



## PLAGIARISM POLICY

<b>Policy Owner</b>	<b>DVC: Research and Internationalisation</b>
<b>Division/ Unit/ Department</b>	<b>Postgraduate School</b>
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# PLAGIARISM POLICY

## 1 PREAMBLE

The University of Johannesburg (UJ):

- In pursuit of its vision of being an international university of choice, anchored in Africa, dynamically shaping the future;
- mindful of its commitment to the sustained excellence and relevance of its comprehensive programmes and of its research; and
- recognising its obligation to nurture employees and students with integrity, who are knowledgeable, well-balanced leaders and confident global citizens and who act in keeping with the precepts of ethical academic conduct, whether in research or in teaching,

The *Policy on Plagiarism* provides a framework to define what plagiarism is in the context of promoting creative and original intellectual endeavour as a public good, what the impact of plagiarism is on the academic integrity of teaching, learning and research, and practices to manage and prevent its occurrence.

## 2 PURPOSE

The purpose of the policy is to:

- 2.1 state clearly what plagiarism is;
- 2.2 establish guidelines and procedures to prevent plagiarism through developmental means;
- 2.3 establish processes to manage acts of plagiarism, and to administer appropriate consequences to incidences of plagiarism and associated disciplinary action; and
- 2.4 prescribe the responsibilities of employees and students when acts of alleged plagiarism occur.

## 3 SCOPE OF THE POLICY

3.1 The policy applies to all persons affiliated to UJ. These include:

- employees;
- postdoctoral research fellows (PDRFs);
- undergraduate and postgraduate students;
- research affiliates;

- visiting academics; and
- community engagement research collaborators.

## 4 MEANING OF PLAGIARISM

- 4.1 A person commits “plagiarism” when they wrongly represent, pass off or reproduce someone else’s words, phrases, concepts, ideas, data or other work (“intellectual output”), whether written, visual or oral, as their own original intellectual work, without adequately acknowledging the original author or source by means of the recognised referencing methods of the relevant discipline.
- 4.2 Plagiarism includes the *direct* representation, passing off or reproduction of another’s intellectual output as one’s own, or through the establishment of a *close identification* with that other person’s intellectual output (e.g., through paraphrase or close borrowing), in the absence of a clear acknowledgment (through, e.g., quotation marks or accurate source reference) that the intellectual output is someone else’s and not one’s own.
- 4.3 Plagiarism does not occur if the words, phrases, concepts or ideas or data used belong to a *common language* or *are common knowledge* in a particular discipline, or if the representation, passing off or reproduction of another’s intellectual output as one’s own is of a *minor or frivolous nature* and not substantial.
- 4.4 Plagiarism is committed by a person who wrongly represents, passes off or reproduces another’s intellectual output as her/his own with the *intention to deceive*, or who does so without adequate knowledge, skill, or care in presenting academic work as her/his own under circumstances where that person *may reasonably be expected to have had* such knowledge, skill, or care.
- 4.5 Plagiarism can and often does amount to infringement of *copyright*, in which case the provisions of the Copyright Act 98 of 1978 can also apply.
- 4.6 Plagiarism is academic dishonesty. It compromises academic integrity, the five fundamental ethical values of which are taken to be:<sup>1</sup>
- honesty,
  - trust,
  - fairness,
  - respect and
  - responsibility.

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<sup>1</sup> See <https://www.academicintegrity.org/fundamental-values/>

- 4.7 A student who commits plagiarism fails to:
- (i) develop the ability to analyse, interpret and evaluate available knowledge and information;
  - (ii) acquire the knowledge, competencies and skills required for the workplace;
  - (iii) develop a personal style of academic writing; and
  - (iv) establish or develop an independent voice that articulates knowledge and information in an original and authentic way.
- 4.8 Self-plagiarism occurs where a person represents, passes off or reproduces their own work previously submitted for assessment or published as new or original work without declaring that fact. This may amount to academic misconduct that may lead to disciplinary action. Examples are where a student submits previously assessed work for which a qualification had been awarded for purposes of obtaining another qualification, or where a publication for which state subsidy had already been generated, is submitted as original work to again generate state subsidy.
- 4.9 Fabrication and falsification of academic research are related to plagiarism and are also forms of academic misconduct:
- (i) *Fabrication* of academic research occurs through the invention of data and results and recording or reporting them;
  - (ii) *Falsification* of academic research occurs through manipulation, change or omission of data or results of research material, equipment, or processes, resulting in inaccurate representation of research.<sup>2</sup>

## **5 RESPONSIBILITIES FOR COMBATING PLAGIARISM**

### **5.1 Responsibilities of academic and academic support staff towards students**

- 5.1.1 Executive Deans and, where appropriate, Executive Directors/Senior Directors, must ensure that all academic and academic support staff involved with the research, teaching, and learning activities of students have or are provided with adequate training in and information on plagiarism and on appropriate discipline-related writing conventions and referencing techniques when using literature sources. Their obligation extends, where appropriate, to ensuring that structured opportunities exist and are employed for staff and students to develop the necessary knowledge and skills to avoid plagiarism.

