



UNIVERSITY OF ZULULAND

POLICY AND PROCEDURES

ON

MANAGING AND PREVENTING ACTS OF PLAGIARISM

POLICY NUMBER	RI P5	POLICY OWNER	DVC: Research and Innovation
OVERSEEING COMMITTEE(S)	University Research Ethics Committee → Senate → Council		
APPROVAL DATE	07 June 2013	REVISION DATE	07 June 2016

POLICY STATEMENT

The University is responsible for developing and promoting academic integrity and improving trust in scholarly work, and for preventing plagiarism in educational and research material. This Policy articulates the University's resolve to take a firm position against all acts of plagiarism and sets out the processes and procedures that will create awareness of plagiarism issues, monitor all acts of plagiarism and will enable transgressions to be acted upon in a uniform manner across the Institution.

REVISION HISTORY

CURRENT APPROVAL CYCLE			
POLICY NUMBER:	RI P5	SENATE NUMBER(S):	S1080/18
DATE OF APPROVAL BY THE UNIVERSITY OF ZULULAND RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE:			
DATE OF SENATE APPROVAL:		07 December 2012	
DATE OF COUNCIL APPROVAL:		07 June 2013	
EFFECTIVE DATE FOR IMPLEMENTATION:		07 June 2013	
NEXT REVISION DATE:		07 June 2016	

APPROVAL HISTORY			
DATE OF FIRST APPROVAL:		07 June 2013	
POLICY NUMBER	SENATE NUMBER(S)	SENATE / MANCO REVISION DATE	COUNCIL APPROVAL DATE

RELATED POLICIES	
POLICY NUMBER	NAME OF POLICY
	Research Policy
	Ethics Policy
	Higher Degrees Policy
	Student Disciplinary Code
	Staff Disciplinary Code

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SECTION A: POLICY

1 PURPOSE AND RATIONALE

Plagiarism constitutes a breach of academic integrity and compromises and undermines the values and processes by which knowledge is created, shared and evaluated. Such breach not only cast suspicion upon the integrity of the individuals involved, but also damage the reputation of the academic community. The University of Zululand (“the University”, “UNIZULU”, “the Institution”) therefore has a responsibility to uphold academic integrity and to promote trust in scholarly work undertaken at the Institution and to prevent plagiarism within the Institution.

This Policy and Procedures on Managing and Preventing Acts of Plagiarism (“the Policy”) articulates the University’s resolve to promote academic integrity and to take a firm position against all acts of plagiarism. Its purpose is to establish consistent guidelines and procedures on how plagiarism at UNIZULU can be monitored and prevented at undergraduate, postgraduate and research levels in order to enhance academic integrity and ethical behaviour from the onset of a student’s and a researcher’s academic career.

The Policy’s premise is that acts of plagiarism do not necessarily stem from dishonesty and therefore adopts a nuanced approach that allows for formative, corrective and punitive approaches depending upon the particular circumstances. Accordingly, it sets out processes and procedures for creating awareness of plagiarism issues, for educating and monitoring, and for acting upon transgressions in a uniform manner across the Institution. Effective policy implementation will also enhance UNIZULU’s image as a quality academic institution.

The Policy is necessary for the following reasons:

- To get a shared and clear understanding of the nature of plagiarism
- To emphasise the need to educate the University community about plagiarism and its impact on them and the Institution
- To provide for monitoring, detection and prevention mechanisms and processes
- To establish uniform procedures for dealing with instances of plagiarism that comply with the principles of natural justice
- To contribute to academic integrity within the Institution
- To improve the quality of research at UNIZULU
- To augment the attributes of the University’s graduates
- To enhance the University’s academic reputation

The Policy should be read together with institutional codes of conduct, the Research Ethics Policy, the Disciplinary Codes for staff and students, and the Postgraduate Handbook. Referencing conventions within a particular academic discipline should also be considered.

2 SCOPE

This Policy applies to all persons who perform academic and administrative work at or on behalf of the University, where such work can reasonably be seen to be associated with the University and where the act of plagiarism has impacted or has the potential to impact upon the University's academic and administrative reputation and/or standing. Without limiting its scope, the Policy has particular relevance to the conduct of academic and administrative staff, academic assistants and tutors, research fellows and associates, staff of entities affiliated or associated with the Institution, and undergraduate and postgraduate students.

3 DEFINITIONS

Category A Transgressions

First-time, minor infringements, often associated more with incorrect citation and referencing. Such instances usually stem from ignorance or lack of academic maturity and are seldom intentional. Such cases are usually restricted to undergraduate students in their first or second years of study.

Category B Transgressions

(a) Repeated Category A offences, or to relatively minor offences at a more senior academic level than second year; (b) first-time, more serious offences, irrespective of a student's year of study, where the offence would not attract a penalty of more than the loss of a Duly Performed (DP) certificate; (c) first-time minor offences perpetrated by postgraduate students; or (d) first-time minor offences perpetrated by members of staff. Category B offences are not necessarily committed intentionally.

Category C Transgressions

Major, serious infringements by students or infringements by staff; in circumstances where they acted intentionally or negligently; or failure on the part of staff members to take reasonable steps to ensure that they comply with their obligations to prevent plagiarism as stipulated in this policy.

