

1.5.1 PROCEDURE FOR PLAGIARISM INCIDENTS

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RELATED DOCUMENTS

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

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

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

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 Committee¹ 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

¹ 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 according to the student's academic record
- 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 Committee² 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. Hi

² 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

Should the academic department log a third case of plagiarism leading to a Disciplinary Hearing, the following procedure applies:

+ As normal, the academic department would need to log the third plagiarism warning and indicate it is a third warning on the paperwork.

- If the student denies the plagiarism, you form a plagiarism committee to explain (usual process).
- If not, you get the student to sign the papers and log the warning as usual.

+ Once the plagiarism investigation is concluded and logged, the Head of School / Department would send an email to the Academic Head notifying that a third plagiarism warning has been logged - and providing detail where possible.

+ The Academic Head will arrange with the Registrar: Student Support and Administration - and disciplinary procedures will be arranged. Please note, unless invited, the academic lecturers are not required to participate in the disciplinary hearing.)

+ feedback following the disciplinary will be reported to the Academic Committee, and relevant HODs can communicate accordingly where necessary.

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. After positive identification of plagiarism, the lecturer must log it on the Lecturer Portal.
 - b. The lecturer must check the plagiarism log for previous incidents of plagiarism recorded, as this should be noted in Annexure C.
 - c. The lecturer contacts the student in writing, utilising the form below (Annexure C), explains what happened, and asks for a response.³
 - d. The lecturer informs their Subject Manager and HOS⁴, 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 take into consideration representations from both student and lecturer. 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 (see section 3.6.1 below). 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 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.







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

3.6.1 Procedure for plagiarism logging

This form for logging of plagiarism events is available through the Student / Lecturer Portal (<https://students.openwindow.co.za/plagiarism-report/>) as below under > FORMS & REPORTING > PLAGIARISM LOGGING.

Forms & Reporting

Please select the required item below

 At Risk Students	 Plagiarism Report	 Extension Requests
 Reassessment Submissions	 Certificate Reassessment Submissions	 Registration Change Requests

Thereafter, you will complete the Plagiarism Log by completing the required information, and uploading a PDF document of the completed ANNEXURE C as part of the logging submission:

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

Please note that where the log requests the lecturer to attach documentation - this is specifically referring to the required Annexure C document forming part of the Plagiarism reporting process (which included a detailed report of evidence).

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 (lecturer should use the Annexure C form).
 - b. The lecturer informs their HOS and SM, 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

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>)
v3.3	September 2022 (<i>updated section 3.5 on disciplinary outcome process</i>)

05 REFERENCES

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.

Plagiarism Penalty Scale - LEVEL 1				
		1st incident	2nd incident	3rd incident
MINOR TO MODERATE PLAGIARISM	RECORDS	first written warning	final written warning noted on student record	disciplinary hearing
	STUDENT ACTION	resubmit work without plagiarism	resubmit work without plagiarism	
	MARKS	resubmitted work assessed in full	resubmitted work assessed up to 50%	
SERIOUS PLAGIARISM	RECORDS	first written warning noted on student record	final written warning noted on student record	disciplinary hearing
	STUDENT ACTION	resubmit work without plagiarism	no opportunity to resubmit	
	MARKS	resubmitted work assessed up to 50%	0% awarded	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + <i>If a student has the opportunity to resubmit work but does not, 0% will be awarded</i> + <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> 				

Plagiarism Penalty Scale - LEVEL 2&3

		1st incident	2nd incident	3rd incident
MINOR TO MODERATE PLAGIARISM	<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	
SERIOUS PLAGIARISM	<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"> + <i>If a student has the opportunity to resubmit work but does not, 0% will be awarded</i> + <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> 				

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), use a line of argument without acknowledging it, or even re-use your own work while misrepresenting the origin. 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.

Links to latest versions of 1) this procedure 2) Policy on plagiarism 3) OW Referencing Guide

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 for more information.

ANNEXURE C - Plagiarism Reporting Form

FORM FOR REPORTING PLAGIARISM INCIDENTS

This form forms part of the investigation and tabling of the plagiarism incident that the lecturer fills in to inform the student. This report should include references to the plagiarism incident, screenshots of the project and/or evidence gathered of the plagiarism incident.

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. The form will then be uploaded to the Portal as evidence, alongside the recording of the incident, as indicated in section 3.6 Summary of process for reporting plagiarism incidents, *1.5.1 Procedure for plagiarism incidents*

Student name & surname:		Student number:	
Subject / Project		Date assignment submitted:	
Lecturer:			

LECTURER REPORT ON INCIDENT

PLEASE INDICATE THE SERIOUSNESS OF THE INCIDENT <input type="checkbox"/> SERIOUS <input type="checkbox"/> MINOR / MODERATE
Detailed report:

Lecturer is to attach / include in the above, documentation / screenshots of the project and evidence gathered of the plagiarism incident (where possible).

STUDENT TO COMPLETE			
I admit to the plagiarism transgression, as detailed above			<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
I agree to the seriousness of the plagiarism transgression, as indicated above			<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
STUDENT SIGNATURE:		DATE:	

**Should the student indicate 'no' above, or fail to respond within 5 - 7 days, the form should still be logged on the portal whilst the below process is followed.*

THE STUDENT IS HEREBY INFORMED THAT SHOULD THE STUDENT INDICATE 'NO' TO EITHER OF THE POINTS ABOVE, THE INCIDENT WILL STILL BE LOGGED VIA THE PORTAL WHILE A PLAGIARISM COMMITTEE WILL BE FORMED AND AN INVESTIGATION WILL ENSUE AS PER BELOW.

Members of plagiarism committee:			
Date formed:			
PLAGIARISM COMMITTEE'S REPORT ON THE INCIDENT:			
Findings of the seriousness of the offence:	<input type="checkbox"/> SERIOUS <input type="checkbox"/> MINOR / MODERATE <input type="checkbox"/> NOT DEEMED PLAGIARISM		
Detailed report:			

COMMITTEE CHAIR SIGNATURE:		DATE:	
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**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.*

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.