

POLICY ON PLAGIARISM¹

Policy #:

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This policy, its rules, guidelines and procedures replace all previous policies and/or circulars on Plagiarism.

1. POLICY STATEMENT

It is the policy of Tshwane University of Technology (TUT) to ensure that formal mechanisms are in place that will enable its staff and students to promote academic integrity, and deter and detect plagiarism.

¹ This document is partially based on the ideas and/or content of the following documents: 1) University of Stellenbosch, *Calendar 2012, Part 1, Section 5* (pp.274-277); 2) University of Pretoria, 2009, *Plagiarism Prevention Policy*, Office of the Registrar, Document S 4726/09 (Amended) pp.26; 3) University of Johannesburg, 2012, *Historical Studies Policy: Plagiarism*, pp.9; 4) University of the Witwatersrand, 2003, *Plagiarism Policy*, Senate Document S2003/351B, pp.14; 5) University of Cape Town, 2012, *Avoiding Plagiarism: A guide for students*, pp.3; 6) University of South Africa, 2005, *Policy for Copyright Infringement and Plagiarism*, pp.3

2. DEFINITIONS

- 2.1 **“Academic output”** means all academic and scholarly work (e.g. artistic works, electronic works, literary works, multimedia products, research outputs), written or otherwise, submitted by a staff member or student for study purposes or with the intention to contribute or provide evidence of his/her intellectual contribution to the current body of knowledge.
- 2.2 **“Artistic works”** means images, graphic art, photographs, drawings, engravings, paintings, sculptures, works of architecture, poetry, compositions, lyrics, CDs, DVDs and music bites on the internet.
- 2.3 **“Electronic works”** means circuitry, computer programmes, software, websites and the internet.
- 2.4 **“Literary works”** refers to ideas, opinions, articles, books, monographs, dissertations, theses, newspapers, notes, course material, academic works of fellow students, electronic messages, data, digital information, internet sources, speeches, lectures and interviews.
- 2.5 **“Multimedia products”** means websites, video productions, films, CDs, design products and audio-recordings.
- 2.6 **“Plagiarism”** means the intentional or unintentional act of representing the published/unpublished ideas, writings, works or inventions of others as the products of one’s own original intellectual endeavours without adequately acknowledging the author, creator or source (University of Johannesburg, 2012).
- 2.7 **“Research outputs”** means publications in accredited and peer-reviewed journals, scientific reports, research grant applications, publications in conference proceedings, oral and poster conference presentations, peer-reviewed books, as well as Master’s dissertations and Doctoral theses by postgraduate students. The aims of the outputs are to validate previous research findings, to contribute to new knowledge, and to increase scientific and technological knowledge.
- 2.8 **TUT** means the Tshwane University of Technology, as duly constituted in terms of the Higher Education Act, 1997 (Act No. 101 of 1997), as amended; and
- 2.9 **University** means the Tshwane University of Technology, as duly constituted in terms of the Higher Education Act, 1997 (Act No. 101 of 1997), as amended.

3. RULES

- 3.1 Plagiarism is a form of academic misconduct that deserves specific attention due to the serious legal and/or moral consequences associated with it. An important risk associated with plagiarism is its effect in undermining public trust in the quality and integrity of academic and/or research outputs by TUT students and TUT staff members. Essentially, plagiarism is a violation of the legal and moral norms of responsible conduct towards other scholars and researchers.
- 3.2 Plagiarism is regarded as “the act of appropriating the literary compositions of another, or parts and passages of his (her) writings, or the ideas or language of the same, and passing them off as the product of one’s own mind” (Garfield, in Kumar, 2008:213). In short, plagiarism is “the appropriation of other people’s material without giving proper credit” (European Science Foundation, 2010:9).
- 3.3 No plagiarism in any form or format, committed by any member of the University community (students, staff members) is permissible, irrespective of whether it occurs with or without the intent to plagiarise. In all cases it is assumed that where certain plagiarised content/material is found in academic output, the author intended it to be there.
- 3.4 Each student and staff member is personally responsible to familiarise him/herself of the plagiarism principles in this policy. As such, in all matters it will be assumed that all registered students and staff members are adequately aware of the principles of plagiarism, conventions of referencing and norms of academic writing. See Paragraph 6 for specific staff responsibilities and Paragraph 7 for specific student responsibilities regarding plagiarism awareness.
- 3.5 Plagiarism is a form of academic misconduct for which a student or staff member may be disciplined according to the University’s disciplinary code.
- 3.6 Plagiarism applies to the following academic outputs: Artistic works, electronic works, literary works, multimedia products and research outputs.
- 3.7 Plagiarism is not the same as copyright infringement, even though both processes may apply to a particular act. Stander (2012) indicates that *copyright infringement* refers to a violation of the rights of a copyright holder, when material restricted by copyright is used without consent, while *plagiarism* is a moral concept referring to the unearned increment to the plagiarising author's reputation that is achieved through false claims/misrepresentation of authorship. Within academia, plagiarism by students, lecturers or researchers is considered academic dishonesty or academic fraud.

