

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE INTERIM POLICY ON PLAGIARISM IN THE FACULTY OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

This document is based on the University of Stellenbosch's interim approach to dealing with plagiarism (2006). The purpose of this document is to establish a consistent and comprehensive approach to dealing with plagiarism in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences.

A) What is plagiarism?

Plagiarism is committed when the work (words, ideas, intellectual or artistic creations), published or unpublished, of others is taken over and presented as if it is the presenter's (writer's or speaker's) own. Amongst other possibilities, the following contraventions are considered to be plagiarism: handing in someone else's work, with or without his or her permission, as one's own; word-for-word repetition or direct translation of words or sentences from someone else's work, including that of a fellow student or from class notes without the necessary and correct acknowledgement and reference; handing in data that has been developed or collected by someone else without correct acknowledgement of the original source; handing in a one's own work that has already been submitted for another module without referring to the original source; repeating someone else's ideas in one's own words without acknowledging the original source; using any translation programme to transfer one's own ideas into a foreign language in modules where the correct use of the foreign language is part of the assessment process; incomplete and/or inconsistent references to sources; the use of direct quotations without using quotation marks.

All instances of plagiarism are serious offences which can have serious consequences for the student, including suspension from the university. They can also lead to criminal and civil action.

B) Approach

The University's approach makes provision for a developmental dimension, namely that occurrences of plagiarism – excluding instances of a serious nature – can be used as opportunities for showing those who have committed them as a consequence of ignorance what is expected of them and how they should deal with information in the future. This does not imply that the University is complaisant in its approach to plagiarism; but, on the contrary, that it is creating a basis for a firm (though fair), transparent and consistent approach. In terms of this approach, all students must be thoroughly informed at the beginning of the year about the current plagiarism policy and its implementation in the Faculty. This information should be repeated before the submission of assignments which should be accompanied by a document signed by the student in which he or she declares that no transgression with regard to plagiarism (in the most comprehensive sense) has been committed in the document concerned.

C) Categories (including the student's level and record of offences)

Three broad categories may be distinguished in the University's handling of offences regarding plagiarism:

Category 1: Blatant instances where the department considers that the matter should in any case be referred to the **Central Disciplinary Committee**.

What counts as plagiarism in category 1:

- Any form of plagiarism committed by a postgraduate student
- Any third offence
- Serious second offences
- A second or further repetition of Category 2 offences
- Where the assignment or written material of another person is taken over blatantly without any acknowledgement, for example
 - ✎ Handing in someone else's work, with or without his or her permission.
 - ✎ Word-for-word repetition of sentences and/or paragraphs from someone else's work, including the work of a fellow student (with or without his or her permission) and class notes (oral or written) received from a lecturer.
 - ✎ Repetition with the alteration of selected words or phrases of sentences and/or paragraphs from someone else's work, including the work of a fellow student (with or without his or her permission) and class notes (oral or written) received from a lecturer.
 - ✎ Direct translation of sentences and/or paragraphs from someone else's work, including the work of a fellow student (with or without his or her permission) and class notes (oral or written) received from a lecturer.
 - ✎ Presentation of data developed or collected by someone else without acknowledging the original researcher(s) and source(s) of the information.

Category 2: Less serious instances where sources are dealt with injudiciously – in terms of plagiarism – but which in the nature of things still count as plagiarism.

What counts as plagiarism in category 2:

- Plagiarism as described in category 1 committed by a first offender or a second offence without evil intent (*mala fide*).
- Repeating ideas from someone else's work in one's own words without acknowledging the original source.
- Handing in a one's own original work or parts of a work that has already been submitted for another module or programme without indicating where the material was originally used.
- Using any translation programme from either the Internet or any other source, even in presenting one's own ideas in a foreign language (e.g. German or French), in fields of study where the use of a foreign language forms part of the assessment process.

Category 3: Offences that can be regarded as showing carelessness or inaccuracy in using and acknowledging sources, but which are still regarded as plagiarism.

What counts as plagiarism in category 3:

- Incomplete or inconsistent references to sources.
- Omitting the acknowledgement of sources in some parts.
- Using direct quotations without the use of quotation marks.

D) Procedure**Category 1 offences:**

- The lecturer assembles the necessary evidence of the plagiarism.
- The matter is pursued by the chair of the department and the lecturer concerned. (If the lecturer who pointed out the plagiarism is also the chair, another lecturer in the department is involved in the process.)
- The chair ascertains whether or not any previous offence with regard to plagiarism has been reported to the Registrar's Division (or recorded on the Faculty's Plagiarism databasis). This information is taken into account in the further handling of the matter.
- The chair and the lecturer meet with the student to discuss the matter and the student is informed that the matter is being referred to the CDC for further action. If the student so chooses after this first meeting, he or she can ask for a representative from the BASC to support him or her.
- The student is fully informed about the formal procedures of the CDC (including the "right to support" to which students are entitled in terms of the Student Regulations) and the penalties which may be imposed by the CDC (including suspension, the forfeiture of a degree or diploma and the forfeiture of class marks or credits that have been earned).
- Details of the offence and the punishment, including the student's name may also be published on notice boards on the campus.
- The decision of the department concerning the action against the student is recorded in writing.
- Details of the offence and the sanctions are recorded on the Faculty's databasis.
- The required evidence is sent to the CDC.

Category 2 offences:

- The lecturer assembles the necessary evidence of the plagiarism.
- The matter is pursued by the chair of the department and the lecturer concerned. (If the lecturer who pointed out the plagiarism is also the chair, another lecturer in the department is involved in the process.)
- The chair ascertains whether or not any previous offence with regard to plagiarism has been reported to the Registrar's Division (or recorded on the Faculty's Plagiarism databasis). This information is taken into account in the further handling of the matter.
- The chair and the lecturer meet with the student to discuss the matter and the student is informed that the matter will either be dealt with within the department or be referred to the CDC for further action. If the student so chooses after this first meeting, he or she can ask for a representative from the BASC to support him or her.
- As in the case of category 1, the student is fully informed about the procedures of the CDC so that he or she can make an informed choice.
- Departmental sanctions that may be imposed include the following: a mark of "0" may be given, a lower mark may be given.
- The decision of the department concerning the action against the student is recorded in writing. If the matter is referred to the CDC, the necessary evidence is attached. If the matter is dealt with internally, the evidence used in dealing with it (or a copy of it) is kept for at least three years.
- The Registrar's Division is informed in writing about the internal handling of the matter and about the sanction imposed.
- Details of the offence and the sanctions are recorded on the Faculty's databasis.

Category 3 offences :

- The cases of first offenders may be dealt with by the lecturer concerned, at his or her discretion.

- The lecturer assembles the required information with regard to the offence and ascertains if the student already has a record of having committed plagiarism.
- The lecturer discusses the offence and appropriate sanction with the student.
- Details of the offence and the sanctions are recorded on the Faculty's databasis.