

# **Senate Committee on Plagiarism Policy for the University of Jos**

## **University of Jos Plagiarism Policy**

## Table of Contents

1.0 Purpose .....	3
2.0 Scope.....	3
3.0 Meaning of Plagiarism .....	3
3.1 Plagiarism in General Terms .....	3
3.2 Plagiarism as Examination/Academic Misconduct .....	3
3.3 Plagiarism as Poor Academic Practice .....	3
3.4 Academic Collusion .....	3
3.5 Self-Plagiarism.....	4
4.0 Plagiarism and Copyright Infringement .....	4
5.0 What Constitutes Plagiarism.....	4
6.0 Acceptable Percentage of Freedom.....	4
7.0 Avoiding Plagiarism.....	5
8.0 Establishing a Case of Plagiarism .....	5
9.0 Disciplinary measures against plagiarism .....	6

## **1.0 Purpose**

The University of Jos has a commitment to foster a culture of learning informed by academic humility and integrity. Plagiarism undermines academic integrity, therefore, it is not tolerated at University of Jos. This Policy statement is to be used as the official source document for defining terms related to Plagiarism and how to prevent or handle suspected cases of Plagiarism.

## **2.0 Scope**

This Plagiarism Policy Statement affects all staff and students including Contract staff, Visiting staff and staff on sabbatical, Coursework students, and research students.

## **3.0 Meaning of Plagiarism**

Plagiarism is the dishonest presentation of the work of others as if it were one's own ideas and academic output. In broader sense, plagiarism means presenting someone else's work, either in whole, or in part without the appropriate referencing. 'Work' means any intellectual output, including but not limited to thoughts, texts, research results, data, images, sound or performance, drawings, designs, paintings, sculptures or photographs. Plagiarism may be in any of the following ways:

### **3.1 Plagiarism in General Terms**

It is the act of using same or very similar words to the original text or Idea without acknowledging the source or using quotation marks. This includes copying materials, Ideas or concepts from a book, article, report or other written document, presentation, composition, artwork, design, drawing circuitry, computer program or software, website, internet, other electronic resource, or another person's assignment, without appropriate acknowledgement.

### **3.2 Plagiarism as Research/Examination Misconduct**

It is generally accepted that plagiarism constitutes an aspect of research misconduct. General research misconduct is contained in the Office of Research and Development document on Research Ethics. It is also an examination misconduct because the term papers, undergraduate projects, dissertations and theses, which are capable of benefiting from plagiarism are subjected to examination (for which marks or other credits are awarded) one way or another.

### **3.3 Plagiarism as Poor Academic Practice**

This is said to arise from lack of understanding of academic protocols or a misunderstanding of expected academic conventions of the discipline. However, a case would not be considered 'poor academic practice' where members of staff and students have already been given the orientation to avoid plagiarism.

### **3.4 Academic Collusion**

Presenting work as independent work when it has been produced in whole or part in collusion with other people. Collusion include Students providing their work to another student before the due date, or for the purpose of them plagiarizing at any time, paying another person to perform an academic task and passing it off as your own, stealing or acquiring another person's academic work and copying it, offering to complete another person's work or seeking payment for completing academic work. This should not be confused with academic collaboration.

### **3.5 Self-Plagiarism**

Self-Plagiarism occurs where an author republishes their own previously written work and presents it as new findings without referencing the earlier work, either in its entirety or partially. Self-Plagiarism is also referred to as ‘recycling’, ‘duplication’, or ‘multiple’ submissions of research findings’ without disclosure. In the case of the students, self-plagiarism includes re-using parts of or all of, a body of work that has already been submitted for assessment without proper reference and evidence of advancement of knowledge. This may include sending same paper for publication to many journals.

### **4.0 Plagiarism and Copyright Infringement**

Plagiarism and copyright infringement have been mistaken for each other by many. It is therefore necessary to clearly distinguish them for the avoidance of doubts. Plagiarism means academic dishonesty which refers to the use of someone else's words or work as one's own whereas, Copyright infringement is the act of using or selling other people's work or commercially exploiting it without obtaining the permission and rights to do so.