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<sup>2</sup> On “fabrication” and “falsification” of research data see Office of Research Integrity, USA: <https://ori.hhs.gov/definition-misconduct>).

5.1.2 It is the responsibility of all academic and academic support staff involved with the research, teaching, and learning activities of students to:

- (i) know, understand and consistently apply the UJ Plagiarism Policy and to serve as a role model for students in the avoidance of plagiarism in their own work (whether the work is for teaching and learning purposes or for publication);
- (ii) make students aware of the Plagiarism Policy, and of the serious consequences of plagiarism in as prominent and continuous a manner as possible;
- (iii) provide students with the *Plagiarism Warning* attached to this policy as **Appendix A** and ensure that a student completes and attaches the *Anti-plagiarism declaration* (attached to this policy as **Appendix B**) to each assignment submitted;
- (iv) inculcate in students an awareness of the importance of academic integrity (in their own and in others' work), of thinking independently and expressing their own ideas in academically acceptable fashion;
- (v) instill a comprehension of which referencing techniques and writing conventions are appropriate to a particular academic discipline to ensure authentic and original academic work; and
- (vi) provide information on the punitive consequences of plagiarism.

5.1.3 Faculty/college-approved signed declaration forms must accompany all academic assignments submitted by a student at the levels below master's and doctoral levels confirming the originality of the assignment (see Appendix B as an example).

5.1.4 A student registered for a master's or doctoral qualification must submit a faculty/college-approved affidavit upon submission of a minor research dissertation, dissertation, or thesis, as the case may be (in a format of which **Appendix C** serves as an example). The affidavit must, at a minimum, contain:

- a statement by the student that the work submitted is their own and original work;
- acquiescence that the student understands what plagiarism is and what the consequences of plagiarism are;
- confirmation by the student that where their own previously published or assessed work is used, this is clearly referenced as such; and
- affirmation by the student that all sources used by the student are clearly and properly referenced and acknowledged as may be appropriate.

- 5.1.5 All online submission portals must ensure compulsory acknowledgement by the student of the declaration relating to plagiarism referred to in 5.1.2(iii), 5.1.3 and 5.1.4 for every electronically submitted assignment, minor dissertation, dissertation or thesis, which thus serves as an acknowledgment that the student has familiarized her/himself with the contents of the declaration and that the acknowledgement accompanying the electronic submission bears the full equivalence to a signature to the declaration.
- 5.1.6 All practical and available means of electronic plagiarism detection must be used by academic and academic support staff to assist with plagiarism detection, such as *Turnitin* or comparable software.
- 5.1.7 Plagiarism detected in the submissions of master's and doctoral students during or after assessment will be dealt with by the higher degrees committees of both faculties and Senate.

## **5.2 Responsibilities of students**

- 5.2.1 Students have the responsibility to ensure that they know and understand what plagiarism and academic integrity are as explained in the Plagiarism Policy and what the serious consequences of academic dishonesty are.
- 5.2.2 Students are expected to know and to apply the referencing techniques appropriate to a particular academic discipline, as made available to them by academic and academic support staff, to ensure that the authenticity and originality of written or presented works of academic creativity are not compromised by a lack of understanding proper referencing.
- 5.2.3 Students are expected to seek assistance from academic and academic support staff when they are unsure about whether they are committing plagiarism in their work.
- 5.2.4 Students who allow their work – whether intentionally or negligently, to be copied by others, are equally complicit in the fraudulent practice of academic misconduct and will be subject to concomitant university disciplinary measures.

## **6 MANAGEMENT OF ALLEGED STUDENT PLAGIARISM**

- 6.1 It is acknowledged that it is often no simple matter to identify and deal effectively with plagiarism and related forms of academic misconduct or self-plagiarism, fabrication, and falsification of academic research, as defined, and explained in 4 (“Meaning of Plagiarism”).
- 6.2 An academic or academic support employee who becomes aware of an act of alleged plagiarism must, after consultation with and the approval of their immediate superior, make an initial assessment of its seriousness. In such an assessment, the following factors, among others, are considered:

- the year of study or level of the student and her/his concomitant level of academic maturity;
- whether the student had the intention to deceive;
- how substantial the alleged plagiarism is;
- writing and referencing conventions of the particular academic discipline;
- whether the student has committed plagiarism before; and
- the potential legal or reputational risk to UJ.