Ethics

A set of principles of correct conduct, in this instance, in the academic environment of teaching and learning and research. It involves morality and specific moral choices to be made by a student, lecturer or researcher. Ethics are reflected in rules and standards directing the actions and conduct of a person or the members of the

University.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the act of submitting or presenting work, study material, assignments, research work or inventions of someone else, irrespective of its source, as one's own creation; in some instances, even where credit or acknowledgement is given to the original source.¹ Plagiarism where a researcher makes use of his or her own previously-published work, without proper reference to the original work, is called self-plagiarism. (Note that fault is not part of the definition. A person's intention, negligence or innocence is not relevant to determining whether conduct constitutes plagiarism.²)

Plagiarism Detection

Processes and procedures used to identify acts of plagiarism with the assistance of relevant detection tools such as anti-plagiarism software.

Plagiarism Prevention

Steps that reduce acts of plagiarism through education, creation of awareness, prevention and monitoring.

Postgraduate student

A student registered to do a postgraduate diploma, or an Honours, Master's or doctoral degree, irrespective of whether it is a coursework or research qualification.

Researcher

A person who researches at the University and/or who produces research output in the name of or under the auspices of the University, irrespective of whether he or she is a staff member or student and could include Research Fellows, research associates, collaborators, co-authors and external supervisors of postgraduate students.

Undergraduate student

A student registered for an undergraduate degree, diploma or certificate programme.

¹ Examples of conduct that may fall within the definition include:

- Using the direct words of another without using quotation marks (even where the passage is referenced)
- Unacknowledged copying of a sentence or two of text; or copying more extensive blocks of text
- Syndication of a single piece of work by more than one student (except where the assignment task is a legitimate group assignment)
- Borrowing and using another person's assignment (with or without his or her knowledge and permission)
- Submitting an entire essay from another person or from the Internet; or infringing copyright

² However, these factors become material when determining the nature of any remedial or punitive action.

4 GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND VALUES

The following principles govern the University's approach to the identification and management of plagiarism and will inform any decisions and processes taken to ensure compliance with this Policy:

- 4.1 The University has a responsibility to uphold academic integrity and to promote trust in scholarly work undertaken at the Institution.
- 4.2 Academic activity within the Institution shall be conducted with scholarly integrity and excellence. Plagiarism constitutes a breach of academic integrity and compromises and undermines the values and processes by which knowledge is created, shared and evaluated.
- 4.3 Instances of plagiarism cast suspicion not only upon the integrity of the individuals involved, but also upon the reputation of the University and its academic community.
- 4.4 Plagiarism is not only an issue in the academic sphere. The principles apply equally for ensuring that administrative work is conducted with integrity.
- 4.5 Acts of plagiarism do not necessarily stem from dishonesty. In a society where preparation for academic endeavour is inadequate, different levels of academic maturity should be recognized and policies and rules should cater for such different situations by taking in to account, in appropriate instances, possible lack of awareness of applicable standards and inadequate academic preparation in respect of the referencing protocols.
- 4.6 In a learning institution, the obligation for creating awareness and educating students about plagiarism and its impact on them and the institution is paramount. Although plagiarism prevention is a group effort, academic staff members have a particular obligation to in this regard.
- 4.7 Plagiarism cases are not all the same and circumstances may dictate that ostensibly the same conduct should be treated differently. For example, a violation of academic integrity by a staff member or a postgraduate student may amount to no more than an academic misdemeanor in the first assignment of a first-year student; work submitted in the course of supervision is not a finished product and provides opportunity for education and remedial action; repeated offences would attract more serious responses; and disciplinary conventions might dictate that what constitutes plagiarism in one discipline does not attract the same reprobation in another.

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- 4.8 A nuanced developmental approach should be adopted in formulating remedial action and it must at all times be borne in mind that in a learning environment space should be made to accommodate mistakes and/or breaches of rules. Inculcating self-discipline should take precedence over imposing discipline upon another and a formative or corrective approach to remedial action should always be considered in the first instance. Punitive action should normally be reserved for serious and/or repeated violations, or where a person's academic maturity would give rise to higher standards having been set.
- 4.9 The precepts of the Constitution and the principles of natural justice must govern procedures for acting upon transgressions. Accordingly, rules and the consequences of their breach must be certain, clear and known to the alleged transgressor; and compliance and remedial standards and procedures shall be uniform, transparent and evenly applied.
- 4.10 Compliance oversight should be conducted in a spirit of promoting research endeavours and the dissemination of results.

5 STRUCTURES FOR OVERSEEING COMPLIANCE OF THIS POLICY

- 5.1 The University's research ethics oversight structures comprise the following:
- (a) Senate
 - (b) The University of Zululand Research Ethics Committee (UZREC).
 - (c) Faculty Boards
 - (d) Faculty Research Ethics Committees (FRECs)
 - (e) Committees and Tribunals constituted in term of this clause
- 5.2 The structures mentioned in Clause 5.1 operate as a collective and any of them may, without derogating from their overall responsibilities, perform certain of their functions and obligations through other committees, or special ad hoc committees or tribunals set up for specific purposes.
- 5.3 The committees established to implement this Policy have discretion to deviate from strict application of the relevant ethical guidelines where exceptional circumstances or common sense dictate, provided that the basic principles underlying this Policy are not compromised.
- 5.4 It is important to note that Senate and the committees that oversee plagiarism focus primarily on research conducted at the University and the degrees and/or programmes that the University offers. They have the usual powers associated with dealing with academic matters. Where findings may impact