- 3.8 The following forms of plagiarism are applicable to this policy (Kumar, 2008:213-221; Walker, in Löffström, 2011:259; Walker & Townley, 2012:27-31):
- 3.8.1 **Plagiarism of ideas:** The ideas of another person are used/presented as one's own academic output while in actual fact only the wordings and format of presentation have been changed. This includes translating ideas from one language into another language and then presenting it as one's own academic output.
 - 3.8.2 **Paraphrasing plagiarism:** The practice of correctly citing an information source in any form of academic output but presenting the cited material as paraphrased when in actual fact it is a direct quote. Alternatively, it refers to paraphrasing someone else's academic output without crediting the source.
 - 3.8.3 **Verbatim plagiarism** (Word-for-word plagiarism): The practice of copying material verbatim from an information source, including those taken from the internet, without citing the source in any recognised way. The material is presented as one's own academic output.
 - 3.8.4 **Purloining** (Plagiarism of authorship): The practice of submitting any form of academic output as one's own work while it is substantially/essentially the academic work of another person/s with or without that person/s' knowledge. Essentially it is misattribution of authorship, so-called pseudepigraphy. This includes knowingly allowing another person to copy one's own academic work and allowing him/her to present it as their own academic output.
 - 3.8.5 **Ghost writing** (Contract cheating): The practice of using/contracting another person or a professional agency to produce academic work, sometimes even original work, on his/her behalf and then submitting it as his/her own academic output. It *inter alia* includes the practice of buying pre-written academic work from online essay mills which may have been submitted to educational institutions before.
 - 3.8.6 **Autoplagerism** (Self-plagiarism, Duplicate publication, Dual publication, Concurrent publication, Simultaneous submission): The practice of publishing/presenting/submitting the same academic content with or without minor modifications in different academic contexts (e.g. course, programme, qualification) or research outcome contexts (e.g. scientific journals, scientific conferences) without reference to the earlier/concurrent academic output.
 - 3.8.7 **Plagiarism of ideas by reviewers/assessors:** The practice where a reviewer/assessor use the ideas he/she has access to during a review/assessment process to create any form of academic output and presenting the ideas as his/her own work.

3.8.8 **Collusion plagiarism:** The practice of presenting academic output as one's own independent work when it has been produced in whole or in part in collusion with other person/s.

4. ACADEMIC CONTEXT OF PLAGIARISM

4.1 The scholarly endeavours at a university means that students and staff members are exposed to the ideas, written material and various intellectual and creative products of other scholars (*sensu lato*). The intention of scholarship is that the ideas, knowledge and academic products of students and staff members are shaped by these scholars' ideas and material. In this process, critical evaluation is required to make new/original inputs or syntheses regarding contemporary international and local academic questions. In this regard it is of utmost importance to evaluate and distinguish the original contribution by a particular student or staff member from the authentic contributions of other scholars. Fundamentally, this is done by a formal system of acknowledgement and referencing. The basis and/or origin of scholarly work at a university is undermined when these conventions of acknowledgement and referencing are ignored and/or violated.

4.2 The primary foci of the policy are the following:

4.2.1 To **create awareness** amongst students, lecturers, researchers and staff members regarding the principles of plagiarism;

4.2.2 To promote an **educative development** (i.e. informative, educative and preventative) context to assist students and staff members in the practical observance of plagiarism principles; and

4.2.3 To establish **procedures to detect** plagiarism and **deal** with **transgressors**.

5. PLAGIARISM AWARENESS – GENERAL PRINCIPLES

5.1 The primary aims of plagiarism awareness are the following:

5.1.1 Establish and instil a proper understanding of the concept of plagiarism;

5.1.2 Outline the practices that constitute plagiarism;

5.1.3 Ensure proper knowledge of referencing conventions; and

- 5.1.4 Provide training on the use and application of referencing conventions within an academic context (e.g. writing essays, assignments, dissertations).
- 5.2 It is the responsibility of the relevant Head of Department or Director to ensure that all students and staff members in his/her domain are adequately aware of this policy.
- 5.3 The following initiatives and/or resources should be utilised to optimise plagiarism awareness:
 - 5.3.1 Information Literacy courses offered by the Library and Information Services, including a compulsory induction information literacy module and plagiarism of internet material module for all first-year students;
 - 5.3.2 Library and Information Services webpage with online information and tutorials regarding plagiarism;
 - 5.3.3 Research methodology courses for postgraduate students that provide in-depth information and guidance regarding plagiarism, copyright, and referencing principles/conventions;
 - 5.3.4 Generic Research Competency courses for staff members offered under the auspices of the Directorate Research and Innovation. The plagiarism module should ideally be presented by experts from Legal Services and/or the Directorate Teaching and Learning with Technology – course content should include the principles, identification, avoidance and consequences of plagiarism, as well as training in plagiarism detection software (e.g. Turnitin);
 - 5.3.5 Warning notices against plagiarism in all study guides and assignment guidelines, including a reference or link to the relevant Library and Information Services webpage and guidelines;
 - 5.3.6 All academic work guidelines should prescribe a specific referencing convention;
 - 5.3.7 A strict requirement for each academic output submission (e.g. assignment, project, manuscript, dissertation and thesis) to be accompanied by a signed Declaration of Originality (see Annexures A and B); and
 - 5.3.8 A strict prohibition that academic output submissions may not be formally assessed, graded or commented on unless it is accompanied by a signed Declaration of Originality.

6. PLAGIARISM AWARENESS – STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES

- 6.1 All staff members must be fully aware that plagiarism offences/penalties can seriously affect their scholarly and/or professional status and progress at TUT and other tertiary institutions. In the most serious cases it can result in dismissal from the University and/or formal cancellation/retraction of current/previously submitted academic outputs. This information may be released by the University when it is required to provide a reference or conduct statement for the particular staff member.
- 6.2 All staff members, lecturers and postgraduate supervisors have a moral obligation and professional responsibility to act as role models of scholarly conduct by avoiding plagiarism in their own work (e.g. journal manuscripts, teaching material, study notes, formal documents) and by expressing a positive emphasis on the value of learning and professional growth through the production of original scholarly work.
- 6.3 Academic staff members, lecturers and postgraduate supervisors have a responsibility to ensure that undergraduate and postgraduate students are provided with guidance and awareness/understanding on how to identify and avoid plagiarism, as well as how to consistently apply the conventions and norms of referencing and academic writing. This is important as students who allegedly commit plagiarism may claim that they were not adequately informed by the university about the nature and/or seriousness of plagiarism misconduct.
- 6.4 All lecturers are required to ensure that all study guides and assignment guidelines prominently display a warning notice against plagiarism, an indication of potential penalties for offences, a reference or link to the relevant Library and Information Services webpage and guidelines, and a statement concerning the students' responsibilities (see Paragraph 7).
- 6.5 All lecturers and postgraduate supervisors are required to only accept academic output submissions (e.g. assignment, project, manuscript, dissertation and thesis) for assessment if they are accompanied by a duly signed Declaration of Originality (see Annexures A and B).
- 6.6 All staff members, lecturers and postgraduate supervisors have a moral obligation and professional responsibility to report plagiarism incidents in their work environments. All whistleblowers are protected in terms of the Policy on Prevention of Fraud, Corruption and Theft (Policy #: VCPOL010).

7. PLAGIARISM AWARENESS – STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

7.1 All students have a personal moral obligation and responsibility to maintain the following academic integrity principles in the production and presentation of academic outputs, regardless of the presentation format and/or work type:

7.1.1 Each student should only submit his/her own original academic work, except when formal group work was required in the production of the academic output;

7.1.2 Each student should accurately indicate in all academic outputs when information is used that was produced by another scholar by referencing it in accordance with a recognised referencing convention system;

7.1.3 No student should use, present or submit someone else's electronic works, multimedia products or artistic works as if it were his/her own;

7.1.4 Each student should accurately indicate the download/access date and the uniform resource locator (URL) of the internet web page when information is used from a website, web page or other electronic source;

7.1.5 No student should allow another person/s to use or copy from his/her academic output and present it as their own work;

7.1.6 Each student is required to attach a signed Declaration of Originality (see Annexures A and B) for each academic output submission (e.g. assignment, project, manuscript, dissertation and thesis); and

7.1.7 Each student has the responsibility to request assistance from staff members should they require guidance and/or advice about plagiarism in their academic outputs.

7.2 Students have a moral obligation to report plagiarism incidents in academic and/or research environments. All whistleblowers are protected in terms of the Policy on Prevention of Fraud, Corruption and Theft (Policy #: VCPOL010).

7.3 Plagiarism is a form of misconduct. The relevant part (Chapter 15 - Student Discipline) of the Prospectus, Part 1 (Students' rules and regulations) read as follows:

“Any student who contravenes the provisions of rule 15.1 of the disciplinary code is guilty of misconduct and will be dealt with in terms of the disciplinary code for students ...

15.1.16 Handing in any written assignment for assessment in which the essential parts of the assignment have been copied from the work of another person, or any form of plagiarism.”

- 7.4 All students must be fully aware that plagiarism offences/penalties can seriously affect their academic status and progress at TUT and other tertiary institutions. In the most serious cases it can result in dismissal from the University and/or formal cancellation/retraction of current/previously submitted academic outputs. This information may be released by the University when it is required to provide a reference or conduct statement for the particular student.

8. PLAGIARISM OFFENCES

- 8.1 Plagiarism offences are divided into the following three **categories**:

8.1.1 **Category 1 – Minor (“naive”) offences:** This involves first-time offences resulting from ignorance, negligence and/or inaccuracy in working with and/or acknowledging information sources in academic outputs. This category is only applicable to undergraduate students.

8.1.2 **Category 2 – Less serious (moderate) offences:** These offences refer to cases in which information sources have been dealt with in a consciously injudicious way. This category is applicable to all students and staff members.

8.1.3 **Category 3 – Blatant (serious) offences:** These offences refer to cases where the academic work, information sources, literary works, artistic works or multimedia products of another person have been intentionally and deliberately plagiarised. It includes cases of suspected collusion and/or deliberate dishonesty with the intention to plagiarise. In addition, these offences may pose a significant legal risk to the University as an institution. This category is applicable to all students and staff members.

- 8.2 The objective of **plagiarism penalisation** is to deal with it in a fair, transparent and consistent manner. Anyone suspected of Category 2 or Category 3 plagiarism offences must be informed in writing by the relevant Head of Department, Director or Executive Dean of the alleged plagiarism and be given a chance to respond to the allegations in writing or in person within a reasonable time period. Plagiarism offences must be handled according to the following guidelines:

8.2.1 **Category 1 offences (Minor offences):** These cases should be dealt with by the department/faculty/directorate concerned, primarily with a focus on academic/scholarly development rather than punishment. One or more of the following sanctions/actions may be imposed: Verbal warning; a mark of zero is allocated to the submitted academic output (student submissions); compulsory attendance of awareness course/s; academic output may be redone. A formal note of the offence must be entered into the offender's student record. This will ensure that persons who have been referred for specific developmental actions/programmes are held accountable for any subsequent plagiarism infringements.

