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:WSU
Walter Sisulu University

WSU PLAGIARISM POLICY

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Responsible Department	LIBRARY & INFORMATION SERVICES
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Related WSU policies	
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University Disciplinary Policies for Academic Staff and Students	Senate Research Ethics Policy
Examinations policy	Senate Research Policy
Senate Higher Degrees Policy	Senate Code of Good Practice for Quality Assurance of Higher Degrees Policy
Intellectual Property Policy	Open Access Policy
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Chairperson of Council

CONTENTS

1 PREAMBLE

Plagiarism constitutes a breach of academic integrity, 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 damages the reputation of the university. Walter Sisulu University (WSU) takes serious consideration of its role to uphold its academic integrity and to promote trust in the scholarly and administrative work undertaken at the university. Plagiarism policy acts as an overseer in ensuring the university protects intellectual property of the originator of sources of information its stakeholders use, to teach, research, learn and manage.

Scientific knowledge is constantly disseminated by those who teach and are taught, those who learn and those who render research results. Scientific communication as one of the major role of a University should be pursued mindful of the ethics and legalities of using scholarly published and unpublished works. Scientific knowledge must pass the test of correctness, defensibility and (especially in the case of research) originality. The scientific practice of students and scientists is arbitrated and appraised on an ongoing basis. For that reason, integrity and honesty in using other people's sources of information should be declared and acknowledged using academic acceptable norms such as (citation and enlisting of the original source in reference list or compiled bibliography).

As plagiarism does not start and end when drafting a final manuscript such as "thesis or dissertation or a research article", plagiarism policy requires a series of internal interventions to either educate or save the university from the policy violation. As the university acquired a plagiarism detection software (Turnit-in), that alone suggests the value attached to knowledge produced in its premises.

2 PURPOSE OF THE POLICY

- To get a shared and clear understanding of the nature of plagiarism, how it is conducted and how to avoid it,

- To emphasize the need to educate the University community about plagiarism and its impact on their integrity and on institutional reputation,

- To develop an enabling environment as a positive reinforcement which understands that academic writing is enacted skill that requires, education, a closer monitoring and evaluation before the stringent measures of detection are put in place to punish a writer,

- To establish uniform procedures for dealing with instances of plagiarism within the university and to save our students and researchers from external forces that may be detrimental to their integrity,

- To promote scholarship and contribute to academic integrity within the university,

- To improve the quality and authenticity of WSU authored research

- To inculcate the graduate attributes through infusing scholarship and academic writing skills during an early stage of university scholarship endeavors,

- To prepare the university to join other academic and research universities in the adoption of the Open Access movement (Berlin Declaration Signatory) by sharing its research and publications on the internet.

3. 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.

Resources that would normally be the subjected to plagiarism enquiry would include, but would not be limited to, the following: teaching and learning materials, assignments, study guides, examination question papers, research

papers, dissertations, theses, manuscripts, published research material, project proposals, policies and reports.

4. DEFINITIONS

4.1. 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.

4.2. 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.

4.3. 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.

4.4. 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.

4.5. Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the act of submitting or presenting work, study and assessment 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])

4.6. Plagiarism Detection

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

4.6.1. Plagiarism Prevention

Steps that reduce acts of plagiarism are through education, creation of awareness, lecturer classroom coaching, prevention and monitoring.

4.6.2. Postgraduate student

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

4.6.3. Researcher

A person who researches at the University and/or who produces research [3]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.

4.6.4. Undergraduate student

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

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[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.

[3]

5. POLICY STATEMENT

In line with other universities whose policies are consulted in drafting this policy, WSU subscribes to the following principles:

5.1. Each university focus is on scholarship, therefore its practices are guided by Scientific disciplines,

5.2. Scholarship is discovered/researched, taught, learnt and made useful to satisfy legitimate needs,

5.3. **Scientific knowledge is constantly disseminated by those who teach and are taught, to those who learn and** those who render research results.

5.4. **Scientific knowledge** is communicated regardless of whether this is pursued in the context of learning, teaching in the classroom or in research or application of its application,

5.5. It is therefore the responsibility of anybody engaged in scientific work that the relevant individual should assume sole responsibility for the content of his or her scientific communication.