- upon contractual relations between the University and the person involved, additional processes in terms of the appropriate codes would have to be instituted. Such processes cannot, however, override or supplant the conclusions reached regarding issues of academic integrity.
- 5.5 **Senate** has overall oversight in respect of research integrity, but may delegate this function, in terms of this and other policies,³ to the Research Ethics Committee (UZREC) and other committees that are accountable to that Committee (eg. Faculty Research Ethics Committees (FRECs)).
- 5.6 The **University Research Ethics Committee (UZREC)** implements, oversees and monitors research integrity at the University, including plagiarism, and shall
- (a) Provide guidance on the interpretation and implementation of this Policy
 - (b) Receive faculty reports regarding Category A and B plagiarism in their faculties
 - (c) Act upon Category C transgressions
 - (d) Constitute ad hoc Plagiarism Tribunals to deal with specific instances
 - (e) Where necessary and/or appropriate, constitute ad hoc Plagiarism Tribunals to deal with specific instances
 - (f) Annually report to Senate on matters concerning plagiarism
 - (g) Periodically review the content and the implementation of this Policy
- 5.7 **Departmental Plagiarism Committees** are committees constituted by Heads of Department to oversee and implement this Policy within a department, and to deal with Category A transgressions. The membership will vary according to the size and needs of the Department.
- 5.8 **Faculty Research Ethics Committees (FRECs)** oversee and implement this Policy within faculties, receive departmental reports regarding Category A plagiarism cases and act upon Category B transgressions. They may constitute ad hoc Faculty Plagiarism Tribunals to deal with specific instances.
- 5.9 Senate shall nominate two members from each faculty, who shall be academics, to serve on the **Senate Plagiarism Panel**. Panel members may from time to time be called upon to serve on tribunals constituted to deal with Category C transgressions or appeals from Faculty Plagiarism Tribunals.
- 5.10 In instances of Category C transgressions, the Chairperson of the UZREC shall constitute a **Plagiarism Tribunal** to deal with the matter. In such instances the Plagiarism Tribunal shall comprise three members: The UZREC

³ For example, the Research Ethics Policy.

Chairperson and two members drawn from the Senate Plagiarism Panel, one of whom shall be a member of the faculty in which the alleged plagiarism occurred and the other from another faculty.

- 5.11 A Plagiarism Tribunal may also be constituted to adjudicate appeals in respect of Faculty tribunal decisions. In such instances the membership of the Plagiarism Tribunal shall be drawn entirely from the Senate Plagiarism Panel, with one member from the faculty involved and two from other faculties.
- 5.12 The Plagiarism Tribunal shall report its findings to Senate via the UZREC.
- 5.13 A person who has been found guilty of a Category C transgression, may appeal the Plagiarism Tribunal's decision. In such instances a **Plagiarism Appeals Tribunal** shall be constituted comprising the Vice-Chancellor or a Deputy Vice-Chancellor as the Chairperson and two members of the Senate Plagiarism Panel who were not part of the original decision. The Plagiarism Appeals Tribunal shall report its findings to Senate via the UZREC. Subject to the overriding authority of Senate, its decisions shall be final and no further appeals shall be entertained.
- 5.14 In instances of Category C transgressions involving staff, the Plagiarism Tribunal, alternatively the UZREC, may, in addition to taking action in respect of the academic transgression, refer the matter to the Executive Director, Human Resources for possible disciplinary action in terms of the Staff Disciplinary Code.

6 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

6.1 Academic staff

- 6.1.1 Academic staff members are responsible for creating awareness and for putting preventative measures in place
- 6.1.2 All lecturers must be able to use and apply programs used to detect plagiarism
- 6.1.3 Departmental Heads must report acts of plagiarism to the Deans of Faculties and the Deans will ensure that the Plagiarism Policy and procedures are duly implemented
- 6.1.4 Supervisors of postgraduate students and their research work are expected to follow the university policy on postgraduate supervisory practice and should, when reviewing drafts of students' work, be vigilant in identifying potential plagiarism; and insist on students attending workshops that will familiarize them with best practice and the use of plagiarism detection software and databases.

6.2 Students

- 6.2.1 During the first two years of study students must follow orientation and awareness programmes to educate them about plagiarism
- 6.2.2 All postgraduate students should follow the procedure to check scholarly work for possible plagiarism whereafter a Plagiarism Declaration Form (Annexure B) must be completed.

6.3 Academic support

The Research Office, the Library and Information Services Division, the Academic Development Unit and the Information Communication Technology Division will co-operate to ensure availability of orientation sessions and programmes, as well as software licensing and maintenance of approved detection programmes.

6.4 Faculty and Departmental Plagiarism Monitoring and Prevention

- 6.4.1 FRECs are responsible for overseeing and coordinating awareness and preventative activities within their faculties and shall liaise with the designated persons in each department to ensure that appropriate steps are taken to implement this Policy.
- 6.4.2 Deans and Heads of Department must ensure that staff members are aware of the contents of the Policy and academic staff members are in turn obliged to educate their students in respect of their responsibilities in terms of this Policy.
- 6.4.3 At the beginning of each academic year Heads of Department should identify staff members who will oversee and implement this Policy in their departments, particularly regarding awareness training and taking preventative measures, and who will be available to assist other staff in dealing with Category A cases, and identifying Category B cases for referral to the FREC or Category C cases for referral to the UZREC.

7 DEALING WITH PLAGIARISM

7.1 Awareness and training

- 7.1.1 Staff and students must be made aware of plagiarism and its consequences and the importance that the University attaches to the detection and prevention of plagiarism. The educational role is an ongoing and shared one and it is incumbent upon University and faculty managers, Heads of Department, lecturers, supervisors and

tutors to make a concerted and sustained effort to make the University community aware of their obligations.

