



Plagiarism Prevention Guidelines for Students

As at July 2019

Dear Students,

This guideline is concerned with the topic of plagiarism. It summarizes all the information on the following points: what is plagiarism, and what are the potential consequences of submitting a piece of work which has been plagiarized?

What to do in this situation and what must be taken into consideration when speaking to the persons affected? Where can you ask for additional information in individual cases, and who can provide support to reach clear answers?

Familiarize yourself with the information provided and don't hesitate to ask your teachers and Academic Advisors (<https://www.uni-stuttgart.de/en/study/counseling/academic-advisors/>) in case of doubt.

These guidelines are also available to you online: <https://www.student.uni-stuttgart.de/en/exams>

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1. On the integrity of academic practice

The University of Stuttgart and its members aspire to the highest principles of science – to honesty and probity in research and teaching. These guidelines have been written down in the University of Stuttgart's "Satzung der Universität Stuttgart zur Sicherung der Integrität wissenschaftlicher Praxis und zum Umgang mit Fehlverhalten in der Wissenschaft" (Statute to Ensure the Integrity of Academic Practice and to Deal with Academic Misconduct) of July 31, 2013.

It is our aim to educate you, not just in terms of the subject matter but to teach you how to think and work as a scientist, so that you can apply these skills in practice.

Those who carry out research are constantly communicating with other researchers. This is why clearly referring to theses and arguments and the communicative exchange about them – whether at meetings and in publications or in teaching and in student projects – is important for scientific progress.

Problems are often encountered relating to pieces of work being cited incorrectly, which can lead to the suspicion that a student has attempted to cheat. If this is the case, it is the job of the teaching staff to examine the circumstances and ensure that the rules of academic practice – whether it is legal requirements or ethical codes of conduct – have been adhered to.

2. What is plagiarism?

Plagiarism is an attempt to cheat, in the sense of an author giving an impression of having completed a piece of work independently which is actually the work of somebody else.

Different rules relating to citations apply depending on the subject area, likewise the idea of what is considered as general knowledge within the subject and so does not need to be cited. An inquiry must be made to the relevant institute about the respective subject-specific regulations and minimum thresholds.

The most noticeable case of plagiarism is copying sections of text word for word without acknowledging the source, whether it is phrases, passages or complete texts. Not acknowledging means not making it clear in the piece of work that the section in question was written by somebody else. Acknowledgment is given by naming the author, work, and year and place of publication.

It is not only considered as plagiarism when passages are copied word for word without acknowledging them as sources. Copying the thoughts and ideas of others without acknowledging them in a way which is not verbatim, i.e. summarizing without acknowledging (paraphrasing), also comes under the term "plagiarism", as well as copying e.g. arguments and argumentative structures ("structural plagiarism") without ac-

knowledging them, like definitions, theses, theoretical considerations, conclusions, experiments, empirical data, results and their interpretation, charts, tables and graphics.¹

If a piece of work or a part of a piece of work is translated from another language uncited and then submitted supposedly as one's own work, this must also be considered as plagiarism ("translation plagiarism").

Including extracts from one's own texts which have previously been published without reference to the source is referred to in some subject areas as "self-plagiarism". Strictly speaking this is not a case of plagiarism since no "third-party" intellectual property is affected, though publishing rights potentially need to be taken into account. A lack of acknowledgment however makes theses more difficult to classify from a research-history perspective. Examination procedures must determine whether texts and dates which have been part of a previous examination may be reused in a new examination, in full or in part.

Furthermore, it is considered plagiarism when a written piece of work is submitted which has been written in full or in part by another author ("ghostwriting"). This does not need to be plagiarism in the strictest sense; the deception is in the authorship of the text.

If texts need to be edited, the editing must not impair the originality of the piece of work. For example, this would be the case if the piece of work is changed so significantly that the original content and the original academic standard of the work is no longer reproduced.

All of these points mentioned can be confirmed in a declaration of originality signed by the student. The declaration of originality is the written confirmation by the student that he/she has acknowledged all content and sources from third parties in his/her piece of academic work as such. The author confirms this by signing the declaration of originality, which clearly highlights the problems relating to plagiarism again.

A declaration of originality for example can be formulated as follows.

I hereby declare that I have written this term paper independently and only using the aids indicated. I have clearly identified as quotes all passages which I have copied verbatim or paraphrased from the literature or from other sources such as e.g. websites, and I have given the source.

(Signature)

¹ cf. such as Martin Brian (1984): Plagiarism and Responsibility. In: Journal of Tertiary Education Administration 6/2, P. 183–190, here p. 183ff.

3. What happens in the event of suspicion?

If plagiarism has been detected, the examiners must decide how serious a case it is. In cases which are unclear, serious or complex, the examiners have the option of inviting you for a conversation to clarify the issue.

A conversation in the event of suspicion

If there is any suspicion of cheating, you may be invited to a conversation with the purpose of examining together how the suspicion has arisen, and where applicable how the situation can be resolved.

A third person is generally present during this conversation to keep minutes. If you want support during the conversation, you can bring somebody along to accompany you, e.g. the ombudsperson.

In each case, you should have the piece of work in question with you providing you have a copy, or all other relevant documents which could help to clarify the situation.

Possible penalties in the event of plagiarism

“Those who plagiarize cheat both themselves and others.”

By committing plagiarism, the candidate deceives others about the originality of the work produced by them. This is not a trivial offense, but a violation of the rules of good academic practice and a breach of exam regulations.

Students should be aware that an attempt to cheat can result in severe penalties. The individual exam regulations of the University of Stuttgart stipulate which penalties can be imposed should a student attempt to cheat.

The following regulation can be found in Paragraph 17 of all exam regulations of bachelor's and master's degree courses at the University of Stuttgart with the heading “Absence, withdrawal, deception, breach of regulations”:

“If a candidate tries to influence the result of their academic achievements or examination by cheating or by using inadmissible aids, the corresponding module or master's thesis is assessed as “insufficient”.

[...] In serious cases, the Examination Board can exclude the candidate from completing further academic achievements or examinations.”

The exam regulation stipulates two possible penalties which can be enforced if a student attempts to cheat:

1. A piece of work to be given a grade of 5.0 due to cheating.
2. Exclusion from completing further academic achievements in more serious cases.

If a student is proven to have attempted to cheat, the relevant piece of work is given a grade of "insufficient" (5.0 due to cheating). The piece of work is not assessed based on its content, but is penalized by being given a grade of "insufficient" due to the attempt to cheat.

An attempt to cheat is made clear in C@MPUS and in the transcripts, since a note saying "cheating"/"Täuschung" is added alongside the grade.

The cheating does not need to have been completed; in accordance with the exam regulations simply the attempt to cheat is sufficient for a piece of work to be given a grade of 5.0.

The question is often asked of how extensive a case of plagiarism in a piece of work has to be for it to be considered an attempt to cheat. It is always assumed that a candidate has attempted to cheat when a minimum threshold has been exceeded. When the minimum threshold has been exceeded depends on the individual case, the kind of errors found, and the specialist assessment from the examiner.

As an additional penalty, the exam regulations state that in serious cases, the Examination Board can exclude the candidate from completing further academic achievements or examinations. Being excluded from completing further academic achievements or examinations means that no more academic achievements or examinations can be completed in the study program. This leads to the student being unenrolled from the respective subject.

The boundary between a "normal" attempt to cheat and a serious case is determined by the extent to which a candidate has violated the rules of fair competition and the equal opportunities of the other candidates who have behaved honestly.

Serious cases of cheating can include, for example (not an exhaustive list):

- Repeated cases of cheating
- Employing the services of a ghostwriter
- Collaboration between multiple candidates
- Using a plagiarized piece of work which has been bought
- Using technical aids for the purpose of cheating in serious cases

The decision of whether an attempt to cheat can be considered as serious and whether a student should be excluded from completing further academic achievements or examinations is made by the Examination Board.

If plagiarism or any other kind of attempt to cheat in an academic achievement or examination is only discovered after the certificate has been issued, the grade of the academic achievement or examination can be adjusted accordingly up to five years from the date on which the certificate was issued. That means that a module examination can be declared to be “insufficient” and the mid-degree exam or bachelor’s or master’s examination to be “not passed”.

4. Further information

- **Advice on your university studies**

Academic counseling

<https://www.uni-stuttgart.de/en/study/counseling/academic-advisors/>

Study guides

<https://www.student.uni-stuttgart.de/en/counseling/study-guides/>

Student Counseling Center (ZSB)

<https://www.uni-stuttgart.de/en/study/counseling/zsb/>

Advice from A to Z

<https://www.student.uni-stuttgart.de/en/uni-a-to-z/>

- **Support in conversations**

Ombudsperson

<http://www.uni-stuttgart.de/ombudsperson>

- **Support in legal matters**

Division III, Student Affairs

<https://www.uni-stuttgart.de/en/university/organization/administration/div3-generalstudymatters/>

- **Courses and events**

Writing Center

https://www.sz.uni-stuttgart.de/en/writing_center/

Key competencies (the latest offer in C@MPUS)

<https://campus.uni-stuttgart.de/cusonline/webnav.ini>

- **Useful links**

“Satzung der Universität Stuttgart zur Sicherung der Integrität wissenschaftlicher Praxis und zum Umgang mit Fehlverhalten in der Wissenschaft” (Statute of the University of Stuttgart to Ensure Integrity of Academic Practice and to Deal with Academic Misconduct (2013, Official Announcement 62/2013)): <https://www.uni-stuttgart.de/universitaet/aktuelles/bekanntmachungen/#id-0b234da7>

Preventing Plagiarism project of the University of Constance

<https://www.plagiatspraevention.uni-konstanz.de/>

Here you can find publications and material on the topic of plagiarism.

“Fremde Federn finden” (Taking credit for the work of others) learning unit – HTW Berlin:

http://plagiat.htw-berlin.de/ff/startseite/fremde_federn_finden

Citation Guide in German, English and French – TU Munich:

<https://mediatum.ub.tum.de/?id=1225458>

- **Literature**

Lahusen, Christiane/Markschies, Christoph (Hg.) (2015): Zitat, Paraphrase, Plagiat. Wissenschaft zwischen guter Praxis und Fehlverhalten. (Citation, Paraphrase, Plagiarism. Scholarship Between Good Practice and Misconduct) Frankfurt a. Main: Campus Verlag.

Malo, Markus (2016): Plagiat und Zitat. Eine skizzenhafte Problemgeschichte. (Plagiarism and Citations. A Sketchy Problematic History.) In: Handbuch Informationskompetenz. Hg. von Wilfried Sühl-Strohmer. Unter Mitarb. von Martina Straub. (Handbook of How to Use Information. Published by Wilfried Sühl-Strohmer in cooperation with Martina Straub.) 2nd Edition, Berlin: de Gruyter, p. 323–334. (<https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110403367-031>)

Malo, Markus (2012): Das Schreiben der Anderen. Informationskompetenz und Plagiarismus. (The Writings of Others. How to Use Information and Plagiarism.) In: Handbuch Informationskompetenz. Hg. von Wilfried Sühl-Strohmer. Unter Mitarb. von Martina Straub. (Handbook of How to Use Information. Published by Wilfried Sühl-Strohmer in cooperation with Martina Straub.) Berlin: De Gruyter Saur, p. 290–300.

Prexl, Lydia (2015): Mit digitalen Quellen arbeiten. Richtig zitieren aus Datenbanken, E-Books, YouTube und Co. Utb. (Working with Digital Sources. How to Cite from Databases, e-Books, YouTube etc correctly) Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh.