Framework for the Assessment of Undergraduate Plagiarism

Established: 1 September 2017
Revised: […]
Supersedes: N/A
Responsible/Originating Department: Vice-President, Academic & Provost
Executive Contact: Associate Vice-President, Academic

Related Policies, Guidelines & Procedures:
Policy 71 – Student Discipline
Policy 73 – Intellectual Property Rights

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1. General

Policy 71's glossary defines *plagiarism*, in part, as "presenting, whether intentionally or not, the ideas, expression of ideas or work of others (whether attributed or anonymous) as one's own in any work submitted whether or not for grading purposes". The following principles are articulated in recognition that:

1) some instances of plagiarism may be the result of inadequate writing strategies rather than a lapse in academic integrity; and
2) a variable penalty is needed to address the range of occurrences of plagiarism.

2. Principles

1. The student's associate dean has the authority to assess instances of plagiarism and the resultant penalties. An instructor can propose a grade penalty to the associate dean, who will decide whether to accept the penalty or initiate a formal inquiry.

2. Students sometimes make submissions[1] that contain material that is the work of others. When this material is properly cited, initial submissions should <u>not</u> be considered an academic integrity violation. The student's mark should reflect the amount of the student's own writing. For example, if the submission contains a disproportionate quantity of cited materials, such that the student has contributed very little original material to the submission, then the student's mark should reflect that limited level of contribution. Students who make these submissions have the responsibility to address this type of writing error and will be directed to campus resources that support improved writing (see Appendix A – Achieving Academic Success).

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[1] "Submissions" refers to any work provided by a student in order to obtain credit in a course and includes (but is not limited to) essays, assignments, reports, proposals, lab reports, and presentations.

3. Repeat instances of writing errors described in Principle 2 may be treated as academic integrity violations and may lead to a penalty that includes disciplinary probation to recognize the failure of the student to address the issue.

4. The severity of the penalty associated with the plagiarism depends on both the quantity of plagiarized content and the extent to which the student failed to attribute the plagiarized materials. (Examples: one sentence of poorly paraphrased material may warrant a significantly lighter penalty than a full essay of unattributed, copied-and-pasted text; two plagiarized sentences in a 10-page essay might receive a lighter penalty than four plagiarized pages in a 10-page essay.)

5. The impact of an academic integrity violation on a student's marks depends on the value of the submission. (Examples: a penalty of a 100% reduction on an assignment worth 2% of a student's final course grade is not particularly impactful; a penalty of a 50% reduction in the earned grade on an assignment worth 40% of the student's final course grade may result in a course failure.) As such, imposed penalties can vary from the Suggested Management of Plagiarism Penalties (see Appendix B) in an effort to ensure that their impact is consistent with their objectives. In the first example described in this principle, the imposed penalty may be a 100% reduction on the assignment grade plus an additional 5% reduction from the final course grade. In the second example described in this principle, the imposed penalty may be a 50% reduction on the assignment earned grade, but may specify that the student's final mark on the assignment should not produce a failure in the course.

6. There may be instances where a student's submission includes multiple components (such as lab reports) with plagiarism confined to a single section. If the marking rubric allows, the imposed penalty may be limited to that section of the submission; in such cases, the section penalty will normally be 100%.

7. For group submissions, students are strongly encouraged to identify the portions of the assignment for which they are responsible. In the absence of this identification, all students will be held responsible for violations of academic integrity in the group submission. A sample form to allocate responsibility in group submissions can be found in Appendix C – Assignment Checklist for Group Submissions.

8. Associate Deans can consider extenuating circumstances in levying penalties that are less severe than the guidelines (see Appendix B – Suggested Management of Plagiarism Penalties). The most common of these circumstances is limited university experience (Example: student's first term at the University) because students are still learning these conventions.

9. Consistent with University policy, repeat offenders shall receive more severe penalties.

Appendix A
Achieving Academic Success

Students are strongly encouraged to consider the root cause of their writing error and use one or more of the following resources, workshops and/or courses to learn how to successfully gather, summarize and cite published information, write in their own words and avoid allegations of plagiarism under Policy 71 – Student Discipline:

HELP NEEDED:	HELP PROVIDED:
Writing skills Unsure how to write in own words or organize ideas	• Attend a Writing Centre (WC) workshop – e.g., 'Say it in your own words: paraphrase & summary' • Review Writing Centre (WC) writing resources, such as 'Integrating Evidence' • Use WriteOnline resources for writing case studies, reflective essays, literature reviews, & lab reports • Meet with a Writing Centre (WC) writing specialist by booking an appointment or attending a drop-in session at the Library
Stress and time management skills Struggling with workload stress, sufficient time for course work and/or how to approach large assignments	• Attend Student Success Office workshops – e.g., 'Get this term started' and 'Organizing Your Time' • Review Student Success Office time management resources – e.g., 'Backwards Planning' • Book Peer Success Coach appointment
Referencing and research skills Unsure how to find good sources, cite sources and/or quote ideas	• Use Library Find and use resources and Quick Start Guide • Review Citing Sources and use citation management software, like RefWorks, to track and format citations • Attend Library workshops – e.g., 'Citing Properly with RefWorks' • Review Avoiding Plagiarism or How to Successfully Use the Works of Others • Contact a subject librarian or try Ask us for help
Motivation and interest Not motivated about or interested in material; not seeing the relevance of material	• Meet with an academic advisor • Attend a Centre for Career Action appointment drop-in time or workshop to understand relevance of course work

Plagiarism consequences
Unsure of policies regarding plagiarism or its consequences
	• Review Office of Academic Integrity resources:
	  o Introduction to Policy 71
	  o Academic integrity tutorial
	  o 10 tips to avoid academic misconduct
	  o Academic integrity fact sheet for students

Writing Courses
Needing practice writing and integrating research in a supported and scaffolded setting
	• Take a writing-intensive course:
	  o ENGL 109: Introduction to Academic Writing
	  o EMLS 129/ENGL 129R: Written Academic English
	  o ENGL 140R: The use of English 1

Appendix B
Suggested Management of Plagiarism Penalties

Level 0 Penalties	Level 1 Penalties			Level 2 Penalties
Verbatim text or minimal paraphrasing <u>with</u> appropriate in-text citation(s)/attribution	Verbatim text or minimal paraphrasing <u>without</u> in-text citation(s)/attribution OR Re-submission of own work without acknowledgement			Stolen or purchased work
• Percentage deduction aligned with quantity of poor writing • Referral to writing help options[2] • Repeat occurrences may trigger Level 1 penalties	**1a.** 1-2 sentences of uncited or erroneously cited content • 25% of earned grade deduction • Probation	**1b.** >2 sentences to <25% of course element • 50% of earned grade deduction • Probation	**1c.** ≥25% of course element • 100% of earned grade deduction • Probation	• Zero on course element • Course failure • Suspension • Probation
	An additional penalty up to 5% of the final grade may be implemented, in particular for plagiarism occurring on low-valued course elements (i.e. elements worth less than 10% of a student's grade)			

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[2] See Appendix A.

Appendix C
Assignment Checklist for Group Submissions

Students should be aware that academic integrity is expected in all individual and group assignments.

The following text is recommended for instructors who utilize group assignments as an assessment technique.

Group Assignment Disclosure

Please read the disclosure below following the completion of your group assignment. Once you have verified these points, hand in this signed disclosure with your group assignment.

1. All team members have referenced and footnoted all ideas, words, or other intellectual property from other sources used in the completion of this assignment.

2. A proper bibliography has been included, which includes acknowledgement of all sources used to complete this assignment.

3. This is the first time that any member of the group has submitted this assignment or essay (either partially or entirely) for academic evaluation.

4. Each member of the group has read the full content of the submission and is assured that the content is free of violations of academic integrity. Group discussions regarding the importance of academic integrity have taken place.

5. All team members have identified their individual contributions to the work submitted such that if violations of academic integrity are suspected, then the student(s) primarily responsible for the violations may be identified. Note that the remainder of the team may also be subject to disciplinary action.

Course: _____

Assignment: _____

Date: _____

Name (print)	Signature	Section Contributed	Section Edited