351B. University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg

4.10.3.3 Appeal:

An appeal can be made as per Annexure B of the General Rules for Students.

4.11 Revocation of already awarded degrees

Revocation of degrees are dealt with in terms of the relevant provisions of the General Rules for Students.

5. Implementation of the policy

- 5.1 The Directorate for Student Discipline and Mediation (DSDM) undertakes to:
- be the holders of the register and facilitate any access to information contained therein;
 - guide lecturers and other staff members through the process as described by the policy;
 - advise ad-hoc committees when required; and
 - conduct disciplinary hearings when necessary.
- 5.2 The institutional responsibility, administration, and review of the policy are vested in the line function of the Registrar: Academic. The business owner of the policy is the Vice-Rector: Research. The implementation of the policy is vested in the line function and discretion of the dean of each faculty.

6. Purpose of the policy

- In striving to maintain and enhance sound academic and research practices, scientific discourse, and the integrity of academic writing at the UFS, this policy aims to:
- 6.1 enhance academic integrity in all areas of scholarship;
- 6.2 further develop a didactic and developmental process to cultivate and support academic integrity;
- 6.3 provide clear meaning to what the University of the Free State views as 'academic writing misconduct' and 'plagiarism' to increase awareness of what constitutes plagiarism and academic writing misconduct, to know how to avoid it, and to understand its consequences;
- 6.4 promote a fair, transparent and consistent approach towards deterring and detecting plagiarism and academic writing misconduct, and dealing with confirmed cases of plagiarism and academic writing misconduct;
- 6.5 outline the developmental and disciplinary measures applicable to confirmed incidents of plagiarism and academic writing misconduct;
- 6.6 identify the responsibilities of faculties, academics, and students pertaining to the avoidance of plagiarism and academic writing misconduct, and monitoring and dealing with cases of plagiarism and academic writing misconduct;
- 6.7 provide guidelines on the use of software which checks documents against other documents, with the aim of identifying similarities (e.g. Turnitin and Grammarly); and
- 6.8 provide clear guidelines on the three levels of plagiarism and academic writing misconduct offences, and outline procedures for dealing with these cases at each level.

7. Scope

- This policy applies to all UFS-affiliated staff members and students, including all:
- 7.1 faculties, units, departments, schools, directorates, centres, and their activities;
- 7.2 forms of assessment, including short courses, diplomas, and under- and postgraduate research in programmes of study designed to gain credits and recognition;
- 7.3 academic research activities; and

7.4 academic activities that are linked to recognition or financial reward, including contract research.

8. Resource consequences of the policy

This policy will be implemented by using existing UFS resources (structures, staff, etc.), and therefore no additional resources will be required.

9. Review procedure

9.1 The Postgraduate School is responsible for ensuring that the policy is reviewed, and it will follow a consultative process that includes the gathering of inputs from representatives of all faculties and other relevant stakeholders.

9.2 The policy will be submitted to the appropriate UFS decision-making structures.

10. Policy record

Document name	Policy on Preventing and Dealing with Academic Writing Misconduct
Coordinating UMC member	Vice-Rector: Research
Contact person	Vice-Rector: Research
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Date for next review	2023
Person responsible for review	Director: Student Discipline and Mediation (DSDM)
Monitoring by	Directorate for Student Discipline and Mediation (DSDM)
Related documents	Teaching-learning Policy • Assessment Policy • Quality Assurance Policy • Master's and Doctoral Studies Policy • Academic work at the UFS in terms of its intrinsic nature as a university • UFS Statute Rules on Student Discipline • Disciplinary Policy and Procedure • Guidelines for policy formulation, development and review: UFS • UFS Policy on Naming and Renaming • Assessment Policy • Faculty Rule Books • General Rules
Effective date	1 January 2019

1. ANNEXURE A: PROCEDURE

Procedure for the ad-hoc departmental plagiarism committees, Section 4.10.2

1. Definitions and abbreviations

- 1.1 DSDM: Directorate For Student Discipline and Mediation
- 1.2 HOD: Head of Department
- 1.3 Day/s: Refers to business or working days
- 1.4 Natural justice: Refers to the principles of *audi alteram partem* (hear the other side) and *nemo iudex in causa sua* (one should not be a judge in his own cause)

2. Purpose of procedure

- 2.1 This procedure should be followed when Level Two academic writing misconduct is detected and referred to an ad-hoc departmental plagiarism committee by the DSDM in terms of Section 4.10.2. The procedure is made explicit so that all departmental plagiarism committees could operate in the same manner.