### 6.3 **Developmental/educative response**

6.3.1 If the assessment provided for in 6.2 finds that the alleged plagiarism is not of a serious nature and does not merit disciplinary action, the relevant employee must:

- (i) counsel the student on plagiarism and the possible consequences of future acts of plagiarism;
- (ii) provide such advice or assistance as deemed necessary to inculcate in the student proper academic practice, such as referral to writing-skills workshops or explanatory literature;
- (iii) place the onus on the student to accept responsibility for the prevention of future acts of plagiarism.

6.3.2 No disciplinary action is taken against the student, except that

- (i) marks for the particular assignment may, in the discretion of the employee concerned, be deducted for the student's assignment;
- (ii) the name of the student is submitted to the relevant faculty committee (see 5.5 below) for noting;
- (iii) failure on the part of the student to act on a referral provided for in 6.3.1 (ii) above can lead to formal disciplinary action against the student.

### 6.4 **Disciplinary response**

If the investigation provided for in 6.2 finds that the alleged plagiarism committed by a student is of a serious nature, an appropriate course of action takes place in accordance with one of three levels of engagement with the matter:

#### 6.4.1 **Level One**

- (i) If the alleged plagiarism is deemed by the employee concerned to have been committed *unintentionally* by a student who lacks academic maturity, they engage with the student. The student is informed of the detection of the alleged plagiarism.

- (ii) The work in which the alleged plagiarism occurs is retained by the employee concerned.
- (iii) The student is afforded an opportunity to re-submit the work within a reasonable period, upon submission of which the student is awarded a mark of no more than 50%.
- (iv) Should the student not avail themselves of the opportunity to re-submit the work, the student will receive 0% for the assignment.
- (v) If a student denies that plagiarism has been committed or refuses to submit to the process described in (i)-(iv), the matter is dealt with at Level Two.

#### 6.4.2 Level Two

- (i) If, in the opinion of the employee concerned, the alleged plagiarism is such that it justifies action beyond the steps to be taken at Level One, or the student does not accept the steps taken by the employee at Level One, the employee, refers the matter to the relevant committee of the faculty/college as set out in 6.5.
- (ii) The committee, after having considered written or verbal representations from the employee concerned and/or, where appropriate, the student concerned (who has a right to be assisted by a UJ student or employee) and any other employee or student, takes any of the following steps:
  - it decides that plagiarism did not occur, in which case the matter is disposed of; or
  - it determines that plagiarism did occur and directs the employee concerned to award the student 0% for the assignment; or
  - it determines that plagiarism did occur and refers the matter, with the approval of the Executive Dean (or, where appropriate, Executive Director) to the Student Disciplinary Committee with a recommendation that, should the student be found guilty of plagiarism as defined in this policy, the student's registration for the module concerned should be cancelled.
- (iii) If the student or employee is dissatisfied with the steps taken by the committee, they may appeal to the Executive Dean (or Executive Director). After considering the matter, the Executive Dean (or Executive Director) must:
  - dismiss the matter, in which case the matter is disposed of; or
  - refer the matter back to the committee for it to re-consider its decision and, upon re-consideration, to either direct the employee to act in



accordance with (iii)-(iv) of Level One or award the student 0% for the assignment or refer the matter to the Student Disciplinary Committee; or

- confirm the decision of the committee.
- (iv) If the student remains dissatisfied with the steps taken in accordance with Level Two, they may request the Executive Dean (or Executive Director) to refer the matter to the Student Disciplinary Committee for its consideration and decision in terms of the *Regulations for Student Discipline* and the *UJ Student Regulations*.
- (v) The student must be provided with written reasons for any steps taken by the committee.
- (vi) The steps taken by the committee and, where appropriate, by the Executive Dean (or Executive Director) in the matter are recorded by the chairperson of the committee and the record is submitted to the relevant Faculty/College Board for noting.

### **6.4.3 Level Three**

- (i) If, in the opinion of the employee concerned, the alleged plagiarism is such that it justifies action beyond the steps to be taken beyond level Two she/he refers the matter to the relevant committee of the faculty/college as set out in 6.5.
- (ii) If the alleged plagiarism is committed by a postgraduate student or by an undergraduate student who has committed plagiarism before, the committee *must*, in collaboration with the Executive Dean (or Executive Director) refer the matter to the Student Disciplinary Committee, which deals with the matter in accordance with the *Regulations for Student Discipline* and the *UJ Student Regulations*. In other cases, the committee *may* deal with the matter in accordance with Level Two or refer the matter to the Student Disciplinary Committee.
- (iii) If the Student Disciplinary Committee finds a student guilty of plagiarism as defined in this policy, the name of the student is placed on a Plagiarism Register maintained by the Registrar and the disciplinary charge and finding is recorded in their ITS/Oracle record.