- 8.2.2 **Category 2 offences (Moderate offences):** These cases are dealt with by the department/faculty/directorate concerned. One or more of the following sanctions may be imposed: Written warning; a mark of zero is allocated (student submissions); compulsory attendance of awareness course/s; academic output may be redone. A formal note of the offence must be entered into the offender's student/staff record. Cases dealing with repeated offenders and/or cases that are deemed to border on Category 3 offences should be referred to Legal Services (Integrity Office).
- 8.2.3 **Category 3 offences (Serious offences):** All these cases must be referred to the Student Judicial Office, in the case of students, or the Employee Relations Office, in the case of staff members, for investigation. An appropriate penalty for the misconduct is imposed according to University's Staff Code or Student Code.
- 8.3 The following assessment factors should inform the seriousness of an alleged plagiarism case:
- 8.3.1 The significance of the plagiarised content on the submitted academic output;
- 8.3.2 The extent and/or amount of the plagiarism in the submitted academic output. Note that this is not equivalent to the % reported by the plagiarism detection software (e.g. Turnitin) as that number is merely a reflection of the sources that contain text similar to previously submitted material;
- 8.3.3 The academic/research experience of the student or staff member;
- 8.3.4 The level of exposure to the University's plagiarism awareness actions (see Paragraph 5.3); and
- 8.3.5 Previous offences of plagiarism.
- 8.4 The Student Judicial Office, in the case of students, or the Employee Relations Office, in the case of staff members, will only investigate written complaints of alleged plagiarism, together with the necessary documentary and/or oral evidence. Such a complaint may be made anonymously.
- 8.5 All formal cases of alleged plagiarism need to be properly documented. A written report needs to be submitted to the Student Judicial Office, in the case of students, or the Employee Relations Office, in the case of staff members, for inclusion in a formal plagiarism register. The aim of the plagiarism register is to enable monitoring of offenders and to ensure the consistent application of penalties and/or corrective actions. This includes the cases where the allegations were found to be unfounded. The following information needs to accompany the report:

- i. The submitted written complaint;
- ii. The submitted alleged documentary evidence;
- iii. The names of the persons who were involved in the investigation/hearing;
- iv. The verdict, with sanction/s, where applicable; and
- v. Proof that the alleged offender has been informed of the decision.

8.6 Appeals are dealt with according to the existing disciplinary guidelines.

9. REFERENCES

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10. BIBLIOGRAPHY OF SOURCES CONSULTED

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11. SIGNATURES

Date checked by Quality Promotion:		Date checked by Legal Services:	
Notification date: AC		Notification date: ASC	
Date Draft policy placed online for comments: QP		Date approved by CRIC:	
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Date approved by Council:		Date Quality Promotion post e-document on the web:	
Date filed by Legal Services:		Date reviewed:	

ANNEXURE A

DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY - INDIVIDUAL WORK

1. I hereby declare that this academic work is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree BTech (*Insert course name*), at Tshwane University of Technology.
2. This academic work is my own original work and has not been partially or wholly copied/translated from the academic work of another person.
3. This academic work has not previously been submitted to any other institution of higher education in South Africa or any other country.
4. I declare that this academic work fully complies with the stipulations of the TUT Policy on Plagiarism (Policy X.xxx). Each scholarly contribution and all the sources cited or quoted have been properly attributed and are indicated and acknowledged by means of a comprehensive list of references.
5. I understand that the University may impose disciplinary actions against me should a reasonable suspicion exists that this academic work is not my own unaided work or that I have failed to properly acknowledge the source of the information in my academic work”

Full Names & Surname

Student/Staff Number

Signature

Date

ANNEXURE B

DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY - GROUP WORK

1. We hereby declare that this academic work is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree BTech (*Insert course name*), at Tshwane University of Technology.
2. It is the original work of our group and the individual contribution of each group member is the following: (*Insert the initials, surnames and student numbers of all group members*).

Initials, Surname & Student Number	Specific contribution to the academic work (e.g. performed the statistical analyses, written section A of the report, typed the electronic version of the report, etc)
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	

3. This academic work has not been partially or wholly copied/translated from the academic work of another person/group.
4. This academic work has not previously been submitted to any other institution of higher education in South Africa or any other country.
5. We declare that this academic work fully complies with the stipulations of the TUT Policy on Plagiarism (Policy X.xxx). Each scholarly contribution and all the sources cited or quoted have been properly attributed and are indicated and acknowledged by means of a comprehensive list of references.
6. We understand that the University may impose disciplinary actions against us should a reasonable suspicion exists that this is not our own unaided work or that we have failed to properly acknowledge the source of the information in my academic work”

Full Names, Surname & Student Number - Group Member 1

Signature - Group Member 1

Full Names, Surname & Student Number - Group Member 2

Signature - Group Member 2

Full Names, Surname & Student Number - Group Member 3

Signature - Group Member 3

Full Names, Surname & Student Number - Group Member 4

Signature - Group Member 4

Date