5.6. To be avoided at any level is to present another person's original thought as one's own,

5.7. Copying and pasting another person's works word by word without acknowledgement is considered unacceptable and that is equally comparable to commitment of crime or fraudulence,

5.8. Using other organisation's sources of information for drafting your documents, preparing examination scripts, assignments, thesis or any form of writing without acknowledging original sources is considered violation of plagiarism policy of the Walter Sisulu University,

5.9. Plagiarism at Walter Sisulu University is equally associated to breach of academic integrity and compromises and undermines the values and processes by which knowledge is created, shared and evaluated.

5.10. Walter Sisulu University takes responsibility in ensuring educational and developmental processes are put in place to improve the stature of its

scholarly reputation, by so doing, all transgressions to the policy will be punishable.

6.   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:

6.1.   The University has a responsibility to uphold academic integrity and to promote trust in scholarly work undertaken at the Institution.

6.2.   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.

6.3.   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.

6.4.   Plagiarism is not only an issue in the academic sphere. The principles apply equally for ensuring that administrative work is conducted with integrity.

6.5.   Acts of plagiarism do not necessarily stem from dishonesty. In a society where preparation for academic endeavor 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.

6.6.   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.

6.7. Plagiarism cases are not all the same and circumstances may dictate that hypothetically 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.

6.8. 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.

6.9. The guidelines 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.

6.10. Compliance oversight should be conducted in a spirit of promoting research endeavors and the dissemination of results.

7. STRUCTURES FOR OVERSEEING COMPLIANCE OF THIS POLICY

7.1.   The University's research ethics oversight structures comprise the following:

7.2.   Senate

7.3.   The University Research Ethics Committee (REC).

7.4.   Faculty Boards

7.5.   Faculty Research Ethics Committees (FRECs)

7.6.   Committees and Tribunals constituted in term of this clause

7.7.   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.

7.8.   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.

7.9.   The **University Research Ethics Committee (WSUREC)** implements, oversees and monitors research integrity at the University, including plagiarism, and shall

7.9.1.   Provide guidance on the interpretation and implementation of this Policy

7.9.2.   Receive faculty reports regarding Category A and B plagiarism in their faculties

7.9.3.   Act upon Category C transgressions

7.9.4.   Constitute ad hoc Plagiarism Tribunals to deal with specific instances

7.9.5.   Where necessary and/or appropriate, constitute ad hoc Plagiarism Tribunals to deal with specific instances

7.9.6.   Annually report to Senate on matters concerning plagiarism

7.9.7.   Periodically review the content and the implementation of this Policy

7.10. 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.

7.11. 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.

7.12. 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.

7.13. 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 normally from the faculty involved and two from other faculties.

7.14. 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.

8. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

8.1. Academic staff

8.1.1.   Academic staff members are responsible for creating awareness and for putting preventative measures in place

8.1.2.   All lecturers must be able to use and apply programs used to detect plagiarism

8.1.3.   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

8.1.4.   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.

8.2. Students

8.2.1.   During the first two years of study students must follow orientation and awareness programmes to educate them about plagiarism

8.2.2.   All postgraduate students should follow the procedure to check scholarly work for possible plagiarism where after a Plagiarism Declaration Form (Annexure B) must be completed.

8.3. Academic support

The Research Office, the Library and Information Services Division, the Centre for Teaching and Learning and Research directorate will co-operate to ensure availability of orientation sessions and programmes, as well as software licensing and maintenance of approved detection programmes. Academic development should encompass training for academics on how to use the software or detect academic writing malpractices.

9. PREVENTATIVE MEASURES

9.1. The University has purchased the rights to use acceptable and lawful text-matching, similarity-checking software (Turnit-in), 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.

9.2. Members of staff are compelled, in terms of their professional commitment to best academic practice, to use this software as their self-detection system. Staff should be open to various detection and monitoring approaches.

9.3. 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.

9.4. 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.

10. EDUCATIONAL INTERVENTIONS

10.1. Teaching and Learning

- All academic staff should ensure that students are inducted into the values and practises of their discipline with respect to the conventions associated with acknowledging the work of others (citation and referencing styles).
- Students are exposed to multiple copies and latest relevant adequate information sources in various formats to support their subject disciplines and to avoid reliance on one source of information for learning,

- Academics in conjunction with librarians facilitate the process of organising library training (information literacy skills) for students before they are expected to write and submit assignments.
- In that way, Plagiarism and use of Turnit-in will be viewed as a developmental process than a punitive measure to fail the learners.