### **6.5 Committees responsible for the management of alleged student plagiarism**

- 6.5.1 Each faculty/college and, where appropriate, each academic support division, must provide for an existing committee or a committee to be established, or a sub-committee of such committees, to manage cases of alleged student

plagiarism and other forms of academic misconduct. It is at the discretion of a faculty/ college to have the same committee dealing with alleged plagiarism on undergraduate and postgraduate level, or alternatively to have different committees dealing with each.

6.5.2 The higher degrees committees of both faculties and Senate deal with plagiarism detected in the submissions of master's and doctoral students during, or after, assessment.

6.5.3 The committee referred to in 6.5.1 manages cases of alleged plagiarism in respect of modules for which its faculty/college has the academic responsibility awarded to it by Senate.

6.5.4 The responsibilities of such a committee are:

- (i) those described in 6.4.1 (i)-(iii) and (v) of Level Two and 6.4.1 (i)-(ii) of Level Three;
- (ii) to maintain a register of all cases of alleged student plagiarism in modules for which the relevant faculty/college or support division has responsibility, irrespective of whether the matter was dealt with at Level One, Two or Three;
- (iii) to provide the student involved in a case of alleged plagiarism with written reasons for the steps it takes in dealing with the alleged plagiarism;
- (iv) to submit a report to the faculty/college board on cases of alleged plagiarism and the manner in which they have been dealt with at least once per year; and
- (iv) to advise its faculty/college board on developmental initiatives to be taken or, if in place, on their effectiveness in combating student plagiarism.

## **7 MANAGEMENT OF ALLEGED PLAGIARISM BY AN EMPLOYEE OR AFFILIATE**

Alleged plagiarism by an employee or person affiliated with the University other than as a student is dealt with in terms of the *Disciplinary Code and Procedure* for employees. An affiliate is any person who qualifies for their research output (whether any had been produced) to be measured and evaluated in terms of policy published in terms of the Higher Education Act, 1997

## **8 RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER UNIVERSITY POLICIES AND RULES**

- 8.1 This policy does not over-ride established administrative or appeal procedures that would normally be followed in relation to academic matters, e.g. appeals against assessment grades, exclusion, student rules and regulations and the Student Representative Council's (SRC) Code of Conduct.
- 8.2 It will not be a defense in disciplinary proceedings conducted by a duly constituted disciplinary committee of the University that any or all the steps to deal with alleged plagiarism as provided for in this policy had not been taken or had been taken defectively, and the disciplinary committee may proceed with its enquiry regardless. A disciplinary committee of the University does not have the power to review a decision of an academic structure of the University.

## **9 PUBLICATION OF POLICY**

This policy is readily available to all students and persons who are affiliated to UJ.

## **10 INTERPRETATION AND COMMENCEMENT**

- 10.1 Any reference in the policy to the singular includes the plural and vice versa. A reference to gender includes all genders.
- 10.2 If any provision of the policy is or becomes invalid or unenforceable due to law, such provision shall be divisible from the policy and regarded as *pro non scripto* and the remaining provisions of the policy shall remain valid and enforceable.
- 10.3 If any clause (including a definition clause) contains a substantive provision, notwithstanding that it is present only in that clause, effect shall be given to it as if it were a substantive provision in the body of the policy.
- 10.4 The use of word "including" or "for example" or other similar grammatical forms followed by specific instances shall not be construed as limiting the meaning of the general wording preceding it and the *eiusdem generis* rule shall not be applied to the interpretation of such general wording or such specific instances.
- 10.5 This policy is not a complete codification of all the issues to which it refers and shall not in any way be interpreted to amount to a waiver, or to limit or prejudice UJ's rights and remedies against persons affected by it in terms of the law or any other rule, policy, regulation, code or practice applicable to a person.

- 10.6 This policy or any amendment to it comes into effect when approved by the Senate. When it becomes effective, it will replace previous policies dealing with plagiarism. Previous policies will continue to govern matters where formal steps have already commenced before their repeal.

## **111 POLICY REVIEW**

Regular review of the policy will be done in line with the approved University Policy on Policy Development. This takes place in consultation with the relevant quality assurance structures at management and institutional level under the auspices of the official custodian of this policy namely the Registrar to ensure that the policy remains valid and current in the light of changing circumstances. Unless circumstances dictate otherwise, the policy will be formally reviewed within the six-year University review cycle.