- 7.1.2 Departments and academic staff must appreciate the importance of their roles in assisting students to acquire the academic discourse and their responsibility for taking active steps to provide students with an explanation as to why and how sources are used and cited in building academic integrity. In addition, because the nature of referencing and plagiarism is usually context-specific, departments, in collaboration with institutional support structures such as the Research Office, the Academic Development Unit and the Library and Information Services, are responsible for ensuring that students fully understand the nature of legitimate academic practice, of what constitutes illegitimate practice, and the potential consequences of such conduct, in that particular discipline.
- 7.1.3 It is particularly important that students are alerted to the nature of plagiarism, are informed that it constitutes a serious offence, and are informed about the disciplinary procedures that are in place for dealing with suspected cases. Such information should not only be provided to them at the beginning of their studies, but there should be constant reminders afterwards.
- 7.1.4 Without limiting the nature of any educational programme that the UZREC or any other body or person might wish to follow, the following specific tasks should be undertaken:
- (a) The Research Office and Library staff shall conduct regular plagiarism workshops for staff and students
 - (b) Faculty Research Ethics Committees shall supplement the University workshops with faculty-specific programmes
 - (c) Departments shall expose students to the concept and the consequences, and train them on the citation, referencing and presentation conventions applicable to their disciplines.
 - (d) Departments are encouraged to refer students and staff to the useful information literacy- and plagiarism prevention workshops provided by the Library.
 - (e) The topic must be covered during departmental induction activities for new students. Such training could occur either in lectures or during the regular tutorial programme or in specialised sessions designed for this purpose. Students are alerted to the nature of plagiarism, are informed that it constitutes a serious offence, and are informed about the disciplinary procedures that are in place for dealing with suspected cases.
 - (f) Such training should not occur at the first-year level only, but must be reinforced at each subsequent level, including postgraduate levels.

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- (g) Faculty and departmental student handbooks and study guides must contain information on plagiarism and its consequences, and how material from such sources as books, articles, the Internet and the work of other students, may and may not be used in the preparation of assignments, dissertations, publications and theses. Guidelines as to the extent of the loss of marks and other penalties for plagiarism (where such are appropriate) should be agreed by departments and should be made available to the students in handouts and study guides.
 - (h) All postgraduate students must attend at least one workshop on plagiarism and the contents of this Policy during the course of their studies towards a postgraduate degree, which shall become a prerequisite (DP requirement) for obtaining a postgraduate degree.
 - (i) In addition, supervisors must ensure that postgraduate students are aware of their obligations and responsibilities, and the supervision meeting minutes must record the fact that the supervisor has counselled the candidate in this regard.

7.2 Preventative measures

- 7.2.1 The University will purchase the rights to use acceptable and lawful text-matching, similarity-checking software, or to use an internet-based text-matching database to assist staff and students in cross-checking material and identifying situations where submitted material matches previously-submitted material or previously-published sources.
- 7.2.2 Members of staff are compelled, in terms of their professional commitment to best academic practice, to be on the lookout for cases of plagiarism, and to deal with any such cases in accordance with this Policy and its procedures. Staff should be open to various detection and monitoring approaches.
- 7.2.3 Monitoring and detection material should not be used only to detect possible plagiarism in final products. In line with the developmental and educational objectives of this Policy, such mechanisms should also serve to assist staff and student authors to improve their writing and referencing skills and to prevent instances of plagiarism in the final product.
- 7.2.4 In compliance with this principle of promoting academic integrity, all postgraduate material submitted for final examination must be accompanied by a statement not only that the material constitutes the author's original work, but preferably also that it had been subjected to the University's text-matching and/or similarity-checking procedures to confirm that the work is original.

7.3 Punitive measures

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- 7.3.1 The principle of legality, a standard principle underpinning punitive action, must be applied in all cases. In terms of this principle, a person should not be sanctioned in respect of rules that did not exist at the time the conduct was perpetrated, or that are not known to that person. It is therefore important, before punitive steps are taken, that the entire University community, staff and students, are made aware of this Policy, the plagiarism concept and the consequences of committing an act of plagiarism.
 - 7.3.2 In compliance with the principles of natural justice, punitive action must be uniform, consistent, impartial and equitable in their application. In addition, given the academic nature of the offence, punitive action should have a strong developmental focus, while not ignoring the other disciplinary objectives of punishment, which are to reprimand and discipline the individual, to regulate that person's behaviour and the behaviour of the University community generally, and to deter the person and others from engaging in such conduct in future.
 - 7.3.3 In line with this Policy's objectives, a gradual, incremental approach to punishing acts of plagiarism should normally be followed, determined by the nature of the offending conduct and the academic maturity of the individual involved.

8 SPECIFIC INSTANCES INVOLVING STAFF AND/OR RESEARCHERS

8.1 Introduction

- 8.1.1 Although the concepts of plagiarism, plagiarism prevention and referencing are sometimes not well understood by staff, such knowledge is an inherent requirement of an academic staff member's job. It is therefore incumbent upon all academic staff members to become acquainted with this Policy and the obligations it imposes upon them in them. Ignorance of the nature and content of an inherent job requirement cannot constitute an excuse. Staff members are therefore encouraged to acquaint themselves regarding plagiarism and to attend training events that the University offers from time to time. Academic staff members have an additional responsibility to ensure that their conduct serves as model academic behaviour for their students.
- 8.1.2 As far as the members of the academic staff are concerned, it is important that staff themselves have the opportunity to be trained about plagiarism.

8.2 Supervisors

- 8.2.1 Supervisors are ordinarily not principal investigators of postgraduate candidates' research and so would not be primary authors of a mini-dissertation, dissertation or thesis. It is therefore unlikely that a supervisor would be held responsible for a candidate's plagiarism in a thesis that has been submitted for assessment.
- 8.2.2 A supervisor who fails to take reasonable steps to ensure that s/he complies with the obligations stipulated in Clause 6.1.4 above, may be held responsible for having breached those obligations.
- 8.2.3 Should a candidate and a supervisor subsequently publish thesis material, at which stage the plagiarism is revealed, the supervisor may attract responsibility as a co-author in respect of that output. This matter is dealt with below (Clause 8.4).

8.3 Members of a research group or team

- 8.3.1 Members of a research group or a research team who are not cited as authors of a document will not be responsible for any plagiarized material that is contained in that document. As authors, they may attract responsibility, applying the rules set out below in Clause 8.4.

8.4 Co-authors

- 8.4.1 Instances arise where staff members are co-authors, with fellow employees, outside persons or students whom they have supervised, of work containing plagiarised material.
- 8.4.2 All co-authors are presumed to be jointly responsible for the published material; in other words, each is responsible for the entire content of the publication, even those parts which they did not write themselves. Unless they can show that they were not at fault in any way in publishing the plagiarised work, they will be held to have perpetrated the plagiarism as if they were the principal author of that part of the work.
- 8.4.3 It is therefore important to assess the co-author's role in preparing and presenting the published output. A person who wrote the offending section will normally be accountable for what he or she wrote.
- 8.4.4 In instances of an author who did not write the piece, the question arises as to whether or not he or she had been negligent; in other words, whether the person met or had acted below the standard of a reasonable co-author. A reasonable co-author would not checked every word against every document available on the Internet, for example, or use plagiarism tracking facilities to verify the words that a co-author had written; but such a person must be alert to the

possibility, depending upon the academic maturity and experience of the co-author, of plagiarism violations and should recognise obvious instances. Crucial to the enquiry would be nature of the steps that the co-author took to prevent the risk of plagiarism occurring in the document. If reasonable preventative action was taken, even if such action did not succeed in preventing the plagiarism, the co-author cannot be said to have been negligent and therefore at fault.

SECTION B: PROCEDURES

9 DEALING WITH TRANSGRESSIONS AT UNDERGRADUATE LEVEL

- 9.1 Although plagiarism constitutes unacceptable academic conduct, each instance should be considered on its merits in order to assess the appropriate remedial or punitive action. The concepts of plagiarism, plagiarism prevention and referencing are often not well understood by many students so, irrespective of the severity of a case, all instances plagiarism should be with sensitively; and developmental remedial action such as counseling and education should always be considered as a preferable first step, rather than simply imposing sanctions.
- 9.2 It is also important that students are alerted to the nature of plagiarism, are informed that it constitutes a serious offence, and are informed about the disciplinary procedures that are in place for dealing with suspected cases. Such information should not only be provided to them at the beginning of their studies, but there should be constant reminders afterwards.

10 DEALING WITH CATEGORY A TRANSGRESSIONS AT UNDERGRADUATE LEVEL

- 10.1 Category A transgressions constitute first time, minor infringements, and are usually handled by the staff member/lecturer who detects the offence, usually in conjunction with the lecturer in charge of the course, or the course coordinator.
- 10.2 In cases where the student is new to the University, and/or where it is apparent that the student has committed such plagiarism because of a lack of understanding of what is required, the student should usually:
- 10.2.1 Be counseled by the staff member concerned: the problem should be explained, the correct practice should be encouraged, and the student should be warned of the serious consequences of committing plagiarism again.

- 10.2.2 The student may be required to get more training on plagiarism prevention and referencing techniques. This practice would reflect the importance of our educative role as far as plagiarism is concerned.
- 10.2.3 In some cases it might be appropriate to ask the student to re-do the work to demonstrate that he or she has learnt from the experience.
- 10.2.4 Additionally, if it is appropriate, a mark penalty could be imposed.

11 DEALING WITH CATEGORY B TRANSGRESSIONS AT UNDERGRADUATE LEVEL

- 11.1 Category B transgressions relate to repeated offences of a minor nature, or to relatively minor offences at a more senior academic level than first year, or to first time, more serious offences, where the offence would not attract a penalty of more than the loss of a Duly Performed (DP) certificate.
- 11.2 Where a member of staff is uncertain as to whether an alleged case of plagiarism constitutes a Category A or B offence:
- 11.2.1 This matter should be discussed with the Head of Department and/or members of the departmental plagiarism structures, and a decision should be taken that is consistent with previous practice in the department.
- 11.2.2 In large departments, Heads of Department may delegate this role to a senior member of staff.
- 11.2.3 If a category B offence is detected, the matter must be referred to the Head of Department or nominee, who must refer the matter to the relevant FREC for a hearing.
- 11.2.4 The administrative and hearing processes should be compatible with the principles and processes set out in Clause 12 in respect of Category C transactions.
- 11.3 Should a student be dissatisfied with the outcome of a hearing, he or she may appeal the decision by submitting a written document to the UZREC Chairperson in which the grounds of appeal and reasons therefor are set out. The UZREC Chairperson shall then constitute a Plagiarism Tribunal as envisaged in Clause 5.10 above.