3. Procedure

- 3.1 Notifying the student:
The student must be notified through his/her UFS4life email account and/or any other email address/es via the prescribed form. The notification must contain a full written report of the plagiarism account and evidence of the original source(s). The notification must also include the proposed venue, date and time of the hearing.
- 3.2 Notifying the DSDM:
Irrespective of the suspected level of transgression, all suspected cases of academic writing misconduct/plagiarism should be reported to the DSDM, which will assist in determining the level of transgression and the course of action to be taken.
- 3.3 The hearing:
 - 3.3.1 The UFS will be represented by a committee consisting of two staff members from the department concerned, appointed by the HOD, to assist with the adjudication of the matter. The staff member who detected the academic writing misconduct/plagiarism may **not** be part of the committee. If the student is represented by a legal representative, the DSDM will hold an advisory seat on the committee.
 - 3.3.2 The hearing must take place within 15 days of the date on which the transgression has been reported, or as soon as reasonably possible thereafter.
 - 3.3.3 Where a student is alleged to have copied from another student, it may be necessary for both students to attend the hearing.
 - 3.3.4 The hearing will be carried out according to the rules of natural justice.
 - 3.3.5 Should the student not attend the first sitting, the committee should adjourn and reschedule the matter. However, if the student fails to attend the hearing for a second time without reason, the hearing can continue in his/her absence.

3.3.6 At the hearing, the representative of the academic department that detected the alleged plagiarism will present the evidence, while the student (or his/her representative) will have the right to ask questions. The student (or his/her representative) can then present any evidence in support of his/her case, or make a statement. The committee should then adjourn to make a decision.

3.4 The decision:

3.4.1 The standard of proof is on the balance of probabilities. The question is whether plagiarism has occurred. Matters of intention or negligence, or other relevant factors, should be considered in aggravation or mitigation of penalty.

3.4.2 Where possible, the student should be recalled immediately and informed of the penalty that is to be received.

3.4.3 The student must be advised in writing of the findings of the committee (together with the reasons) within 5 days of the hearing. This advice should also inform the student that he/she has the right to lodge an appeal with the DSDM against the decision in terms of Section 4.10.2.4 Appeal. A copy of the record should be forwarded to the DSDM on completion of the hearing.

4. Related policies, procedures or guiding documents

4.1 General rules for undergraduate qualifications, postgraduate diplomas, bachelor honours degrees, master's degrees, doctoral degrees, higher doctorates, honorary degrees and the convocation

4.2 UFS rules on student discipline - Annexure B to the General Rules in 4.1

5. Procedure record

Document name	Policy on Preventing and Dealing with Academic Writing Misconduct
Coordinating UMC member	Vice-Rector: Research
Contact person	Vice-Rector: Research
Status	Approved
Approved by	Senate
Date finally approved	16 October 2018
Date last amended	16 October 2018
Date for next review	2023
Person responsible for review	Director: Student Discipline and Mediation (DSDM)

Monitoring by	Directorate for Student Discipline and Mediation (DSDM)
Related documents	Teaching-learning Policy • Assessment Policy • Quality Assurance Policy • Master's and Doctoral Studies Policy • Academic work at the UFS in terms of its intrinsic nature as a university • UFS Statute Rules on Student Discipline • Disciplinary Policy and Procedure • Guidelines for policy formulation, development and review: UFS • UFS Policy on Naming and Renaming • Assessment Policy • Faculty Rule Books • General Rules
Effective date	1 January 2019

ANNEXURE B: Other Important Terms PROPOSED AS AN ADDENDUM TO THE POLICY Types of Plagiarism

“Anyone who has written or graded a paper knows that plagiarism is not always a black-and-white issue. The boundary between plagiarism and research is often unclear. Learning to recognise the various forms of plagiarism, especially the more ambiguous ones, is an important step in the fight to prevent it.

I. Sources not cited

- 1) ‘The Ghost Writer’
The writer turns in another’s work, word-for-word, as his/her own.
- 2) ‘The Photocopy’
The writer copies significant portions of text straight from a single source, without alteration.
- 3) ‘The Potluck Paper’
The writer tries to disguise plagiarism by copying from several different sources, tweaking the sentences to make them fit together while retaining most of the original phrasing.
- 4) ‘The Poor Disguise’
Although the writer has retained the essential content of the source, he/she has altered the paper’s appearance slightly by changing key words and phrases.
- 5) ‘The Labo(u)r of Laziness’
The writer takes the time to paraphrase most of the paper from other sources and makes it all fit together, instead of spending the same effort on original work.
- 6) ‘The Self-Stealer’
The writer ‘borrows’ generously from his/her previous work, violating policies concerning the expectation of originality adopted by most academic institutions.

II. Sources cited (but still plagiarised!)

- 1) 'The Forgotten Footnote'
The writer mentions an author's name for a source, but neglects to include specific information on the location of the material referenced. This often masks other forms of plagiarism by obscuring source locations.
- 2) 'The Misinformer'
The writer provides inaccurate information regarding the sources, making it impossible to find them.
- 3) 'The Too-Perfect Paraphrase'
The writer properly cites a source, but neglects to put in quotation marks text that has been copied word-for-word, or close to it. Although attributing the basic ideas to the source, the writer is falsely claiming original presentation and interpretation of the information.
- 4) 'The Resourceful Citer'
The writer properly cites all sources, paraphrasing and using quotations appropriately. The catch? The paper contains almost no original work! It is sometimes difficult to spot this form of plagiarism because it looks like any other well-researched document.
- 5) 'The Perfect Crime'
Well, we all know it doesn't exist. In this case, the writer properly quotes and cites sources in some places, but goes on to paraphrase other arguments from those sources without citation. This way, the writer tries to pass off the paraphrased material as his/her own analysis of the cited material.

THIS IS NOT PART OF THE POLICY. IT IS AN EXPLANATION OF THE PRO FORMA

1. GUIDELINES FOR APPLYING THE POLICY OR PROCEDURE TEMPLATE*

- These recommendations and guidelines should be viewed as providing general direction, rather than specific prescriptions for action, except if otherwise stated herein or in so far as specific actions are required in terms of existing procedures, institutional policies and regulations.
- In this document, a distinction is drawn between "policy" and "procedure" (kindly refer to the Legislative Framework).
- An appropriate amount of planning and effort should go into the development and/or review of a policy or procedure before it is presented for approval. Policies and procedures should be maintained in a logical and consistent manner.
- The development and review of policies and procedures should originate in the responsible line function, as the line managers are the most knowledgeable about their particular requirements, needs and processes.
- When embarking on the development of a new policy or procedure or the review of an existing policy or procedure, it is recommended that the following steps be taken:

1.1 Identification of the issue/problem to be addressed

The issue or problem to be addressed should first be assessed, and then it must be ascertained to whom the issue or problem should be presented.

1.2 Necessity for a new policy

In consultation with the appropriate individuals, consider whether a new policy or procedure is required to address the issue or problem. Consider whether the issue or problem can be addressed in other ways, or by developing a policy or procedure at a level lower than for the university as a whole.

1.3 Consultation with the appropriate line manager

If it is established after consultation with the appropriate individuals that a new policy/procedure or policy/procedure revision is required, consult with the appropriate line manager to determine which structure within the UFS will have jurisdiction over the proposed policy/procedure development or revision, and what levels of approval are required for its development or revision.

1.4 Determination of assistance required

It should now be determined who will be affected by the proposed policy/procedure or revision, and who should assist in the development thereof. It is also important that those who will be affected by the proposed policy/procedure or revision should be consulted throughout the drafting process, and that their input and comments should be obtained.

1.5 Collect information from other institutions or internal functional units regarding their related policies

Other tertiary institutions and even private institutions can be approached in order to obtain ideas and gain insight into the manner in which they have addressed the problem (or a specific portion of the problem) in a policy or procedure.

1.6 Draft the policy/procedure in accordance with the guiding principles and proposed format contained herein

No hard and fast rules are prescribed for the drafting of a policy or procedure. It is, however, recommended that the policy or procedure should contain at least the minimum requirements as set out in the templates, and should be presented in accordance with the format prescribed.

1.7 Distribute the policy/procedure draft/revision to the appropriate groups

The proposed policy/procedure should be presented to the appropriate representative groups or individuals to be affected by the proposed policy/procedure or review. It is important that feedback, comments and suggestions should be obtained from such individuals or groups and that these, if appropriate, should be accommodated in the proposed policy or procedure by means of changes or revisions. The policy or procedure should then be redistributed to such individuals or groups, as appropriate, for final comment/review.

1.8 Submit the proposed policy/procedure or revision to the appropriate line manager

Upon final amendment of the policy or procedure, the proposed policy/procedure or revision should be furnished to the appropriate line manager for submission to the appropriate approval structures.

1.9 Distribution and implementation of the approved policy/procedure

After final approval by the appropriate structures, the next step will be to publish and implement the policy or procedure, with reasonable notice to the UFS community.

1.10 Guiding principles in the drafting of a policy or procedure

In drafting any policy or procedure, the following important guiding principles must be adhered to:

- Any policy or procedure should be structured, drafted and presented in a way that makes the policy or procedure understandable and easy to read and interpret.
- The content of a policy or procedure should be clear, concise and to the point, and should have a logical and coherent structure.
- The policy should be formulated in plain language that can be readily understood by the intended audience. A policy or procedure that is easy to understand will also assist those involved in administering it. However, the policy or procedure should not be oversimplified to such an extent that it becomes legally uncertain.
- In a policy or procedure, content and language should be used in ways that promote effective communication. This can be achieved by using clear, concise text, by ensuring that internal consistency regarding the use of language is achieved, and by avoiding ambiguity in the policy/procedure.
- In drafting the policy or procedure, it must be made clear whether any matter or action prescribed in the policy or procedure is mandatory or discretionary, by using the words “*must*” or “*may*”.
- Gender-neutral language should be used, for example: “*chairperson*” rather than “*chairman*”.
- Policies or procedures should be written in the present active tense, for example: “*the UFS believes that*” or “*the UFS therefore does this*”.
- Provisions in a policy or procedure should be arranged in numerical order.
- Policies or procedures should be drafted in English or Afrikaans and translated before being submitted for approval.