11.2. Research Writing

In line with Research directorate, writing retreats the following interventions are proposed:

- First part of the post graduate and research writing retreats should include an academic writing session whereby the Library, CLTD and Research directorate unpacks the most critical issues in drafting a research proposal or an academic manuscript. The programme progresses with students as research move from chapter to chapter,
- Post graduate students be taken through information literacy skills (write and cite),
- On completion of the first draft , the supervisor organise the librarians to work with the student in submitting a thesis or dissertation on Turnit-in and a report be submitted to the supervisor so that areas for improvement can be addressed before final submission.
- A structured approach to plagiarism offers the best protection for the university and for the student as the product the university.
- On submission of each assessed work, students should be required to sign a declaration that the work they have submitted is their own unaided work and acknowledging that plagiarism processes have been assessed.

11.3. Governance and Leadership

To safeguard the university from violation of this policy during its process drafting university management documents such as policies, business and strategic plans, the following is proposed:

- On submission of the final draft of the policy for approval by the Senate and Council, there has to be attached evidence that the document has been assessed on the plagiarism software and similarities detection percentage is acceptable.

11. FACULTY MONITORING

11.1.1. FREC be established with a responsibility to oversee and coordinate anti-plagiarism awareness/ campaigns as a preventative measures within their faculties,

11.1.2. 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 the Policy implementation.

11.1.3. 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 departmental plagiarism issues.

12. POLICY REVIEW

12.1. On Council approval, the Office of the Deputy Vice Chancellor Academic Affairs and Research and the Senior Director LIS shall review the Policy on a need based analysis or three year cycle.

12.2. On recommendation of the Research Ethics Committee, Senate may review and amend the policy accordingly, in which event the amendments take effect on the date of the Senate approval.

12.3. The Policy owner may review and amend annexures that contain or illustrate forms or documents for effective administration and/or management at any time.

12.4. All persons affected by the Policy must be notified of any amendments.

12.5. 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.

13. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND REFERENCES

This document draws (verbatim) from similar policies developed at the University of Zululand, North West University, Wits University, Rhodes University, and University of the Western Cape and the University of Fort Hare. A series of acronyms used were derived from University of Zululand Plagiarism policy.

14. ANNEXURE A: PLAGIARISM DECLARATION TEMPLATE
DECLARATION TO ACCOMPANY EACH AND EVERY WRITTEN ACADEMIC OR RESEARCH ASSIGNMENT/OUTPUT

1. I am aware that plagiarism is defined at Walter Sisulu University (WSU) as the inclusion of another's or others' ideas, writings, works, discoveries and inventions from any source in an assignment or research output as your own without the due, correct and appropriate acknowledgement to the author(s) or source(s) in breach of the values, conventions, ethics and norms of the different professional academic and research disciplines and includes unacknowledged copying from intra- and internet and peers/fellow students.

The following include examples of Plagiarism but the list is not exhaustive:

(i) Verbatim copying from another source, such as a paper, a book or a webpage, without using a proper citation.

(ii) Paraphrasing information from another source without using a proper citation.

(iii)   The use of data collected by someone else without the use of proper citation.

2. I have duly and appropriately acknowledged all references and conformed to avoid plagiarism as defined by WSU.

3. I have made use of the citation and referencing style stipulated by my faculty/lecturer/supervisor.

4. This submitted work is my own.

5. I did not and will not allow anyone to copy my work and present it as his/her own.

6. I am committed to uphold the academic and professional integrity of   the University.

7. I am aware of the consequences of engaging in plagiarism.

_____   _____

Signature   Date

15. WSU STUDENTS PLAGIARISM DECLARATION FORM

Students are required to complete this Declaration and include it after the Cover Page of every assignment, essay and take-home test submitted for credit in the university.

An assignment, research essay or take–home test submitted without a completed Declaration will not be evaluated.

I hereby declare and warrant that	√	x
I have read and understood the relevant sections in the university plagiarism policy of the university in the prospectus relating to the importance of citation and referencing.	√	
I understand what plagiarism means and that it is the worst academic sin.	√	
I have acknowledged all quotations which I have used in my assignment, research, essay or take-home test.	√	
I have acknowledged all the ideas of others which I have used in my assignment, research, essay or take-home test.	√	
I have acknowledged all my sources in accordance with the referencing rules as prescribed by the faculty.	√	
I have included a bibliography of all my sources.	√	

I have not copied anyone else's assignment, essay or take-home test or any part thereof.	√	
I have not permitted anyone else to copy my assignment, essay or take-home test or any part thereof.	√	
I have not plagiarised.	√	

First Names(s): ....

Student Number: ....

Signature:..

Date: ....