

Policy on Plagiarism and other forms of Academic Dishonesty and Misconduct

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Policy on Plagiarism and other forms of Academic Dishonesty or Misconduct

1 Preamble

As a pre-eminent university in Africa, driven by the pursuit of knowledge and innovation, with a unique institutional culture based upon the values the University espouses, the North-West University has adopted this Policy on Plagiarism and other forms of Academic Dishonesty and Misconduct on 10 June 2011 .

This policy replaces the Policy on Academic Dishonesty adopted by Council on 21 September 2007.

2 Policy statement

The focus of a University is on scholarship, the practice of scientific disciplines. Science is discovered/researched, taught, learnt and made useful to satisfy legitimate needs.

Scientific knowledge is constantly disseminated by those who teach and are taught, those who learn and those who render research results. Scientific communication is therefore at the root of the activities of the University.

A distinction between what is scientific and pre-scientific is situated in the way in which scientific information is communicated regardless of whether this is in the context of learning, teaching, research or application of knowledge. Scientific communication must pass the test of correctness, defensibility and (especially in the case of research) originality. The scientific practice of students and scientists is adjudicated and evaluated on an ongoing basis. For that reason, integrity and therefore honesty, apart from obvious moral considerations, is an essential factor in the practice of science or scholarship.

It is therefore expected of anybody engaged in scientific work that the relevant individual should assume sole responsibility for the content of his or her scientific communication. To present at any level as one's own work the knowledge, insights, wording or formulation of anybody else within the context of teaching, learning, research activities or the application of knowledge without acknowledgement is unacceptable and the blameworthiness is comparable with crimes such as theft and fraud.

Dishonest academic conduct constitutes serious misconduct, whether it occurs orally, by conduct or in writing, during examinations or in the context of other forms of assessment such as assignments, theses, as well as in reports and publications.

Therefore it is the policy of the North-West University that no form of academic dishonesty shall be tolerated, and if any of such conduct is reported or detected, the perpetrator upon being found guilty shall be punishable in terms of the University's disciplinary policies, rules and procedures. The University has the responsibility to inculcate integrity and its corollary of academic honesty in all students and staff, especially those in academic positions.

3 Definitions

Various acts related to academic misconduct or academic dishonesty can be identified within the contexts of examination processes and other forms of academic assessment. These will be outlined in more detail provided below.

3.1 Examination dishonesty

The generic definition of examination dishonesty includes:

- the presentation for purposes of academic assessment of any material as being the work of the person presenting it while it contains elements of work done by another person, without acknowledgement being given to the latter.

- The unlawful use (that is, without the explicit permission of the assessor) of academic sources includes, but is not limited to, self-produced notes, regardless of the format of such notes or the mode in which it appears (electronic or handwritten), as well as laptops, cell phones and other electronic appliances, programmable calculators, textbooks and study guides without the express previous consent of the assessor. This can also include the following but are not restricted to:
 - o Copying from other students;
 - o Being in possession of and using notes and unauthorised graphic calculators, cell phones;
 - o Falsifying identification, and
 - o Substitution of material
 - o Any conduct by a student aimed at assisting another student to commit plagiarism or any other form of academic dishonesty, including dishonesty during or related to exams.

3.2 Other forms of academic dishonest conduct

Dishonest conduct does not only occur during examinations but also in the context of other forms of assessment such as assignments and other submissions. This includes matters such as copying from another person, and the disguising of somebody else's work in order to create the impression that it is the work of the perpetrator himself.

Academic dishonesty or misconduct can also be perpetrated by:

- Falsifying information regarding admission, claims for recognition of advanced standing, deferred assessment or leave of absence;
- Presenting copied, falsified or improperly obtained data as if it were the result of some research or laboratory or field trips undertaken by the student;
- Presenting individual work material which is the result of undue and unacceptable amount of assistance from another person;
- Assisting another student with presentation of individual work in contravention to instructions or guidelines for that work.

3.3 Plagiarism and copyright infringement

Plagiarism means the presentation, without consent or reference to the source, of another person's text or other published intellectual product by creating the impression that it is the original work of the person attempting to gain advantage from it or as the Oxford and The Essential English Dictionaries describe plagiarise as "(t) take the work or an idea of somebody else and pass it off as its own" and "to present the ideas or words of another as one's own".

Infringement of copyright is a statutory offence which can lead to criminal prosecution and fines. The perpetrator may also be sued for damages in a civil action by the copyright owner, whilst plagiarism may amount to unlawful conduct in terms of common law, which may also lead to lawsuits against the perpetrator.

Apart from the legal consequences, it is axiomatic that plagiarism and copyright infringement compromise the integrity of academicism and is contrary to scientific ethics and society's perception of moral values. It should therefore be forbidden and, where it does occur, should be punished by the University as unlawful practices.

In more detailed terms, one can identify instances of plagiarism as:

- A pre-meditated act of presenting another person's work or property without reference or acknowledgement to the rightful owner, such as:
 - o using another person's ideas, work or research information without acknowledgement
 - o copying verbatim sentences or paragraphs from one or more sources with no proper acknowledgement
 - o paraphrasing closely sentences or paragraphs without acknowledgement
 - o submitting computer material in part or in whole without stating its origin
 - o for group projects, fraudulently representing the individual contributions of group members where individual input is to be identified.

4 Rules

4.1 Responsibilities

Council and Senate are responsible for the existence and monitoring/review of a Policy on Plagiarism and other forms of Academic Dishonesty and Misconduct.

The University has the responsibility of inculcating integrity and academic honesty in all students and staff, especially those in academic positions. This responsibility can be complied with through the formulation and publication of a clear policy about examination dishonesty and plagiarism, through the instruction of students from an early stage about ethical research and referencing practices, as well as general academic honesty, through the prominent placement of warnings against academic dishonesty and plagiarism (inter alia in study material, photocopy machines and scanners) and through expecting of students to confirm, upon the submission of independent academic work for assessment, that such work is their own original work (as per the attached example **Addendum A**), and through punishing cases of academic dishonesty and plagiarism suitably. The University therefore has both an educational, social and a disciplinary responsibility. Each academic and student associated with the University has the personal responsibility of presenting all material intended for academic assessment or research publication in a manner that is ethically and scientifically accountable.

The responsibilities of the lecturer in this regard can be spelled out as follows:

- Notification to Students: Students taking modules within a School must be given information about acceptable standards of integrity and academic honesty in conducting e.g. with respect to assessment, referencing, acknowledgement and bibliography.
- All module outlines must carry a reminder clause on plagiarism, cheating, academic dishonesty or misconduct and copyright protection.
- Provide students with standards of referencing and bibliography at the beginning of each course.
- Advise them against giving or receiving help with assessment or work that is meant to be the work of an individual student.

4.2 Disciplinary processes

There are two levels of disciplinary action possible in cases of academic dishonesty: educational reprimand and penalization in the context of the teaching-learning process, and the formal disciplinary process.

Reprimand is handled in the first instance during an interview by the lecturer (including in what follows below a supervisor, promoter and assessor at any level) concerned, after notifying the director or dean of the matter. The director or dean may take over the matter or leave the lecturer to handle it.

Where a lecturer becomes aware of or suspects that a student has acted dishonestly in the presentation of work e.g. for purposes of academic assessment through, for example, copying the work of another student, copying or paraphrasing material from the work of another student, an article, report, document or the Internet without due acknowledgement that this is a quote, the lecturer has to confront the student with that during an interview. The student should be given an opportunity to clarify the incident in the interview. The interview should enable the lecturer to:

- Close the case; or
- Warn the student with or without nil mark and inform the director and dean as well as keep a record of the action taken; or
- Advise the director or dean that the student should be formally charged;
- The lecturer must in every case submit a written report to the director with authentic evidence, irrespective of the outcome of the case;
- A student must always give written confirmation of the receipt of a reprimand or a warning;
- A student who does not wish to accept the decision of the lecturer can appeal to the relevant school director for a revision of the case. Any further requests for revision can then only be made after a formal disciplinary process.

The *disciplinary process* runs according to the University's Disciplinary Rules for Students and Staff (depending on whether the student concerned is also a staff member), with due regard to the following considerations:

- The relevant school director does a preliminary investigation into allegations of plagiarism, academic dishonesty or misconduct and submits the report to the disciplinary committee for student matters at the campus level in the case of the person being a plain student or the Manager: Labour Relations in the case of the person being a staff member.
- The relevant lecturer may be called as a witness by the disciplinary committee.
- Where the student/staff member is found guilty of plagiarism, academic dishonesty or misconduct by the disciplinary committee a commensurate punishment is imposed in accordance with paragraph 6(1)-(9) of the University Disciplinary Rules for Students or paragraph 8 of the Disciplinary Rules for Staff. Should the disciplinary committee reprimand the student in terms of paragraph 6(10) this must be combined with an additional punitive measure.
- Any requests for revision or appeal are dealt with in terms of the Statute and University Disciplinary Rules for Students and Staff.

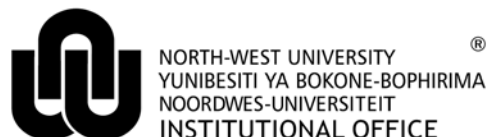
4.3 Record keeping

School directors keep records of academic reprimands of students and all academic reprimands should be referenced and kept according to the rules of the Records Management Policy of the NWU. Records on academic reprimands should be placed on the official student file kept by Academic Administration/Services.

When a student is found guilty of plagiarism, academic dishonesty or misconduct by a disciplinary committee the verdict and sentence imposed are recorded on the student's academic record, especially for purposes of providing accurate information to persons and institutions who have the right to such testimony of a student's conduct during his/her study career.

4.4 Detection of cases of academic fraud

Academic fraud in relation to admission, RPL, second-chance assessment or a selection process should immediately be reported to the Director: Academic Services and relevant campus registrar, who have to bring it to the attention of the Institutional Registrar.



SOLEMN DECLARATION

Solemn declaration by student

I _____ declare herewith that the mini-dissertation/dissertation/thesis entitled,

which I herewith submit to the North-West University as completion/partial completion of the requirements set for the _____ degree, is my own work, has been text edited and has not already been submitted to any other university.

I understand and accept that the copies that are submitted for examination are the property of the University.

Signature of student _____ University-number _____

Signed at _____ this _____ day of _____ 20.....

Declared before me on this _____ day of _____ 20.....

Commissioner of Oaths: _____

Declaration by supervisor/promoter/research director

The undersigned declares:

- 1.1 that the student attended an approved module of study for the relevant qualification and that the work for the course has been completed or that work approved by the Senate has been done;
- 1.2 that the student has complied with the minimum duration of study as stated in the yearbook;
- 1.3 the student is hereby granted permission to submit his/her mini-dissertation/dissertation or thesis;
- 1.4 that registration/change of the title has been approved;
- 1.5 that the appointment/change of examiners has been finalised and
- 1.6 that all the procedures have been followed according to the Manual for post graduate studies.

Signature of Supervisor/Promoter: _____ Date: _____

Signature of Research Director: _____ Date: _____

Original details: Amanda van der Merwe(10935746) SHARE:\2. Management\2.1.3 Policy development and review\2.1.3.2 Review\Academic dishonesty 2010 review\2P-2.4.3.2-academic dishonesty_e2010.docx
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