## PLAGIARISM WARNING

**FACULTY / COLLEGE:**

**DEPARTMENT:**

**Student name:**

**Student number:**

The University of Johannesburg places great emphasis on integrity and ethical conduct in the preparation of assignments. It is very important that all students know how secondary material should be used, as well as the scholarly method of presenting and acknowledging references.

**Plagiarism** is academic theft. A person commits plagiarism when she or he wrongly uses someone else's words, ideas, or data, whether written, visual or oral, as one's own original intellectual work, without proper acknowledgment of the source from which you have taken the words or ideas using an appropriate citation format.

Plagiarism occurs through the direct misrepresentation of another's intellectual output as one's own, or through the establishment of a close identification with that other person's intellectual output (e.g., through paraphrase or close borrowing) without proper acknowledgment. It is committed by a person who misrepresents with the intention to deceive, or who does so under circumstances where that person should reasonably have had the knowledge, skill or care not to represent another person's work as her/his own.

Typical acts of plagiarism include purchasing work from a "ghost-writing" service and representing the work as one's own; representing, passing of or reproducing another's work as one's own ("copying"), even with that other person's consent.

If after reading this warning about plagiarism you are still uncertain about how to avoid committing plagiarism, you should speak to your lecturer or your supervisor about it before your assessment, dissertation or thesis is submitted.

Students who submit assignments, dissertations or theses in which plagiarism can be demonstrated will be subject to sanctions as provided for in the University's Plagiarism Policy and Regulations for Student Discipline.

**ASSIGNMENT COVER PAGE / ANTI-PLAGIARISM  
DECLARATION**

**University of Johannesburg**

**Faculty** .....

**Department:** .....

**Title:** .....

**Full name(s):** .....

**Student number:** .....

**Programme:** .....

**Lecturer:** .....

**Due date:** .....

1. I understand that plagiarism is to present someone else's ideas as my own.
2. Where I have used material written by other people (whether from a printed source or from the Internet), this has been carefully acknowledged and referenced. I have used *(Insert discipline appropriate convention)* for citation and referencing. Every contribution to and quotation from the work of other people in this submission has been acknowledged through citation and reference.
3. I know that plagiarism is wrong.
- 3.1 I am aware of the University's Plagiarism Policy, and I have fully familiarized myself with the contents of this Policy.
- 3.2 I know that I will be guilty of plagiarism if I do not properly credit my sources, or if I copy data, results, graphs, phrases, sentences or paragraphs from a book, article, presentation, or Internet source without providing proper citations.

4. I declare that I have written my submission in my own words, sentences, and paragraphs throughout and have properly credited all ideas / words / thoughts / graphical and pictorial presentations obtained from other people's work. I declare that this assignment is my own original work.
5. I have not allowed and will not allow anyone to copy my work with the intention of passing it off as his or her own work.

**SIGNATURE .....**

**DATE.....**



## AFFIDAVIT: MASTER'S AND DOCTORAL STUDENTS

### TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This serves to confirm that I \_\_\_\_\_ (full name(s) and surname of student)

ID Number \_\_\_\_\_

Student number \_\_\_\_\_ enrolled for the qualification \_\_\_\_\_ in the Faculty of \_\_\_\_\_ hereby declare that my academic work is in line with the *Plagiarism Policy* of the University of Johannesburg with which I am familiar.

I further declare that the work presented in the \_\_\_\_\_

(minor dissertation/dissertation/thesis) is *authentic* and *original* unless clearly indicated otherwise in which case **full reference** to the sources is provided. I do not receive or pretend to receive any credit for such acknowledged quotations, and I affirm that there is no copyright infringement in my work. I declare that no unethical research practices were used nor was any material gained through dishonesty.

I understand that plagiarism is a serious offence and in the event that I am found to be in contravention of the Plagiarism Policy notwithstanding signing this affidavit, I may be found guilty of a serious criminal offence (perjury) that would amongst other consequences compel the UJ to inform all other tertiary institutions of the offence and to issue a corresponding certificate of reprehensible academic conduct to whomever request such a certificate from the institution.

Signed at \_\_\_\_\_ on the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ 20 \_\_\_\_\_.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Print name: \_\_\_\_\_



**STAMP COMMISSIONER OF OATHS**

**Affidavit certified by a Commissioner of Oaths**

This affidavit conforms with the requirements of the JUSTICES OF THE PEACE AND COMMISSIONERS OF OATHS ACT 16 OF 1963 and the applicable Regulations published in the GG GNR 1258 of 21 July 1972; GN 903 of 10 July 1998; GN 109 of 2 February 2001 as amended.