

PLAGIARISM POLICY

1. Preamble

As a University driven by the pursuit of knowledge and innovation which seeks to produce highly acclaimed graduates equipped with research, entrepreneurial, social and technical skills based upon the values the University espouses, adopts this Plagiarism Policy.

The University considers plagiarism to be a serious academic offence and students who plagiarise threaten the values and beliefs that underpin academic work and devalue the integrity of the University's awards, whether or not such plagiarism is intentional. Depending on the severity of the case, offenders may be punished, and the punishment may extend to failing their degree, temporary suspension or expulsion from further study at the University. Plagiarism, at any point of a student's course, whether discovered before or after graduation, shall be investigated and dealt with appropriately by the University.

All work submitted by students for assessment is accepted on the understanding that it is the student's own effort and written from their own understanding, without falsification of any kind. Students are expected to offer their own analysis and presentation of information extracted from research, even when group exercises are carried out. In so far as students rely on sources, they should properly cite these sources in accordance with the appropriate convention in their discipline.

2. Objectives of the Policy

The purpose of this Policy is to ensure that the University's academic integrity is protected by establishing a framework for deterring, detecting and dealing with plagiarism consistently across all faculties of the Institution. To this end, the Policy seeks to provide a framework which shall (i) ensure students and staff awareness of the need to avoid plagiarism, and (ii) provide for fair and consistent administrative processes across all faculties to deal with detected cases.

3. Scope of Application

The Plagiarism Policy applies to all members of the University community. The emphasis of the Policy is primarily on deterring, detecting and dealing with plagiarism on research output, students' work (essays, reports, presentations, dissertations and projects), teaching materials and other scholarly materials.

4. Guiding Principles

This Policy draws from the General Academic Regulations for Undergraduate Degrees of Bindura University of Science Education, the Regulations for Postgraduate Diplomas and Masters Degrees by Coursework, the Research Policy and the Publications Policy.

The Plagiarism Policy shall be communicated to all students and staff who shall acknowledge having read it by signing. The Policy shall also be made visible on each academic departmental website.

5. Policy Details

5.1 Definition of Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the unacknowledged use of material, an idea or ideas, which are not originally one's own. As such, plagiarism is an academic offense in the sense that theft, piracy, and robbery are in ordinary daily life.

5.2 The University shall consider plagiarism to be activities including, but not limited to the following:

- 5.2.1 direct copying without crediting the source,
- 5.2.2 translating without crediting the source,
- 5.2.3 paraphrasing someone else's work without crediting the source,
- 5.2.4 piecing together sections of the work of others into a new whole,
- 5.2.5 copying the work of other persons with or without their knowledge and presenting it as your own,
- 5.2.6 knowingly allowing another person to copy one's work,
- 5.2.7 resubmitting one's own or other's previously graded work,
- 5.2.8 ghost-writing: using ghost writers or professional agencies in the production of your work or submitting material which has been written on your behalf,
- 5.2.9 conspiring by two or more individuals to produce a piece of work together with the intention that at least one passes it off as his or her own work, and
- 5.2.10 submission by a person of the work of another person, in circumstances where the latter has willingly given the former the work and where it should be evident to the person giving the work that the other person would submit it as his/her own. In this case **both** persons are guilty of plagiarism

5.3 Obligations of students

Students should:

- 5.3.1 act with integrity and take responsibility for their academic work,
- 5.3.2 sign a declaration that they have read and shall abide by the Plagiarism Policy,
- 5.3.3 familiarise themselves with and make use of citation methods in accordance with the appropriate conventions in their discipline,
- 5.3.4 not mislead examiners by submitting another person's work for assessment in a way which intentionally and/or negligently and/or recklessly suggests that factual information has been collected and/or analysed which has not in fact been collected and/or analysed by the student, and
- 5.3.5 sign for originality of their work when submitting their thesis/dissertations.

5.4 Obligations of Staff

Staff should:

- 5.4.1 act with integrity and take responsibility for their academic work,

- 5.4.2 sign a declaration that they have read and shall abide by the Plagiarism Policy,
- 5.4.3 familiarise themselves with and make use of citation methods in accordance with the appropriate conventions in their discipline,
- 5.4.4 not mislead the University and/or publishers by submitting or using another person's work as theirs,
- 5.4.5 emphasise the value system and academic integrity of the University,
- 5.4.6 clearly state that students are expected to do their own work and submit it in the prescribed manner,
- 5.4.7 discuss plagiarism with students, its meaning and what is acceptable, as well as the rules with regard to quotations and references,
- 5.4.8 explain the rules with regard to discussions, collaboration and assisting one another,
- 5.4.9 ensure that every student submits his/her assignment or research work accompanied by a signed Declaration of Originality,
- 5.4.10 check for plagiarism on students' work, research papers and teaching material,
- 5.4.11 report on plagiarism cases of suspected plagiarism to the respective Department

5.5 Obligations of the University

The University shall:

- 5.5.1 publicise the Plagiarism Policy,
- 5.5.2 ensure that students and staff sign the Plagiarism Policy,
- 5.5.3 provide antiplagiarism software,
- 5.5.4 train students and staff on the use of antiplagiarism software,
- 5.5.2 provide students and staff with guidance on how to avoid plagiarism,
- 5.5.3 fairly and consistently deal with detected cases of plagiarism.

6. Plagiarism Prevention Mechanisms

In dealing with Plagiarism, the University's initial emphasis is on teaching students to learn with integrity rather than detecting plagiarism and dealing with offenders. To this end, the following mechanisms exist:

6.1 Research Methodology Courses

Through these courses, students are introduced to the research process, the planning accompanying research as well as methods and techniques for logical synthesis of such information and ideas into a scholarly paper or report.

6.2 Declaration of Originality

Each assignment or research component submitted by a student should be accompanied by a declaration that the work is his/hers.

6.3 Plagiarism Prevention Awareness Seminars

Awareness seminars that coincide with the welcoming of first year students should be presented annually.

6.4 Training Workshops

The Library and the RPGC shall actively train students and academic staff on the necessary skills for academic writing, citation and attribution.

6.5 Plagiarism detection software

Bindura University of Science Education shall make use of electronic plagiarism detection software/tool which is integrated into the University's Moodle E-learning Platform. It allows students to submit their assignments and projects, checks the work for plagiarism, and sends an originality report to the lecturer/supervisor and student.

Originality reports generated by the plagiarism detection software are simply a tool to help lecturers and supervisors find sources that contain text similar to submitted work. The decision to deem any work plagiarised must be made carefully, and only after in-depth examination of both the submitted paper and suspect sources.

6.6 Penalisation

Recommendations on the severity of the offence and penalty shall be determined by the appropriate Departmental Board of Examiners as stipulated in the guidelines in a fair, transparent and consistent manner. The most serious cases of Plagiarism shall be referred to SENEX.

Alleged plagiarism shall be penalised in accordance to the Plagiarism Penalty Scale. If a student admits the plagiarism, a note of the offence shall be made on the student's record. If the student denies committing the offence, or disputes the degree of seriousness, the case shall be referred to SENEX for further investigation.

When investigating an incident, the following is important:

- 6.6.1 the extent or amount of the plagiarised content in the submitted work
- 6.6.2 the significance of the plagiarised content on the assessment of the submitted work
- 6.6.3 experience of the student, i.e. the background, year and level of the student
- 6.6.4 whether the student has previous incidents of plagiarism
- 6.6.5 any apparent intention by the student to cheat by way of plagiarism

6.7 Plagiarism Register

The University shall maintain a Plagiarism Register for effective monitoring of offenders and ensuring consistent application of penalties.

Lecturers shall be required to complete the Plagiarism Reporting Form in order to register all cases of proven plagiarism with SENEX.

All cases of proven plagiarism shall be logged on the Plagiarism Register.

PLAGIARISM PENALTY SCALE

Name of student: _____ Department _____ Date _____

Staff Member _____ Chairperson of Department _____ Date _____

Place a tick at the appropriate place for each criteria. Make an overall judgement about the level of seriousness. All levels must be ratified by the Departmental Board of Examiners.

CRITERIA	LOW LEVEL (Score 0)	MEDIUM LEVEL (Score 1)	HIGH LEVEL (Score 2)
<p>Extent of plagiarism (Detected by Anti-plagiarism Software) Amount or proportion of assessment item or work that is not the student's own. -Extent to which the assessment process is compromised</p>	<p>For Example: -Few sentence, one paragraph, one (minor) graphic -Few elements of computer source code -DPhil/PhD <5% -MPhil/MSc <10% -Undergraduate <15%</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><input type="radio"/></p>	<p>For Example: -Two or three paragraphs or a segment of the work -Segments of computer source code -DPhil/PhD, 5-10% -MPhil/MSc, 10-15% -Undergraduate, 15-20%</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><input type="radio"/></p>	<p>For Example: -Significant appropriation of ideas or artistic work -Multiple pages or sections of text or graphics copied -DPhil/PhD > 10% -MPhil/MSc >15% -Undergraduate >20%</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><input type="radio"/></p>
<p>Nature of plagiarism Nature of the breach of academic scholarship</p>	<p>For Example: -Referencing or attribution of work is not clear or adequate, or has numerous errors, -Inappropriate paraphrasing</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><input type="radio"/></p>	<p>For Example: -Failure to reference and/or cite adequately -Copying segments of other students assignment work -False indication of contribution to group work -Copying fragments of material from websites, book or other publications -Recycling parts of previous assignments</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><input type="radio"/></p>	<p>For Example: -Fabricated references or citations -Whole works copied (from students or other sources) -Use of ghost writers -Submitting others' work</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><input type="radio"/></p>

Intent of student to cheat by way of plagiarism Intentionality of the act of plagiarism and intent to cheat by way of plagiarism.	For Example: -Plagiarism appears unintentional or due to lack of knowledge -Intent to cheat is unlikely or doubtful 	For Example: -Plagiarism appears intentional or the result of negligence -Intent to cheat is probable but cannot be clearly substantiated -Two or more students involved 	For Example: -Plagiarism appears deliberate and planned -Actions contravene clear instructions -Intent to cheat is evident 
Previous Plagiarism cases Relates to your expectation that the student should be aware of the seriousness of their actions	First offender 	Second offender 	Third offender 

OVERALL DECISION

Please tick appropriate box for the overall rating of level of plagiarism.

Level I: No Penalty (Score 0)

Level II: Minor Plagiarism (Score 1-4)

Level III: Major Plagiarism (Score 5-8)

(And any High Level Score, for example scores like 0; 0; 0; 2 (total = 2) will considered as a Level III (Major Case).

PENALTIES

Level I - No penalty

Level II

- Mark of zero awarded and recorded
- Opportunity to re-submit: highest mark of 50%
- Note on student's record
- Chairperson's warning
- Student has to attend library training

Level III

- Mark of zero awarded and recorded
- Disciplinary action by SENEX to either suspend or expel the candidate.