### **5.0 What Constitutes Plagiarism**

Acts of plagiarism in specific terms, include but are not limited to the following:

- a. Using the exact words of another writer in part of a paper without both citation and quotation marks (or block indentation in the case of longer quotations);
- b. Cutting and pasting information from Internet or other electronic resources without properly acknowledging the authors and sources;
- c. Including in one's work, the paraphrased or summarised idea of another writer without acknowledging its authors and sources;
- d. Changing a few words and phrases while mostly retaining the original structure and progression of ideas of the original source and information without acknowledgement.
- e. This also applies in presentations where someone paraphrases another's ideas or words without credit and to piecing together quotes and paraphrases into a new whole, without appropriate referencing.
- f. Submitting for credit and other driveable benefits, a complete paper or portion of a paper written by another person, whether the paper was purchased, shared freely, stolen, found or acquired by other means;
- g. Submitting poems, music, drawings, designs, paintings, sculptures or photographs that copy or rely closely on the work of other professionals, without properly obtaining permission and or acknowledging the original authors/sources;
- h. Supervisor(s) publishing all or parts of their students' work without the collaboration and consent of the student(s);
- i. Writing a computer code and or program that is/are the same or closely similar to already existing sources without permission and due acknowledgements;
- j. Duplicate submission of Assignment/coursework/long essay for more than one course;
- k. Accepting credit for a project, multimedia presentation, poster or other assignment that draws dishonestly on the work of other students, members of staff or external authors.

### **6.0 Acceptable Percentage of Freedom**

Percentage similarity allowed for different levels of study are as follows:

- a. Less than 15% for M.Phil/Ph.D and peer review journals and other publications by members of staff.

- b. Less than 25% for master's degrees and postgraduate diplomas.
- c. Less than 30% for undergraduates and diplomas/certificates.

Note: As a guide, a returned percentage of below 15% would probably indicate that plagiarism has not occurred. However, if the 15% or any % of matching text constitute one continuous block, it could still be considered an act of plagiarism. The percentage similarity report will be carefully analysed by the desk officers to avoid undue allegations. A high percentage would probably be anything over 25% especially for postgraduate studies and publications by members of staff (Yellow, orange or red). Moreover, for a work to be considered plagiarised, it will depend on the students/staff work and the requirements of the publication (report, article or essay).

## **7.0 Avoiding Plagiarism**

In order to avoid plagiarism, the University shall ensure that all staff and students (undergraduate and postgraduate) are given proper orientation on the University's policy on plagiarism. To this end, the University shall ensure the following:

- a. A page is created on the University's website and populated with an outline on how to avoid plagiarism. With respect to the creation of awareness and orientation on how to avoid plagiarism, the Directorate of Student Affairs shall be responsible for undergraduate students and the School of Postgraduate studies shall be responsible for postgraduate students both in consultation/collaboration with the University Librarian.
- b. Desk officers are appointed in the library for all distinct disciplines/subjects of the University. These desk officers must be persons who have the requisite skills for guiding staff and students on how to avoid plagiarism.
- c. The desk officers are provided with very fast computers and access to uninterrupted/unlimited internet service.
- d. The Vice Chancellor through the University Librarian, shall supervise all activities relating to this policy.

## **8.0 Establishing a Case of Plagiarism**

All Units, Departments, Centres, Directorates, Faculties, Colleges and other Institutions delivering programmes under or in affiliation with the University of Jos shall be required to follow the policy on plagiarism established by the University, and shall report all such cases and outcomes to the University. In order to establish a case of alleged plagiarism (elements contained in section 5.0 above) , the following steps shall be followed:

- a. The University shall adopt and subscribe to a software to be used in detecting plagiarism. (the vendors of such software will normally have a guide for interpreting the percentage of similarity in report work, published paper and book submitted for consideration).
- b. Every inaugural lecture, students' assignment/term paper/seminar, final year project, dissertation and thesis must go through plagiarism check.
- c. Members of staff and students shall be given the opportunity to make a trial submission into the software to enable them make necessary adjustments before final submission.
- d. The Vice Chancellor shall set up a five (5) man committee comprising Academics of unquestionable integrity, one of which should be a staff of the University Librarian, to investigate suspected cases of plagiarism. The committee shall have an administrative

staff of unquestionable integrity to serve as secretary. In line with the University's regulations, the committee shall serve for a term of two years which may be renewed by the Vice chancellor.

- e. Upon report of a suspected case of plagiarism, the University's standing committee on plagiarism shall carry out its assignment and submit its report to the chairman of Senate within 4 weeks. The committee shall make recommendations in its report in line with the provisions of this policy.

## **9.0 Disciplinary measures against plagiarism**

Plagiarism violates the expectations of trust, humility, integrity and honesty required for the assessment of academic work and dissemination of knowledge. Plagiarism is therefore not allowed and is punishable. An established case of plagiarism therefore, can earn any of the following punishments:

- a. Suspension from the University for first offenders (in the case of students).
- b. Expulsion from the university for second offenders (in the case of students).
- c. Suspension from work (in the case of staff).
- d. Dismissal from work for second offenders (in the case of staff).
- e. Outright expulsion from the University and dismissal from work when a very severe case of over 75% similarity report is established.
- f. A legal action; fines and other penalties etc.