12 DEALING WITH CATEGORY C TRANSGRESSIONS

- 12.1 This rubric sets out the procedures applicable to Category C transgression generally, irrespective of the whether the alleged plagiarism was committed by an undergraduate or postgraduate student, or by a staff member or

researcher. Adherence to these guidelines, with necessary adaptations to suit the nature of the cases involved, would normally ensure that the principles of natural justice are complied with.

- 12.2 Where the Departmental Plagiarism Committee identifies a case that it considers serious enough to constitute a Category C case, it must refer the matter to the Head of Department, who in turn is responsible for reporting the matter to the Chairperson of the UZREC and also notify the Chairperson of the relevant FREC. The Head of Department must include with the correspondence copies of the offending material and the sources from whence the plagiarism is alleged to have occurred (both suitably marked).
- 12.3 The Chairperson of the UZREC shall constitute a Plagiarism Tribunal and establish a time slot for the hearing. A person charged with a Category C offence must be given full written particulars of the allegation against him or her:
 - 12.3.1 The evidence should include the document with the allegedly plagiarised passages (suitably marked) and documentary evidence of the original source material (suitably marked);
 - 12.3.2 The person must be informed of the time and the place of the hearing in the written particulars
 - 12.3.3 The hearing must take place as soon as is reasonably possible, but not later than ten (10) working days after the matter is referred to the UZREC Chairperson
 - 12.3.4 The person charged with having committed plagiarism, as well as any witnesses should be invited to attend the hearing;
 - 12.3.5 A student who is charged may be assisted by another student, or by a staff member or by a legal practitioner. A staff member, researcher or graduate/diplomate may be assisted by another staff member or by a legal practitioner. If a legal practitioner acts for the person charged, this will be at that person's own expense
 - 12.3.6 The hearing must be conducted according to the requirements of natural justice. Under no circumstances may the hearing occur, and a decision be made, without the person having been afforded an opportunity to attend, and to state his or her case. If the person does not appear, the Tribunal should adjourn to ascertain where the person is, and why he or she did not attend the hearing. Where the person has failed to attend a hearing without proper reason, the person, if a student, may be reported to the UNIZULU Public Protection Services (PSD hereafter), and if a staff member, to the Executive Director, Human Resources, for failing to comply with a lawful instruction.

- 12.3.7 Persons will not be able to put off the inevitable by non-attendance. If the person fails to attend for a second time without prior excuse, the matter may continue in his or her absence;
- 12.3.8 The Head of Department in which the alleged transgression occurred, or a designated representative will normally present the evidence on behalf of the University, and the person charged (or his or her representative) and members of the Tribunal will have the right to question any person(s) who presents evidence;
- 12.3.9 The person charged with the alleged transgression (or his or her representative) will have the opportunity to present evidence and the departmental representative and Tribunal members will have the right to ask questions of any person(s) who presents such evidence;
- 12.3.10 After all the evidence has been presented, both parties shall be given an opportunity to make a statement and Tribunal members will have the right to ask questions of them.
- 12.3.11 The Tribunal should then consider its decision. The standard of proof is on a balance of probabilities.
- 12.3.12 If the Tribunal finds that there was no plagiarism transgression, the matter is referred back to the lecturer and/or course coordinator for processing in the normal way.
- 12.3.13 If the Tribunal finds that a person has committed plagiarism, he or she should be re-called and be given an opportunity to make a statement in mitigation of penalty. If necessary, the Tribunal members may ask questions of the person or his or her representative at this stage
- 12.3.14 The Tribunal should then adjourn to consider a suitable sanction.
- 12.3.15 In matters involving students, the Tribunal may:
- (a) Exclude a student from UNIZULU, either permanently or for a specific period; provided that if permanent exclusion is considered to be the appropriate sanction, the matter must be referred to the Vice-Chancellor for confirmation.
 - (b) Withdraw a student's Duly Performed certificate
 - (c) Reduce the mark awarded to a student, or award a mark of zero
 - (d) Order that a student should redo the work to the satisfaction of the Head of Department and/or lecturer
 - (e) Issue a written warning to a student
 - (f) Impose any other appropriate sanction or a combination of the above sanctions
- 12.3.16 In matters involving graduates, diplomats or awardees of other qualifications, the Tribunal may conclude that the qualification that had been awarded be revoked, in which event the matter must be referred to Senate and Council for confirmation.
- 12.3.17 In matters involving staff and/or researchers, the Tribunal may:

- (a) Refer the matter to the Executive Director, Human Resources for possible disciplinary action
 - (b) Direct that offending teaching material be revised to the satisfaction of the relevant Head of Department and Dean of Faculty
 - (c) Direct that the transgression be acknowledged and that the research output and scholarly record be corrected, and it may indicate the specific corrective steps that need to be undertaken
 - (d) Impose any other appropriate sanction, or a combination of the above sanctions
- 12.3.18 The Tribunal may suspend any penalty, either wholly or in part, usually with remedial and/or developmental conditions attached. (It should be remembered, however, that Category C cases, especially those at postgraduate level or staff transgressions, usually merit severe censure.)
- 12.3.19 Once the hearing process is complete, the Tribunal must within five (5) days of the hearing:
- (a) Provide the person with written reasons for its decision, both in regard to its finding and in regard to the penalty imposed
 - (b) Provide the relevant academic Head of Department and Dean of Faculty with a copy of the findings
 - (c) Provide the Research Office with a copy of the findings for record-keeping purposes
 - (d) Provide a report together with a copy of the findings to the Chairperson of the UZREC for presentation to the UZREC, and where appropriate, for onward submission to Senate and Council.
- 12.3.20 The UZREC shall consider the report and findings and, depending upon the severity of the case and the sanction imposed, decide whether or not the matter should also be referred to the Registrar's Division for endorsement of the student's academic record; or to the Director, Human Resources, to be placed on the staff member's personal file.
- 12.3.21 Should the person be dissatisfied with the Tribunal's decision and or sanction, he or she may appeal the decision by submitting a written document to the UZREC Chairperson in which the grounds of appeal and reasons therefor are set out. The UZREC Chairperson shall then request the Vice-Chancellor to constitute a Plagiarism Appeals Tribunal as envisaged in Clause 5.13 above.
- 12.3.22 Where a referred to either the Vice-Chancellor or to Council for confirmation, regard must be had to the Tribunal's report as well as any report that the Dean of the relevant Faculty may wish to submit. No other evidence and/or documentation shall be considered. In the event of a revocation of a qualification, Council shall also have

regard to Senate's recommendation as to the appropriate sanction. Should the Vice-Chancellor or Council determine that permanent exclusion or revocation of the qualification is not an appropriate sanction, the matter shall be referred to the same Tribunal that imposed the sanction with an instruction to consider an appropriate alternative sanction, and report its revised decision to the UZREC and Senate. The Registrar will be responsible for communicating this information to the persons involved. Where a qualification has been revoked, the Registrar must take the necessary administrative steps to, including the recall of the degree parchment and its destruction.

13 DEALING WITH PLAGIARISM TRANSGRESSIONS AT POSTGRADUATE LEVEL PRIOR TO GRADUATION

13.1 Procedures applicable before submission for assessment

13.1.1 In line with a developmental approach, preventative and remedial action should be taken in respect of any draft work (either course work or research work) that a student presents before the stage of submission of the work for examination. Such remedial action may take the form of counseling or attending a workshop on plagiarism, or preferably, both. This provision applies even in respect of final drafts.

13.1.2 The nature of the counseling should be such that the candidate understands why the conduct in question amounts to plagiarism and what other forms of conduct might constitute plagiarism, and the candidate should be warned of the consequences of plagiarism and that should any further plagiarism be revealed in drafts or final products submitted subsequently, disciplinary action could be taken against the candidate. In such an event, the normal procedures applicable to Categories B and C will apply.

13.2 Procedures applicable on or after submission for assessment

13.2.1 All postgraduate work submitted for assessment in the form of assignments, mini-dissertations, dissertations and theses must be accompanied by a declaration by the author(s) that the submitted work is the authors(s) original work and that it has not been plagiarized. (See Annexure B.)

13.2.2 Where an examiner or assessor of material identifies acts of plagiarism, that examiner or assessor should provide a report indicating the nature and extent of potential plagiarism.

13.2.3 The principles and procedures set out in Clause 7 above shall apply equally to postgraduate students, with the necessary changes;

provided that any specific principles and procedures mentioned in this Clause shall take precedence.

Honours or Course-work Master's material

13.2.4 In the case of assignments or material submitted as part of an Honours or Master's course work programme, the Head of Department must determine the category in which the alleged transgression falls and implement the appropriate steps. Where the Head of Department is directly involved as a supervisor/examiner, the Dean of the Faculty, or a senior member of the Department nominated by the Dean, should perform this task. Given the academic seniority of such students, such transgressions would seldom fall within Category A and should normally be either Category B or C offences.

13.2.5 Allegations of plagiarism in a postgraduate research paper or mini-dissertation should be treated as a Category C offence.

Master's dissertations and Doctoral theses

13.2.6 For allegations of plagiarism in Master's dissertations and Doctoral theses, the following procedure should be adopted:

- (a) On discovery of a possible plagiarism transgression, the matter must be referred to the Head of Department, whose task it is to collate the relevant evidence (which may include a report from one or more examiners) and to refer the allegation of plagiarism to the Chairperson of the UZREC and also notify the Chairperson of the relevant FREC. Where the Head of Department or the Dean is directly involved as a supervisor/examiner, the Deputy Dean, or a senior member of the Faculty nominated by the Dean, should perform this task.
- (b) The process described in Clause 10 shall apply equally to these matters, with the necessary changes.
- (c) If the Tribunal finds that there is no case of plagiarism, the matter must then be referred back to the Head of Department (or appropriate nominee) for that person to process the matter in the normal way.

13.3 Procedures applicable after the award of a degree, diploma or certificate

13.3.1 This clause applies to all certificates, diplomas and degrees that the University awards.

13.3.2 Should it transpire, after a degree, diploma or certificate has been awarded, that plagiarism normally falling within Categories B or C might possibly have occurred in material that had been submitted for assessment in the course of obtaining that qualification, the matter must be referred to the Head of Department and Dean of Faculty, whose task it is to collate the relevant evidence and to refer the allegation of plagiarism to the Chairperson of the UZREC and also notify the Chairperson of the relevant FREC.

13.3.3 The process described in Clause 10 shall apply to these matters.

14 DEALING WITH PLAGIARISM INVOLVING STAFF AND/OR RESEARCHERS

14.1 Except in the instances as defined, plagiarism perpetrated by staff in lecturing and research material shall ordinarily constitute Category C offences.

14.2 All allegations of plagiarism involving staff and researchers, or of a failure to take reasonable steps to ensure that they comply with their obligations stipulated in Clause 6.1.4 above, must be referred to the Dean of the relevant Faculty, whose task it is to collate the relevant evidence and to refer the allegation of plagiarism to the Chairperson of the UZREC.

14.3 The UZREC Chairperson shall then constitute a Plagiarism Tribunal as envisaged in Clause 5.10 above.

15 RECORD-KEEPING AND REPORTING

15.1 All academic departments shall keep records of all cases of plagiarism that have occurred in their departments.

15.2 Each department shall ensure that

15.2.1 The names of students involved in Category A cases

15.2.2 The plagiarism findings of category B and C cases and copies of documents associated with the cases

are reported and/or delivered to the Research Office immediately upon finalization of such cases.

15.3 Plagiarism Tribunals and Plagiarism Appeals Tribunals shall similarly report their findings to the Research Office.

15.4 The Registrar shall inform the Research Office of any decisions of Senate and Council regarding plagiarism matters.

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- 15.5 The Research Office shall record all cases on a database set up for this purpose.
 - 15.6 This database may be accessed by Heads of Department (or their authorised nominees) to allow departments to ascertain whether a student has committed serious plagiarism before.
 - 15.7 In February of each year, the Research Office shall compile a report, to be submitted to UZREC and thereafter, Senate, on incidences of Category B and C plagiarism across the University in the previous academic year.
 - 15.8 In appropriate instances, the Registrar's Division and the Executive Director, Human Resources, shall endorse student academic records and staff personal files and maintain the records on file.

16 IMPLEMENTATION AND OVERSIGHT RESPONSIBILITIES

- 16.1 The project owner of this Policy is the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research and Innovation, who shall ensure that the Policy is presented for revision and review at the appropriate time.
- 16.2 Oversight and implementation of this Policy vests in the UZREC and the FRECs, but Senate has overarching oversight responsibility.
- 16.3 Management and administration of this Policy and rests with the Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research and Innovation and the Research Office.

17 POLICY REVIEW

- 17.1 Council shall review the Policy on a three-yearly cycle.
- 17.2 On recommendation of the Research Ethics Committee, Senate may review and amend Section B at any time, in which event the amendments take effect on the date of the Senate approval.
- 17.3 The Policy owner may review amend annexures that contain or illustrate forms or documents for effective administration and/or management at any time.
- 17.4 All persons affected by the Policy must be notified of any amendments.
- 17.5 Nothing in this clause shall prevent Council from reviewing this Policy at any time prior to the stipulated three-year cycle, in which event a new cycle shall commence from the date of such review.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND REFERENCES

This document draws from similar policies developed at Rhodes University and the University of Fort Hare. The University of Zululand thanks both universities for granting it permission to use the material.

InterAcademy Council Responsible Conduct in the Global Research Enterprise: A Policy Report (2012)

ANNEXURE A:
ORIGINALITY DECLARATION (ASSIGNMENTS AND PROJECTS)

Departments may adapt the template provided below to suit their academic needs.

ORIGINALITY DECLARATION

Name:

Department:

Title of Work submitted:
.....
.....
.....

1. The material that I am submitting together with this declaration is the product of my own work, or my group’s own unique group effort.
2. I understand that my research must be accurately referenced. I have followed the rules and conventions concerning referencing, citation and the use of quotations as set out in the Departmental and/or Faculty Handbooks.
3. I know that plagiarism means taking and using the ideas, writings, works or inventions of another as if they were one’s own. I know that plagiarism not only includes verbatim copying, but also the extensive use of another person’s ideas without proper acknowledgement (which includes the proper use of quotation marks). I know that plagiarism covers this sort of use of material found in textual sources and from the Internet.
4. I know that the University has a Plagiarism Policy and that the University considers plagiarism to be a serious academic offence.
5. I acknowledge that plagiarism is wrong. I also acknowledge that copying someone else’s work, or part of it, or taking material from the Internet, is wrong, and that submitting identical work to others constitutes a form of plagiarism. I know that persons who do so may be disciplined.
6. I understand further that if I allow someone to copy my work with the intention of passing it off as their own work, I would be party to that person’s unacceptable conduct. I have not allowed, nor will I in the future allow, anyone to copy my work with the intention of passing it off as their own work.

Signed

Date

**ANNEXURE B:
ORIGINALITY DECLARATION (MINI-DISSERTATIONS, DISSERTATIONS AND
THESES)**

ORIGINALITY DECLARATION

I acknowledge that I have read and understood the University's policies and rules applicable to postgraduate research, and I certify that I have, to the best of my knowledge and belief, complied with their requirements.

I declare that this mini-dissertation/dissertation/ thesis is, save for the supervisory guidance received, the product of my own work and effort. I have, to the best of my knowledge and belief, acknowledged all sources of information in line with normal academic conventions.

I further certify that this mini-dissertation/dissertation/ thesis is original, and that the material has not been submitted, either in whole or in part, for a degree at this or any other university. *(Where the work is a continuation or progression of research that was submitted for another degree, e.g. an Honours project or a Master's dissertation this must be stated clearly, the name of the work must be provided, and an explanation must be given regarding the extent of the current work's originality.)*

I have/have not subjected the document to the University's text-matching and/or similarity-checking procedures. *(One could indicate that this process applied only to some chapters or that it occurred during the course of the research and not in respect of the final product.)*

Signature:.....

Print Name:.....

Date: