

Senate is responsible for ensuring that the issues of plagiarism are dealt with.

Senate Policy

Senate policy (PC11/99 dated 6.12.1999) requires:

- (i) you, for each course you teach, to prescribe a referencing convention, or to allow a student to choose from a set of referencing conventions prescribed by you (and, by implication, to teach this key academic literacy skill to junior students) when setting assignments; and
- (ii) all undergraduates to make and include a declaration each time they submit written work for assessment.

Declaration

1. I know that plagiarism is wrong. Plagiarism is to use another's work and pretend that it is one's own.
2. I have used the convention for citation and referencing. Each contribution to, and quotation in, this essay/report/project/..... from the work(s) of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.
3. This essay/report/project/..... is my own work.
4. 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 _____

Declaration

Individual academics and departments may adapt this declaration to suit particular needs, and may apply the rule with discretion.

- The declaration must be used for any substantial work that a student does unsupervised
- The declaration is neither suitable for reports submitted at the end of a three-hour science laboratory session, nor required in such cases.
- A suitably altered version should be used for students in first-year (Foundation) courses submitting an assignment before having been taught about referencing conventions.
- You may require postgraduate students to use it, or an amended declaration;
- The declaration must be used regularly. It is not sufficient to require students to sign the declaration on an annual basis. Students need to be constantly reminded. The onus is on you to ensure that before work is marked, it is accompanied by a signed declaration in the standard form, or if you have done this, in a contextually altered form.

Teaching Conventions

The responsibility of the staff member teaching a course, or supervising a postgraduate student, is to ensure that students are (or become) familiar with, and observe, one of the internationally recognised scholarly conventions on presentation, documentation of sources and referencing.

Students must be made aware of the consequences of plagiarism, such as any attempt to pass off work of others as their own. Depending on the academic level of the student, these may be:

- failing a course,
- having disciplinary measures taken up against the student. A disciplinary finding against a student will lead to an endorsement of his or her academic record: this will limit his or her career chances, and could jeopardise entry into a career.

Assistance For Staff And Students

The **Library**, the **Writing Centre** and the **Centre for Information Literacy** are willing to assist staff and students, by providing details of referencing conventions, and helping students use them.

Procedures for Dealing with Plagiarism

In order to ensure a consistent approach to plagiarism, the following procedure must be followed, drawing a distinction between your role as an academic in dealing with plagiarism as evaluated in the academic assessment, and plagiarism as the basis for disciplinary action. These are separate and independent, but parallel, processes.

- **Academic Assessment**

The examiner/head of department must decide whether there is plagiarism. Except with the permission of the Head of Department (or a Dean, in the case of a course run by a Head of Department), an academic staff member responsible for marking a question or an essay finding plagiarism must allocate zero to the assignment.

In the case of a candidate for a higher degree, refer to the attached guide.

- **Disciplinary Action**

(a) Plagiarism is a breach of the student rules. Where plagiarism is found or suspected, the Head of Department must refer the matter to the Vice-Chancellor's nominee for possible disciplinary action in terms of the rules on disciplinary jurisdiction and procedures (DJP1.1). (The referral should be to the office of Legal Counsel in the Registrar's Office. The Legal Counsellor, Ms B Mabanga, will refer it for a decision to the Vice-Chancellor's nominee).

In considering each case, the Head of Department should try to ascertain whether there is an academic problem (such as the student had not been adequately taught referencing conventions), or a purposeful attempt to cheat.

- (b) A Head of Department must inform the Dean where he/she has referred a case to the Vice-Chancellor or nominee for possible disciplinary action.
- (c) The Vice-Chancellor's nominee will make the decision whether to prosecute the student. There are varying degrees of plagiarism (from referencing inadequately, in the instance where the student quotes the source but does not insert the inverted commas, to copying a thesis and submitting the work in its entirety as one's own.). This will be taken into account first, in the decision to prosecute, and secondly on imposing the sentence for a student found guilty.
- (d) If a decision is made to prosecute the student, and the student is found guilty, the sentencing will take into account factors such the academic seniority of the student. For the same extent of plagiarism, a first year student is likely to be given a lesser sentence than a postgraduate student.
- (e) It is possible, however, that the University Tribunal will acquit a prosecuted student, if the University fails to prove the charge on the balance of probabilities. This does not alter the action that the department, Faculty Examinations Committee or Doctoral Degrees Board, will have taken in the academic assessment of the student.

Web –based information

To assist students

A guide for students is available on the University's website on the Statute and Policies page (<http://www.uct.ac.za/uct/policies.php>). The direct URL is <http://www.uct.ac.za/uct/policies/plagiarismforstudents.pdf>.

Please refer your students to the Senate policy declaration, which is also accessible on the UCT website at <http://www.uct.ac.za/uct/policies.php>. (The direct URL is <http://www.uct.ac.za/uct/policies/plagiarism.pdf>.)

A student searching for “plagiarism” on the UCT web site will only find the documents on the Statute and Policies page. Departments are encouraged to place material on the UCT web pages, which detail what plagiarism is and gives examples relevant to the course content. Please send any material that would be useful to the wider University community to the Senate Office for posting on a general plagiarism website.

One website which has such material is <http://www.spea.indiana.edu/h320/plaigarlism.html>

To assist staff

The following websites to assist staff:

(## suggested by the Writing Centre).

(a) ## Cut and paste plagiarism:

<http://alexia.lis.uiuc.edu/~janicke/plagiary.htm> This site defines plagiarism, and also has hints on where students often find free essays on the web.

(b) ## Plagiarism and anti-plagiarism:

<http://newark.rutgers.edu/~ehrllich/plagiarism598.html> Detailed discussion of plagiarism, links to newspaper clippings and sites that help curb plagiarism.

(c) ## Checking documents for plagiarism:

<http://www.plagiarism.org/> A pay-site, but worth investigating. This is what they claim to do:

1. First, they make a 'digital fingerprint' of any submitted document using a specially developed set of algorithms.
2. The document's 'fingerprint' is cross-referenced against their local database containing hundreds of thousands of papers.
3. At the same time, they release automated web crawlers to scour the rest of the Internet for possible matches.
4. Finally, they create a custom, colour coded 'originality report', complete with source links, for each paper.

They have a free trial, testimonials and a sample report, which looks impressive.

(d) Electronic Plagiarism Detection

<http://www.jisc.ac.uk/jciel/plagiarism/> A UK-funded project to develop plagiarism detection methods

(e) Software Programs to help deter and detect plagiarism

<http://www.plagiarism.com> ,Glatt Plagiarism Services, USA.

(f) ## Strategies to stop plagiarism:

<http://www.chron.com/content/chronicle/editorial/97/09/29/galles.0-0.html> Prepared by a professor of economics at the University of Malibu.