

## 1.5.1 PROCEDURE FOR PLAGIARISM INCIDENTS

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## RELATED DOCUMENTS

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### DOCUMENTS FROM THE OPEN WINDOW POLICY FRAMEWORK

- Student Code of Conduct
- Policy on Disputes

### LIST OF ANNEXURES

- ANNEXURE A - Plagiarism Penalty Scale
- ANNEXURE B - Plagiarism Declaration
- ANNEXURE C - Plagiarism Incident Report Form
- ANNEXURE D - Plagiarism Register

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## 01 INTRODUCTION

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This procedure provides guidelines, strategies, and courses of action to be implemented in order to adhere to the Policy on Plagiarism. The Procedure on Plagiarism thus guides OW Academic and Academic Support Staff in achieving content of excellence.

## 02 PURPOSE & SCOPE

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The **purpose** of the procedure is to provide a framework for adhering to the outlined expectations in the Policy on Plagiarism.

This **scope** of the procedure includes processes surrounding both identifying and surrounding plagiarism in line with all modes of teaching and learning to all learning programmes at The Open Window, so as to ensure academic integrity.

## 03 THE PROCEDURE

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Lecturers have the right to judge and penalise all cases where plagiarism is committed, and a student who is guilty of the infringement of copyright or unethical practice will be subject to the applicable disciplinary code. The objective is to deal with detected plagiarism in a fair, transparent and consistent manner. A lecturer may not turn a blind eye to any form of plagiarism.

Allegation is not the same as proof of the incident. A student suspected of plagiarism must be informed in writing by the marker and given a chance to deny the allegation in person. If the student admits the plagiarism, the assessor must suggest a penalty in line with the Plagiarism Penalty Scale (please refer to the Addendum A), and a note of the incident must be made on the student's record (see 3.3 for more information). If the student does not admit to plagiarism, or disputes the degree of seriousness, a Plagiarism Committee<sup>1</sup> is established, and the student can make representations to this committee.

### 3.1 Investigating an incident

If plagiarism by a student is suspected by a lecturer, the lecturer is to immediately inform the Subject Manager, and HOS. The incident should then be investigated and documented.

When investigating an incident, the following is important for the lecturer to keep in mind (as adapted from The University of Pretoria's Plagiarism Policy 2009):

- the significance of the plagiarised content on the assessment of the submitted work

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<sup>1</sup> A Plagiarism Committee usually consists of the relevant Head of School, Subject Manager, Lecturer as well as Academic Head. All outcomes will be communicated to the Registrar by the Academic Head, to keep on the student's record.

- the extent or amount of the plagiarism in the submitted work
- the year and level of the student
- the background of the student
- whether the student has taken up any of the opportunities provided by OW to enhance students' understanding of plagiarism
- whether the student has previous incidents of plagiarism (see 3.3)
- any apparent intention by the student to deceive

Once the incident has been investigated the process should be followed to investigate and report on the plagiarism. Please see section 3.6 for a detailed outline of the process that should be followed.

### **3.2 Student's responsibility with regards to plagiarism**

At tertiary level, students are responsible to ensure they understand what plagiarism is, and know how to avoid plagiarism (by referencing and acknowledging the work of others correctly). Academic Practice (and most other courses) include detailed reference to how to acknowledge the work of others and how to reference correctly.

Students are responsible for asking an academic staff member for help, should they be unsure about whether they might be committing plagiarism.

#### **3.2.1 Student's copying another student's work**

It is important to remember that OW considers students who have submitted similar projects as a form of plagiarism. Students who allow their work (whether intentional or through negligence) to be copied by others, are equally complicit in the plagiarism misconduct. In these cases, *both* students will be penalised. Processes to identify the student who committed the plagiarism will be followed, and the punishment may not therefore, be applied equally. However, the student who enabled another to plagiarise will also be subject to disciplinary investigation.

### **3.3 Plagiarism Committee**

If the student does not admit to plagiarism, or disputes the degree of seriousness, a Plagiarism Committee<sup>2</sup> is established for the plagiarism investigation and reporting process. This process is to ensure that there is consistent implementation of the Open Window's plagiarism prevention policy, and that it is handled promptly and fairly across all Schools. The student will then be invited to provide information regarding the incident.

If the Plagiarism Committee is unsatisfied with the information provided by the student and sees the incident as meeting the criteria of plagiarism, the committee will communicate the penalty to the student based on the severity of the incident. The Plagiarism Committee is advised to handle each case within its unique context and consider all aspects of the incident.

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<sup>2</sup> A Plagiarism Committee usually consists of the relevant Head of School, Subject Manager, Lecturer as well as Academic Head. All outcomes will be communicated to the Registrar by the Academic Head, to keep on the student's record.

### 3.4 Records & Plagiarism Register

The Open Window keeps and maintains a plagiarism register to enable the monitoring of offenders and ensure the consistent application of penalties (this register is available on the Lecturer Portal). All cases that have been reported to the Subject Manager and Head of School are then to be logged on the Plagiarism Register (via the Lecturer Portal) which is then managed by the Registrar and Academic Head to keep a record of. Any information recorded will affect the student's record. Plagiarism cases that are considered serious may also be noted at the marks verification meetings.

The plagiarism register also enables a review of the extent of plagiarism within The Open Window. Students need to know that penalties can be serious enough to affect their academic progress. In extreme cases, penalties could result in expulsion or failure to graduate.

**All** cases of plagiarism that a student admits to or of which they have been found guilty of by the Plagiarism Committee, will be logged. A note of all allegations, the outcome and the penalty of all cases of plagiarism must be recorded, and logged when submitting to the plagiarism register to conclude the process. This information may be used by The Open Window when it is asked to provide a reference for the student.

Please note:

Plagiarism incidents are not indicated on student's transcripts, but are noted on a conduct letter that may be requested by other institutions.

### 3.5 Disciplinary Outcome

Please refer to the 6.3 *Policy and Procedure on Student Misconduct*

### 3.6 Summary of process for reporting plagiarism incidents

1. Below are three steps that need to be followed and must take place at the start of the process, but they may not necessarily happen in the order indicated:
  - a. The lecturer identifies a possible plagiarism incident and investigates.
  - b. The lecturer contacts the student in writing, utilising the form below (Annexure C), explains what happened, and asks for a response.<sup>3</sup>
  - c. The lecturer informs their Subject Manager and HOS<sup>4</sup>, and jointly decide on the degree of seriousness according to the Plagiarism Penalty Scale.
2. If the student admits to plagiarism and agrees with the degree of seriousness, the completed Plagiarism Reporting Form (Annexure C) must be logged on the lecturer portal.
3. If the student does not admit to the plagiarism, or disputes the degree of seriousness, the initial section of the Plagiarism Reporting Form (Annexure C) must still be logged on the lecturer portal. Following this, the HOS and Academic Head should be informed, and a Plagiarism Committee should be formed. The Committee will then meet with the student, where both the lecturer and student can make

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<sup>3</sup> If a student does not respond within 5 - 7 days, the lecturer / SM will request that Student Support contacts their sponsor about the incident. The incident will still be logged.

<sup>4</sup> In the case where an HOS identifies the plagiarism case, he/she can inform the Academic Head at this step already.

representations. The Committee will investigate the incident, make a finding, and communicate this outcome to the student in writing (Annexure C).

4. Once the forms are signed, they should be resubmitted to the plagiarism register on the Portal. This is for logging purposes only, and will be used by both the Academic Head and/or the Registrar, who may note the incidents on the student's record (conduct reports). *If neither the student nor sponsor responds (in writing) about the plagiarism incident by the deadline when marks are due each term, the paperwork is concluded (Annexure C) with penalty judgement in place as per original findings.*
5. The plagiarism register is tabled as part of the Marks Verification Meeting of the Academic Committee each semester.

### **3.7 Process in the case where plagiarism is identified after a mark is released**

In cases where plagiarism is detected after the assessment cycle is completed but within the same academic year, the student is still in a position to be penalised accordingly, despite a project being graded and marked.

The process is as follows:

#### ***In the case where plagiarism is detected after marks released, within the same academic year:***

1. The lecturer identifies a possible plagiarism incident and investigates.
  - a. The lecturer contacts the student in writing, explains what happened, and asks for a response.
  - b. The lecturer informs their HOS, and jointly decide on the degree of seriousness according to the Plagiarism Penalty Scale.
  - c. If the student admits to plagiarism and agrees with the degree of seriousness, the completed Plagiarism Reporting Form (Annexure C) must be logged on the lecturer portal.
    - b) If the student does not admit to the plagiarism, or disputes the degree of seriousness, the initial section of the Plagiarism Reporting Form (Annexure C) must still be logged on the lecturer portal. Following this, the HOS and Academic Head should be informed, and a Plagiarism Committee should be formed. The Committee will then meet with the student, where both the lecturer and student can make representations. The Committee will investigate the incident, make a finding, and communicate this outcome to the student in writing (Annexure C).
2. All forms signed and submitted to the Portal. This is for logging purposes only, and will be used by both the Academic Head and/or the Registrar, who may note the incident(s) on the student's record (conduct reports). *If neither the student nor sponsor respond (in writing) about the plagiarism incident by the deadline provided, the paperwork is concluded (Annexure C) with penalty judgement in place as per original findings.*
3. The mark will be cancelled as per the penalty scale - in retrospect - by the registrar, who is informed of the outcome by the Academic Head. The Student & Support Department will release an official letter indicating the reason for the change in marks to both the student and the sponsor. Despite indications by the Plagiarism Penalty Scale, no option for reassessment will be granted in retrospect.
4. The plagiarism register is tabled as part of the Marks Verification Meeting of the Academic Committee each semester. The cancellation of the mark in retrospect should be tabled.

***In the case where plagiarism is detected in a project in a different academic year:***

While unusual, the student may still be penalised if a case of plagiarism is detected in a different academic year, but whilst still registered at Open Window. This is also applicable when a student is enrolled for a different qualification at OW (certificate / degree / honours).

These cases will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis, and may lead to disciplinary procedures or students needing to repeat courses to achieve the outcomes, depending on the degree of seriousness of the case. The Student & Support Department will release an official letter indicating the transgression to both the student and the sponsor, and the incident(s) will be noted on the student's record (conduct reports).

Despite indications by the Plagiarism Penalty Scale - no option for reassessment will be granted in retrospect.

## **04 REVIEW**

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The *Procedure on plagiarism* will be formally reviewed every two years in consultation with relevant stakeholders. Although procedural changes can be amended at any time, with greater frequency than policy amendments. Such amendments will be approved by the Academic Committee.

### **4.1 Version History**

v1.0	2014
v2.0	November 2016
v2.1	August 2019
v2.2	June 2020 ( <i>New forms added. Procedure refined.</i> )
v2.3	December 2020 ( <i>Reworded 3.3 for clarity. Added summary of process. Revised form for reporting plagiarism incidents</i> )
v3.0	January 2022 ( <i>New plagiarism scale. Address identified gaps. Refining the process.</i> )
v3.1	February 2022 ( <i>refined section 3.7</i> )
v3.2	June 2022 ( <i>updated terminology to match our online systems</i> )

## **05 REFERENCES**

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University of Pretoria (UP). 2009. *Plagiarism penalty scale*. Pretoria: University of Pretoria

Nicholson, D.R. 2015. *Copyright for South African Schools*. Johannesburg: University of the Witwatersrand.

Unisa. 2005. *Policy for Copyright Infringement and Plagiarism*.

**ANNEXURE A - Plagiarism Penalty Scales**

Open Window is aware of the difficulty of judging “degree of seriousness” according to this scale in plagiarism cases that do not involve written text. In such cases, the scale of plagiarism indicated is up to the lecturer’s discretion, in consultation with SM or HOS, and can be reviewed. Please refer to section 3.1 of this document for further considerations when determining the seriousness of an incident.

PLEASE NOTE:

- + For undergraduate & certificate students - any 3rd plagiarism incident will result in a disciplinary hearing
- + For postgraduate students - any and all plagiarism incidents will result in a disciplinary hearing
- + The number of incidents is not determined per course or year of study, but across an entire academic career.

<b>Plagiarism Penalty Scale - LEVEL 1</b>				
		<b>1st incident</b>	<b>2nd incident</b>	<b>3rd incident</b>
<b>MINOR TO MODERATE PLAGIARISM</b>	<b>RECORDS</b>	first written warning	final written warning noted on student record	disciplinary hearing
	<b>STUDENT ACTION</b>	resubmit work without plagiarism	resubmit work without plagiarism	
	<b>MARKS</b>	resubmitted work assessed in full	resubmitted work assessed up to 50%	
<b>SERIOUS PLAGIARISM</b>	<b>RECORDS</b>	first written warning noted on student record	final written warning noted on student record	disciplinary hearing
	<b>STUDENT ACTION</b>	resubmit work without plagiarism	no opportunity to resubmit	
	<b>MARKS</b>	resubmitted work assessed up to 50%	0% awarded	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ <i>If a student has the opportunity to resubmit work but does not, 0% will be awarded</i></li> <li>+ <i>The plagiarism investigator / committee has the discretion to determine whether the 0% mark applies to an entire project or just the relevant component(s).</i></li> </ul>				



### Plagiarism Penalty Scale - LEVEL 2&3

		1st incident	2nd incident	3rd incident
<b>MINOR TO MODERATE PLAGIARISM</b>	<i>RECORDS</i>	first written warning noted on student record	final written warning noted on student record	disciplinary hearing
	<i>STUDENT ACTION</i>	resubmit work without plagiarism	no opportunity to resubmit	
	<i>MARKS</i>	resubmitted work assessed up to 50%	0% awarded	
<b>SERIOUS PLAGIARISM</b>	<i>RECORDS</i>	first written warning noted on student record	final written warning & official letter to sponsor noting risk of disciplinary noted on student record	disciplinary hearing
	<i>STUDENT ACTION</i>	no opportunity to resubmit	no opportunity to resubmit	
	<i>MARKS</i>	0% awarded	0% awarded	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ <i>If a student has the opportunity to resubmit work but does not, 0% will be awarded</i></li> <li>+ <i>The plagiarism investigator / committee has the discretion to determine whether the 0% mark applies to an entire project or just the relevant component(s).</i></li> </ul>				

**Serious plagiarism** can be considered as an “intent” to deceive.

**Minor - Moderate** can be considered as plagiarism as a result of negligence.

*Lecturers are requested to use their discretion in categorising between ‘serious’ and ‘minor to moderate’ plagiarism.*

## ANNEXURE B - Plagiarism Declaration wording for website and submissions

### OPEN WINDOW PLAGIARISM DECLARATION (for website)

The Open Window places great emphasis on integrity & ethical conduct in the preparation of all work submitted for evaluation. While academic staff teach you about referencing techniques and how to avoid plagiarism, it is your responsibility not to plagiarise. It is your responsibility to consult your lecturer if you are uncertain about what is required in this regard.

You are guilty of plagiarism if you copy from another author's work (e.g. book, article, visual work etc.) without acknowledging the source in your submission and pass it off as your own. This is not only the case when you copy work word-for-word / composition-for-composition (verbatim), but also when you submit someone else's work in a slightly altered form (paraphrased / completed in a slightly different style) or use a line of argument without acknowledging it. You are not allowed to use or copy work previously produced by another student. You are also not allowed to let anybody copy your work with the intention of passing it off as their work.

Students who commit plagiarism will be penalised according to the process in the *Procedure for plagiarism incidents*. The matter may also be referred to the Disciplinary Committee for a ruling.

By submitting any project to The Open Window, written or practical, you agree to the following:

1. I have read the Open Window Policy and Procedure on Plagiarism and understand the contents thereof.
2. The work submitted is my own original work.
3. I have given sufficient acknowledgement to all sources used as reference for this project (written or visual). (*This includes references to other work / projects / ideas / concepts / theories, etc., whether extracted from a source in a digital, printed, or verbal nature has been acknowledged in the submitted work.*)
4. The submitted project has not been copied from any current or previous student and belongs to me.
5. I have not let anybody use, submit and / or copy my work for evaluation or submission purposes.
6. I am aware that plagiarism is a criminal offence and that Open Window reserves the right to conduct a disciplinary hearing, take legal action or even expel me should I be found guilty of plagiarism.

#### ■ 1.5.1 Procedure for plagiarism incidents (v3.0).pdf

### WORDING FOR ONLINE SUBMISSIONS

By submitting this assignment I confirm that I understand and accept the terms of the Open Window Plagiarism Declaration. Please see [openwindow.co.za/plagiarism](http://openwindow.co.za/plagiarism) for more information.

## ANNEXURE C - Plagiarism Reporting Form

# Please complete the plagiarism report

This form is part of the procedures established to support the consistent implementation of the OW's Plagiarism Prevention Policy promptly and fairly across all schools.

Once completed, it must be provided to the student who will indicate if they agree with the degree of seriousness found by the lecturer by signing the form as an acknowledgement.

Should the student not agree to the degree of seriousness, or not admit to the plagiarism, a Plagiarism Committee should be formed.

The Committee will then meet with the student, where both the lecturer and student can make representations.

The Committee will then investigate the incident, make a finding, and communicate this outcome to the student in writing.

On completion of this form, the form must be submitted to the Academic Head for filing. The Academic Head will also notify the Registrar who will make a record of the incident on the Plagiarism Register, as well as the student's own record.

When you submit the form, student support will be informed and engage with the student.

You can view a log of all submitted plagiarism reports below the form.

**Student Full Name \***

First

Last

**Student Number \***

**Lecturer name \***

**Lecturer email \***

**Subject/module \***

**Project/assignment \***

**Date project/assignment was submitted \***

**Date plagiarism was suspected \***

mm/dd/yyyy

**Date student was contacted \***

mm/dd/yyyy

**Scale of the incident**

- Level 1
- Level 2
- Level 3

**Occurrence of the incident**

- First
- Second
- Third

**Please indicate the seriousness of the incident \***

- Serious
- Moderate
- Minor

**Lecturer is to attach documentation / screenshots of the project and evidence gathered of the plagiarism incident [where possible]**

**Choose file** No file chosen

Max. file size: 700 MB.

**Confirmation**

The student will be contacted in due course. If required, a committee will be formed to investigate. The committee findings must be shared with the student and the sponsor/guardian on record. A note of the outcome will be recorded on the Plagiarism Register as well as the student's record.

**Lecturer Signature \***



Submit

This form is available through the Student Portal:

## Forms & Reporting

Please select the required item below



At Risk  
Students



Plagiarism  
Report



Extension  
Requests



Reassessment  
Submissions



Certificate Reassessment  
Submissions



Registration Change  
Requests



### ANNEXURE D - Plagiarism Register

The full plagiarism register forms part of confidential student records, and cannot be shared publicly. Lecturers can access the Plagiarism Register through the lecturer dashboard on the Student Portal.