

Framework for the Assessment of Graduate Plagiarism

Established:	1 September 2017
Revised:	[...]
Supersedes:	N/A
Responsible/Originating Department:	Vice-President, Academic & Provost
Executive Contact:	Associate Vice-President, Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs

Related Policies, Guidelines & Procedures:

Policy 71 – Student Discipline

Policy 73 – Intellectual Property Rights

1. General:

The Policy 71 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 work in any work submitted whether or not for grading purposes*”. The following principles are articulated in recognition that:

- 1) a variable penalty is needed to address the range of occurrences of plagiarism;
- 2) expectations of graduate students differ to some extent from expectations of undergraduate students; and
- 3) plagiarism within different forms of presentation, including course work, comprehensive examinations and research, are subject to different considerations.

2. Principles:

- 1) The student’s faculty associate dean of graduate studies has the authority to assess instances of plagiarism and the resultant penalties. A course instructor can propose a grade penalty to the associate dean, who will decide whether to accept the penalty or initiate a formal inquiry.
- 2) The severity of the penalty associated with the plagiarism depends on the quantity of the plagiarized content; the extent to which the student failed to attribute the plagiarized materials; and, the nature of the content that was plagiarized, for example, general background material as compared to intellectual content, including new methodology, analysis or critique.
- 3) The impact of an academic integrity violation within course work on a student’s mark 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 a student's final course grade may result in a course failure). Imposed penalties can therefore vary from the Suggested Management of Plagiarism Penalties (Appendix A) in an effort to ensure that the impact is consistent with the objectives. Penalties in such cases would be modified at the discretion of the faculty associate dean, graduate studies. (Using the examples above, in the first situation the imposed penalty may be a 100% reduction on the assigned grade plus an additional 5% reduction from the final course grade. In the second example, 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, assuming grades on other course components are acceptable.)






- 4) There may be instances where a student's course work submission includes multiple sections (such as within 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 would normally be 100%.
- 5) For group submissions, instructors are strongly encouraged to have students identify the sections of the group assignment for which they are responsible and to also make expectations for any group oversight clear. (See Appendix B – Assignment Checklist for Group Submissions). In the absence of this identification, all students will be held equally responsible for violations in academic integrity within the group submission.
- 6) Plagiarism on Comprehensive Examinations may result in delayed examination, re-examination, failure of the exam or exam component, suspension or expulsion, depending on the severity.
- 7) Plagiarism on the background reference content of a Thesis proposal, Major Research Paper or Thesis may result in delayed examination, re-examination, failure of the exam or exam component, suspension or expulsion, depending on the severity. Plagiarism on the research intellectual property* associated with a Thesis proposal, Major Research Paper or Thesis will be referred to the Vice-President University Research or Delegate, as will any identified violation of Research Integrity.

*research intellectual property refers to something that advances knowledge, including methodology, data, other results or research products.

- 8) A student penalized for plagiarism or other violations of academic or research integrity is placed on academic probation. Consistent with University policy, repeat offenders shall receive more severe penalties.

Appendix A
Suggested Management of Plagiarism Penalties

Suggested Management of Plagiarism Penalties on Course Work^a

Level 1 Penalties			Penalties	Level 3 Penalties
1a	1b	1c	2	3
1-2 sentences of uncited or erroneously cited* reference content**	> 2 sentences to <25% of course element uncited or erroneously cited reference content OR 1 – 2 sentences intellectual content***	>25% of course element uncited or erroneously cited reference content OR > 2 sentences to < 25% of course element intellectual content.	>25% of course element contains plagiarized intellectual content OR resubmission of own work previously submitted for grade or credit	Stolen or Purchased Work
				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Referral to writing help options 25% of earned grade deduction Probation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Referral to writing help options 50% of earned grade deduction plus up to 5% of final course grade Probation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Referral to writing help options Zero on course element plus up to 5% of final course grade Probation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Zero on course element One mark less than the passing grade for the course (according to program-specific guidelines) or earned grade (whichever is lower) Probation May include Suspension 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expulsion

Footnotes ^aPenalties for plagiarism on work towards pre-thesis course milestones will vary with the severity and milestone requirements. In all cases, students should be referred to writing help options and placed on academic probation.




**Erroneously cited* at a graduate level refers to ONLY providing general in-text citation (s)/attribution in situations where more specific citation would be expected for publication in the discipline (for example, according to the American Psychological Association [APA] guidelines, text presented verbatim or with minimal paraphrasing should be enclosed in quotation marks and the in-text citation include author(s), year and page number).

**Reference content refers to general background or methodology

*** Intellectual content refers to the authors' ideas, interpretation, critique, conclusions or recommendations.

Note that penalties may be modified at the discretion of the Faculty Associate Dean, Graduate Studies.

Suggested Management of Plagiarism Penalties on Comprehensive Exams

Level 1 Penalties	Level 2 Penalties	Level 3 Penalties
<p>1 sentence to <25% of reference content** of the written comprehensive exam text is uncited or erroneously cited* OR 1 – 2 sentences erroneously cited* intellectual content***</p> 	<p>≥25% of the written comprehensive exam text contains plagiarized reference content OR >2 sentences erroneously cited intellectual content OR any uncited intellectual content OR resubmission of own work previously submitted for grade or credit</p> 	<p>Stolen or Purchased Work included within the comprehensive exam submission.</p> 
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Referral to writing help options • Delayed examination or re-examination • Probation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failure of the comprehensive examination • Suspension • Probation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expulsion
<p>Repeat incidences of Plagiarism will be more severely penalized and may result in expulsion</p>		

Footnotes **Erroneously cited* at a graduate level refers to ONLY providing general in-text citation (s)/attribution in situations where more specific citation would be expected for publication in the discipline (for example, according to the American Psychological Association [APA] guidelines, text presented verbatim or with minimal paraphrasing should be enclosed in quotation marks and the in-text citation include author(s), year and page number).

**Reference content refers to text pertaining to general background or methodology

*** Intellectual content refers to the authors' ideas, interpretation, critique, conclusions or recommendations. Plagiarism would be identifiable from uncited written work or clear lack of acknowledgement/attribution of the source of the intellectual content within verbal presentation.





Note that penalties may be modified at the discretion of the Faculty Associate Dean, Graduate Studies.

Suggested Management of Plagiarism Penalties on Major Research Paper, Thesis Proposal or Thesis

IS THIS REFERENCE MATERIAL?



IS THIS RESEARCH INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY?

Level 1 Penalties	Level 2 Penalties	Referral to the Office of Research	
			Level 3 Penalties
1 sentence to <25% of general reference content** of the written thesis or thesis proposal text uncited or erroneously cited* OR 1 – 2 sentences erroneously cited* intellectual reference content***	≥25% of the written thesis or thesis proposal text contains plagiarized general reference content OR >2 sentences erroneously cited intellectual reference content OR any uncited intellectual reference content	Plagiarism within the thesis or thesis proposal related to research intellectual property****	Fabrication, Falsification, Stolen or Purchased Work within the thesis or thesis proposal.
			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Referral to writing help options • Delayed examination or re-examination • Probation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failure of the examination • Suspension • Probation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Referral to the Vice President University Research or delegate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Referral to the Vice President University Research or delegate • Expulsion
Repeat incidences of Plagiarism will be more severely penalized and may result in expulsion			

Footnotes **Erroneously cited* at a graduate level refers to ONLY providing general in-text citation (s)/attribution in situations where more specific citation would be expected for publication in the discipline (for example, according to the American Psychological Association [APA] guidelines, text presented verbatim or with minimal paraphrasing should be enclosed in quotation marks and the in-text citation include author(s), year and page number).

**General reference content refers to general background or methodology

*** Intellectual reference content refers to the authors' ideas, interpretation, critique, conclusions or recommendations. Plagiarism would be identifiable from uncited written work or clear lack of acknowledgement/attribution of the source of the intellectual content within verbal presentation.

****Research intellectual property refers to something that advances knowledge, including methodology or data. Plagiarism of research intellectual property might be evident from the written thesis or thesis proposal submission or verbal presentation.

Note that penalties outside of those relating to research intellectual property may be modified at the discretion of the Faculty Associate Dean, Graduate Studies.

Appendix B
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