



GUIDELINES FOR HANDLING PLAGIARISM

1. INTRODUCTION

These guidelines are provided for the reference of the Responsibility Centre (RC) on operating procedures for plagiarism cases involving:

- academic work from teaching and learning activities, as well as
- publication by academic staff (without the involvement of the candidate) with suspected elements of plagiarism shall be referred to the Integrity Unit.

2. ¹Scope and Application

(1) This guideline applies to:

- students/candidates at all levels of study, including those who have graduated, and
- academic staff and researchers who are currently serving and have completed their service with the University.

(2) This guideline will be a source of reference when there is a violation of the academic code of conduct related to plagiarism.

3. References

This guideline should be read together with:

- (1) Code of Ethics University of Malaya (latest version);
- (2) Rules and Regulations University of Malaya of all levels of study (latest version);
- (3) Guidelines for the Preparation of Research Project, Dissertation and Thesis, 2017;
- (4) *Prosedur Penerimaan dan Penyiasatan Salah Laku, Unit Integriti* (latest version);
- (5) University of Malaya Policy on Authorship (latest version);

¹ *Dasar Universiti Sains Malaysia Terhadap Ciplakan, USM*

- (6) *Prosedur Kerja Pengendalian Pelucutan Ijazah, Diploma, Sijil dan Kepujian Akademik Lain Yang Telah Dianugerahkan Kepada Siswazah Universiti Malaya Atas Alasan Plagiat*, and
- (7) Any other resolutions approved by the Senate from time to time.

4. Definition of Plagiarism in the Code of Ethics University of Malaya

**Penjiplakan* (plagiarism) is an academic fraud arising from the attitude of lying, insincere, untrustworthy, dishonest and disrespectful to fellow colleagues. Plagiarism happens when someone else's idea is taken without mentioning the source, and thus gives the impression that the idea is his own. This situation may occur when:

- (1) one's idea, taken word for word from an article or book that has been published.
- (2) The idea of a person from an article or book is taken using his own words.
- (3) A person's idea is taken from discussions whether in conferences, seminars, forums, talks or informal discussions between two parties.
- (4) Data, diagrams, tables, photographs or any other illustrative material derived from others is taken as if it were his own.

5. Acts of Plagiarism

- (1) Plagiarism refers to the act of a person using someone else's ideas without citing the source. Plagiarism acts include but are not limited to those listed below:
 - (a) Presenting the work or research data of others as the result of one's own work.
 - (b) ²Using the concept of research work of others, the results of experiments, analysis of findings, conclusion or inferences of argument / statement without appropriate reference or acknowledgement to the creator of the idea.
 - (c) ²Copying part or whole without acknowledging the source(s):
 - written text;
 - structures within texts;
 - diagrams;
 - formulae;

² Academic Integrity Policy, Victoria University Policy Library.

- sound files;
- still photographs;
- audio-visual materials (sound and image files);
- graphics / animations / multimedia objects;
- software and code, including mashed-up products or code;
- other computer based material;
- mathematical evidences;
- art objects;
- practical artifacts (i.e. apprenticeship pieces);
- other work as relevant.

(2) Any other act which in the opinion of the University Authority is associated with the conduct of plagiarism and fraud.

6. Plagiarist

Any individual (student / candidate or University staff) who is and / or has produced academic and research related work that has elements of plagiarism.

7. Similarity Index

The RC may conduct an investigation on any individual who is found to have the result of a similarity index between 10% to 30% in an academic work and / or publication. Academic work includes thesis / dissertation upon submission. In certain circumstances, the RC can set the similarity index percentage for each discipline provided that it does not exceed the percentage as specified above.

In setting the similarity index percentage for the respective fields of study, the RC should consider and determine the percentage limit for each of the following criteria:

- (1) include / exclude quotes;
- (2) include / exclude bibliography, and
- (3) include / exclude small sources (can be either by word count or percentage).

8. Complaint

Any party may lodge a report against any academic work and / or publication that is suspected to have elements of plagiarism. Complaints must be made by filling in the **Plagiarism Complaint Form** (refer to Appendix 1) or any other appropriate mechanism and submitted to the Head of RC.

9. Process of Handling Plagiarism Cases

The process of handling plagiarism cases can be divided into two (2) i.e. academic works and publication of research results that are being or have been made by students / candidates and / or staffs.

(1) Academic Work

(a) Course work of student / candidate for course evaluation

- (i) Course work refers to the work prepared individually and / or in groups as assignments, project papers, designs, computer programs, laboratory reports / research reports and others. Research Project Reports are also considered under this category.
- (ii) The Head of RC who receives the Plagiarism Complaint Form shall submit it to the lecturer of the course immediately.
- (iii) The lecturer of the course shall submit a report to the Head of RC within one (1) week by filling in the **Plagiarism Report** (refer to Appendix 2) on the work done by the student / candidate.
- (iv) After receiving the plagiarism report, the Head of RC shall submit a show cause letter to the student / candidate within one (1) week from the date of receipt of the report if the course work has plagiarism elements that exceed the similarity index percentage for the RC. If there is no element of plagiarism or the work does not exceed the similarity index percentage allowed for RC, the Head of RC shall inform the complainant of the decision.
- (v) The student / candidate shall provide a written explanation within one (1) week from the date of receipt of the show cause letter.
- (vi) After the Head of RC receives feedback from student / candidate, the RC's Plagiarism Investigation Committee (*JKSP*) shall be formed (refer to Appendix 3 - membership and terms of reference of *JKSP*).
 - (A) If plagiarism can be proven, *JKSP* must decide whether to give a zero mark (0) or refer the student / candidate to the Student Disciplinary Committee.
 - (B) If plagiarism CANNOT be proven, *JKSP* needs to inform the Head of RC. The Head of RC shall ask the lecturer to re-examine the work or assignment that has been submitted and give the appropriate marks.
- (vii) The *JKSP* report shall be submitted to the Head of RC no later than two (2) weeks from the date of receipt of the plagiarism report.
- (viii) Decision of *JKSP* shall be informed by the Head of RC to student / candidate and complainant. If plagiarism is proven, it should be reported in the RC meeting.
- (ix) The Student / Candidate can submit an appeal against the decision of the RC meeting. The appeal shall be submitted to the Student Disciplinary Appeal Committee and copied to the Head of RC.

(b) Dissertation / Thesis Examination

- ⓪ For postgraduate candidates who submit a dissertation or thesis for examination, if the examiner suspects that the work contains elements of plagiarism, the examiner is required to submit a report to the Committee of Examiners.

A report on the suspected act of plagiarism shall be made in the examination report form together with proof of the original source that has been plagiarized.

- ⓪ The Committee of Examiners shall investigate the report received. For the dissertation / thesis, the Committee of Examiners can seek clarification from the candidate during the viva voce. For RCs' who do not practice viva voce, the Committee of Examiners shall submit a show cause letter to the candidate to obtain a written explanation of the report received.
- ⓪ If the Committee of Examiners requires further investigation to be conducted, the Committee of Examiners shall refer the report to the Special Committee of Inquiry (*JKKS*) established by the Head of RC (refer to Appendix 4).
- Ⓜ The *JKKS* shall investigate the report received and submit a show cause letter to the candidate concerned for clarification. The *JKKS* report and recommendation must be submitted to the Committee of Examiners within two (2) months for consideration and decision.

If plagiarism can be proven, the Committee of Examiners has the authority to decide as the paragraph below:

- (aa) If plagiarism can be proven, the Committee of Examiners shall decide whether the candidate is given the result as further work or failed. The Committee of Examiners may refer the candidate to the University Disciplinary Committee according to the suitability of the case.
- (bb) If plagiarism CANNOT be proven after an investigation, the Committee of Examiners shall make a decision on the thesis / dissertation submitted based on the provisions of the Rules and Regulations of the University of Malaya governing the candidate's program of study.
- Ⓜ Decision of the Committee of Examiners shall be reported in the Faculty and Senate meetings.
- Ⓜ The decision of the Senate shall be notified to the candidate. The candidate can submit an appeal against the decision of the Faculty and / or Senate in accordance with the procedure set out under Appeal, i.e. in the Appeal Review of the Thesis Examination Results or Dissertation in the Rules and Regulations of the University of Malaya governing the level of study.

(c) Graduates

In the case of University graduates involved in plagiarism, the process shall be based on the Work Procedure for Stripping of the Degree, Diploma, Certificate and Other Academic Honors awarded to Graduates of the University of Malaya due to Plagiarism (latest version).

(2) Publication

(a) Publication by Student/Candidate

- ⓐ The Head of RC who receives the Plagiarism Complaint Form must submit it to the lecturer / supervisor of the student / candidate concerned immediately.
- ⓑ The lecturer / supervisor shall submit a report to the Head of RC within one (1) week by filling in the Plagiarism Report on the results of the publication by the student / candidate.
- ⓒ After receiving the plagiarism report, the Head of RC shall submit a show cause letter to the student / candidate within one (1) week from the date of receipt of the report if the results of the publication has elements of plagiarism. If no plagiarism element is reported, the Head of RC shall inform the complainant of the decision.
- ⓓ The student / candidate shall provide a written explanation within one (1) week from the date of receipt of the show cause letter.
- ⓔ After the Head of RC receives feedback from the student / candidate, the RC's *JKSP* needs to be formed (refer to Appendix 3).
 - (A) If plagiarism can be proven, the *JKSP* can recommend to the Head of RC to not accept the publication to meet the graduation requirements of the candidate or student's course requirement.
 - (B) If plagiarism CANNOT be proven, publication of student / candidate shall be accepted by the RC.
- ⓕ The *JKSP* report shall be submitted to the Head of RC no later than two (2) weeks from the date of receipt of the plagiarism report.
- ⓖ The decision of *JKSP* shall be notified to the student / candidate and the complainant. The student / candidate can submit an appeal against the decision of *JKSP* to the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic and International).

(b) Publication by Academic Staff

For publications submitted by academic and / or research staff to meet the requirements of service conditions, which are suspected to have elements of plagiarism, the Head of RC shall report it to the Integrity Unit for further action.

This guideline was approved by the Senate on 25.06.2020.