

Policy for the Prevention and Management of Academic Misconduct by Students¹

Approved by Senate through PC09/2023

Approved by Council on 2 December 2023

1. Introduction

This policy and its appendices replace all prior Senate policies and resolutions and all other pre-existing Faculty and university Committee policies and guidelines dealing with plagiarism, collusion, cheating and other forms of student academic misconduct, apart from General Rule RCS2.1.

2. Purpose

The University of Cape Town fosters an intellectual and ethical culture based on the principle of academic integrity. Undergraduate and postgraduate students are expected to always be able to defend the truthfulness and accuracy of the work they present as their own without the aid of technologies, materials or collaboration not allowed for the assignment.

The purpose of this policy is to establish a standard for academic integrity for undergraduate and postgraduate students at UCT by:

- (i) providing staff and students with comprehensive definitions of academic misconduct to be applied consistently across all faculties.
- (ii) establishing the processes to be followed at departmental, faculty and central level in relation to cases of academic misconduct by undergraduate and postgraduate students.
- (iii) making clear the consequences of the infringement of this policy in terms of university rules.
- (iv) clarifying the roles and responsibilities of staff, students and different academic offices in upholding academic integrity.
- (v) offering guidelines for staff and students respectively to educate for academic integrity and to avoid academic misconduct.

¹ In developing this policy the following sources have been utilised *European Network for Academic Integrity – General Guidelines for Academic Integrity* (2019) ; Kings College Honesty and Integrity Policy, 2019; Kings College, Guidelines for Staff on Academic Honesty and Integrity, 2020; Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, Academic Integrity Policy, 2020; UC San Diego, Academic Integrity A handbook for San Diego Staff, 2019; University of Pretoria, Plagiarism Prevention Policy, S 5106/19, 2019. (Maurer et al., 2006; Weber-Wulff et al., 2013; Plagiarism.org, 2018). We are grateful to all the organisations and universities that make their policies available online.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

Staff, students and the university academic administration have roles to play in making this policy effective.

Staff are responsible for helping undergraduate and postgraduate students to understand and apply the accepted ways of knowledge making within different disciplinary fields as part of the educational process. Staff are responsible for teaching students about academic misconduct and how to avoid it; remaining up to date on how to detect and prevent academic misconduct within their academic fields and disciplines; and drawing students' attention to this policy in their assessment instructions.

Students are responsible for using all available resources to avoid academic misconduct in their work whether individually or in teams, as well as for making themselves familiar with this policy and the obligations it imposes on them.

The academic administration is responsible for ensuring transparent, effective and consistent processes to safeguard academic integrity and to sanction academic misconduct.

4. Definitions of academic misconduct

There are various types of academic misconduct which include plagiarism, collusion and cheating. Each type can present in various forms.

Plagiarism is a form of academic misconduct involving the use (in any form or medium) of the ideas or work (text, images, results, code or other) of another person without acknowledgement (referencing the source of the words, ideas images, results or other). Plagiarism is not restricted to the word-for-word copying of text. It also includes, for example:

- Using passages from different sources and compiling them together without acknowledgment of the original sources.
- Using a template, material or language possibly with minor changes without acknowledgement of the original source.
- Changing grammar, substituting words with similar meaning, reordering sentences or restating the same content in different words without acknowledgment of the original source.
- Using content translated from the original language into a second language without acknowledging the original source,
- Failing to indicate through the use of quotation marks when the referenced source starts and ends.
- Using an idea, concept, opinion or argument that comes from another source without acknowledgement.
- Providing incomplete, inaccurate or false references for a source.
- The same notions apply to artistic plagiarism in non-textual disciplines, for example in unacknowledged use of images, sounds or the thematic structure of non-textual work.

Collusion is an agreement between two or more individuals to cheat or gain unfair advantage in the submission of academic work, even where such advantage accrues to only one, or a subset, of the individuals concerned. Collusion can take various forms and includes, for example:

- Where students are expected to submit a piece of individual work, getting help from or consulting with (an)other student(s) or person(s), or working together with (an)other student(s) or person(s), might constitute collusion where the individual work relies substantively on the ideas or words of those who were consulted. Unless the instructions were explicit that work must be done as a group or in collaboration with others, working together or consulting others can constitute collusion in cases where material is presented as original when it should be attributed (wholly or partially) to a source other than the named author.
- Wholly or partly sharing individual data, findings, notes or drafts or jointly constructing or writing an assessment answer or any part thereof with others (where this is not explicitly allowed in the instructions for the assignment) without disclosing this.
- Group work is not collusion if the assessment instructions state that work should be done by a group. Group work will be assessed as such.

Cheating is the practice of attempting to gain an unfair advantage. This includes accessing prohibited materials in an examination, making use of 'essay mills', language models such as chatbots (eg. ChatGPT and other large-language models or generative Artificial Intelligence), and any service or software that provides answers to assessments, or writes or re-writes assignments or parts thereof, other than software that detects and corrects spelling and grammatical errors. The only permissible instances of such practices are where they are explicitly permitted by the terms of the assessment instructions. In the case of group work, cheating includes students indicating that they have participated in group work when in fact they have not.

Other forms of misconduct include, for example, misrepresenting, fabricating or falsifying the views, conclusions, arguments or data of another.

5. Process to deal with academic misconduct

5.1 Nature of the decisions to be made

The detection of suspected academic misconduct triggers a need to make three separate and distinct decisions:

- (a) an 'academic decision' about the academic value of the work (as submitted) i.e. the mark that should be awarded to it;
- (b) a 'disciplinary decision' on whether to refer the case for formal disciplinary action; and
- (c) an 'educational decision' on the academic misconduct educational exercise/s the student should be required to complete.

At the end of this section there is a flowchart of the process of decision making involving academics, the Faculty Academic Misconduct Committees (AMC) and the Student Disciplinary Tribunal (USDT).

- a) The 'academic decision' - the mark to award to the work.

Two principles underly the academic decision:

- (i) A student can only be given credit for work that is their own and work that has been duly and appropriately referenced. To make the academic decision on the mark to award, it is therefore necessary to determine which, if any, portion(s) of the work submitted are the student's own independent work and are properly referenced. In the case of undergraduate work, only those portions of the work that are the student's own work and have been appropriately referenced should be awarded any marks. Portions that are not identifiable as the student's own work and are not duly referenced should not be awarded any marks. Where it is not possible to determine which portions are the student's own work with reasonable ease and certainty, or none of the work is the student's own, it will not be possible to award a mark to the work submitted. The only possibility in such cases is to give it a mark of zero. In the case of postgraduate work, theses and dissertations where substantial plagiarism has been detected after submission, the entire work should be awarded a mark of zero or failed (where only a pass/fail grade applies).
- (ii) Academic misconduct affects the academic value of the work and that should be reflected in the mark it is awarded. The mark awarded in cases of misconduct is a purely academic decision based on an application of these two principles. It is not a disciplinary penalty or sanction for proven dishonesty.

Neither the Tribunal nor the Proctor has any authority to make any orders or give any undertakings regarding the mark that will be given to the work.

It is for this reason that a student may receive a mark of zero even where the matter is not referred to the Tribunal (USDT) or where, for any reason, the Tribunal does not find them guilty.

The academic decision should be made by the person responsible for setting the assessment task (this may be different from the person marking it, e.g. where a course convenor sets the task and a tutor marks it). In the interests of consistency, the decision should be made in consultation with the HoD. To ensure fairness, the student should be informed of the nature of the concerns with the academic integrity of the work and the alleged contravention/s of this policy and afforded an opportunity to provide an explanation before the academic decision is finalised. The academic decision should be made and communicated to the student and the AMC within two weeks of the HoD being informed.

The mark awarded to a piece of undergraduate work that has been compromised by academic misconduct is referred to as the 'compromised mark'.

b) The 'disciplinary decision'- whether to refer the matter for formal disciplinary action

Minor offences are to be dealt with entirely at faculty level and reflected in the mark awarded to the work, plus any educational consequences the Academic Misconduct Committee (see below) may impose.

Only serious offences are to be referred to the USDT for formal disciplinary action. The USDT hears and decides all serious offence cases and decides on any disciplinary sanctions.

In making these decisions at undergraduate level, academics need to take into account that the gravity, nature and extent of the offences vary. Therefore there must be differences in the consequences for these offences (e.g., there is a major difference between a student who had incorrectly referenced a source and a student who paid a service to write the entire assessment for them).

A decision to refer the matter to the USDT (or not) should be communicated to the student in writing as soon as is reasonably possible but ideally no more than six weeks from the date on which the matter was referred to the AMC.

c) The 'educational' decision

The Academic Misconduct committee (AMC; described below) decides on the educational consequences to impose on the student. In the case of serious offences, this decision can only be made once the USDT proceedings have been completed. The educational decision may take any form that the AMC considers appropriate for the purposes of educating the student on the nature of academic misconduct and proper practices including for example requiring the student to re-submit the compromised work or participate in a workshop or successfully complete a task relating to ethics or academic integrity. If the second attempt is also suspected of being plagiarized, then zero will be awarded for the specific activity with no further opportunity to gain a mark. The case will be submitted as a second charge to the Student Tribunal.

In order for the educational decision to serve its intended purpose, this decision should be communicated to the student in writing as soon as is reasonably possible but ideally no more than six weeks from the date on which the matter was referred to the AMC.

5.2 Faculty Academic Misconduct Committees

Each Faculty should either establish an Academic Misconduct Committee (AMC) or incorporate the functions of the AMC set out in this policy into the terms of reference of an existing faculty committee.

Faculties may also establish more than one AMC if appropriate.

Where an AMC is established it should have at least five members, which may include for example:

- (a) two HoDs;
- (b) one academic member of staff who teaches at undergraduate level;
- (c) one academic member of staff who teaches at postgraduate level;
- (d) one academic member of staff involved in postgraduate supervision.

AMCs shall meet regularly as required.

The quorum for all meetings of the AMC shall be three members. The terms of reference of the AMC shall be to:

- Consider cases of suspected academic misconduct in courses housed in its faculty.
- Determine, based on the prima facie evidence presented to it,² whether an instance of academic misconduct should be considered a minor or serious offence.
- The student concerned should be invited to present their case to the AMC in writing.
- Refer serious offences to the USDT.
- Determine an appropriate educational sanction in the case of minor offences.
- Determine appropriate educational consequences in the case of serious offences, subject to the findings and outcome in the USDT proceedings.
- Keep complete and accurate confidential records of all cases of academic misconduct referred to it, including for each case, the decision taken, the reasons for that decision, and the academic, disciplinary, and educational sanctions that were imposed. Records may be shared with the AMC of another Faculty on request (for example, where a student in one Faculty takes courses in another).
- Where a student has been found guilty of academic misconduct, record details of the nature of that misconduct and the academic, educational, and disciplinary sanctions that were imposed on the student's PeopleSoft record.
- Report annually to Faculty Board and to the DVC Teaching & Learning (on an anonymised basis that does not reveal the identity of any student) on the number and nature of cases that were referred to it in the year concerned and the outcomes in those cases and provide guidance on effective tools, techniques and strategies for the prevention and detection of academic misconduct.

The establishment of these committees is predicated on the need to achieve consistent (and, where necessary, legally defensible) decision-making centrally through these structures. While the rising number of academic misconduct cases may result in a heavy workload for the Academic Misconduct

² The AMC is not responsible for the investigation of individual cases of plagiarism. This is done by the responsible academic in consultation with the HoD.

Committees (AMCs), over the medium-to long-term, the number of cases should decrease in response to the application of stricter sanctions for misconduct and a constant review and improvement in educating students on the need to refrain from academic misconduct.

4.3 Distinguishing between minor and serious offences

It is necessary to distinguish between minor and serious offences by establishing:

- The nature and extent of the breach and the proportion of the work affected.
- Whether it is the student's first breach.
- The year of study of the student (distinguish between first year and other undergraduate students and between undergraduate and postgraduate students).
- The nature and extent of the guidance given to the student in relation to academic misconduct.
- The clarity of the assessment instructions and whether collaborative work or the use of language models such as AI chatbots, or any service or software that provides answers to assessments, or writes or re-writes assignments or parts thereof was expressly permitted or encouraged at any stage.
- Any other aggravating or mitigating circumstances.

4.4 Remedies

Once a student has been informed of suspected academic misconduct, they may not withdraw from the course until the case has been determined. Students found not to have committed any offence may withdraw in accordance with the normal University rules. Students found guilty of any minor or serious offence may not withdraw from the course.

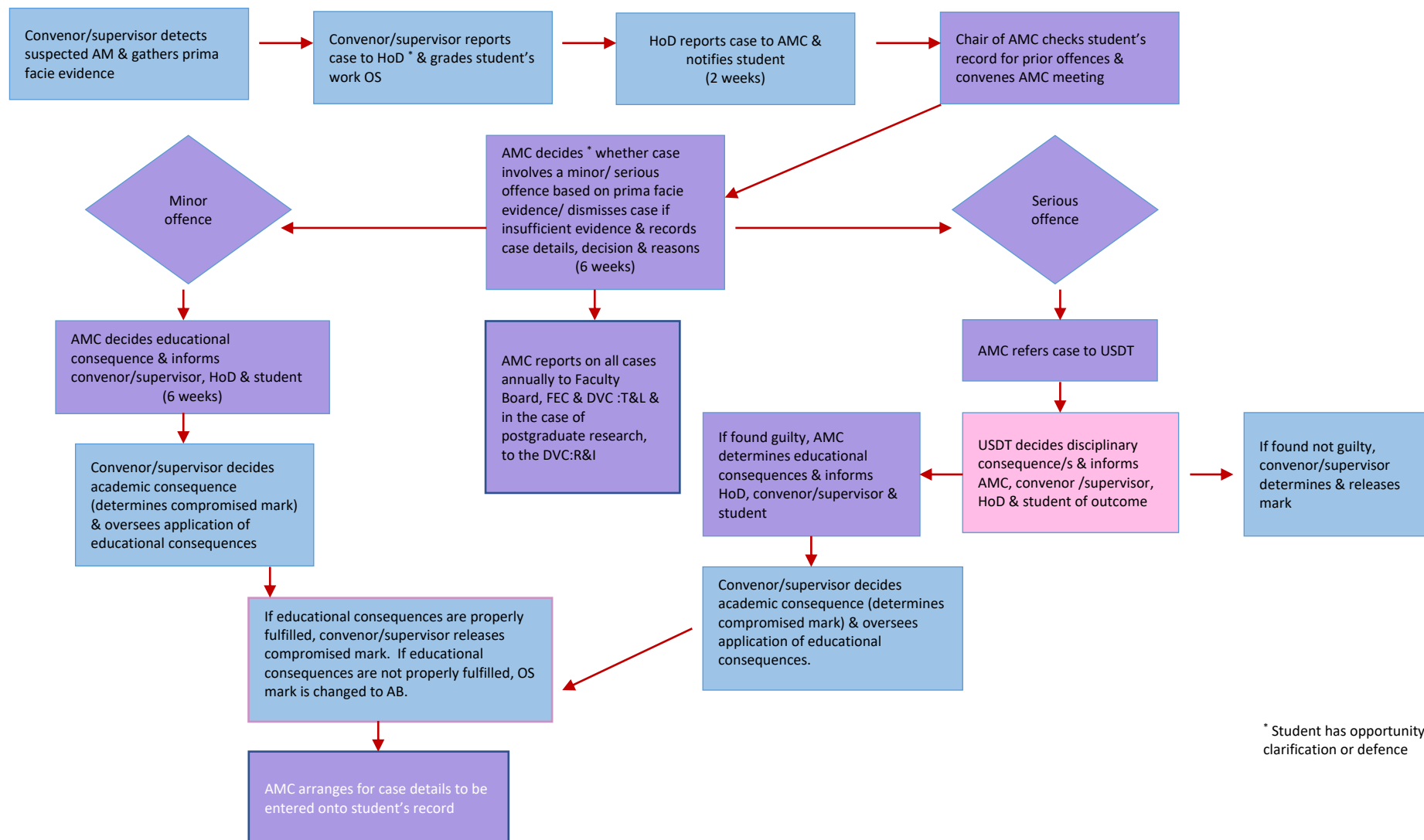
There are no appeals on the substantive merits of any decisions in the case of academic misconduct charges.³

The remedy is confined to a review based on procedural fairness in terms of General Rule G19. There is no review in relation to the academic decision, i.e. the mark awarded to the work.

³ This requires a change to the existing Notes on Rule G17

ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT (AM) PROCESS FLOWCHART

AMC - (Faculty) Academic Misconduct Committee. USDT - University Student Disciplinary Tribunal



* Student has opportunity to provide clarification or defence

6. Consequences of academic misconduct

Rule RCS 2.1 states that “A student must refrain from dishonest conduct in any examination, test or in respect of completion and/or submission of any other form of academic assessment. Dishonest conduct includes but is not limited to plagiarism.”

Rule RCS2.3 states that “A student may not submit the work of any other person in any examination, test or in respect of the completion and/or submission of any other form of academic assessment without full and proper attribution and acknowledgement.”

Students who infringe these rules in terms of any of the different types of academic misconduct as defined in this policy will, depending on the nature and extent of the offence, be:

- Awarded an academic mark proportionate to the own work done in the exam/assignment/thesis/dissertation.
- Required to complete an educational intervention to the satisfaction of the Faculty AMC
- Referred to the USDT

Depending on the severity of the academic misconduct and the specifics of the case, the USDT may sanction students with expulsion, rustication, community service and/or a fine.

APPENDICES TO THE POLICY FOR THE PREVENTION AND MANAGEMENT OF ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT BY STUDENTS

These are guideline documents drawn up by information experts in CILT and the Libraries which may be of value to staff and students. It is expected that these guidelines will be updated more regularly than the policy itself.

Appendix 1: A guide for staff

*NOTE: This guide must be read in conjunction with the university Assessment Policy and Framework.

A) Task and course design to help prevent student plagiarism

Increasingly the lines are being blurred as to what constitutes plagiarism as the internet reshapes education and writing. Citation is an important feature of academic writing and is fundamental in successfully constructing academic discourse. Citation involves more than just the mechanical aspects of referencing but focuses on attribution, a complex sociolinguistic practice of using the voices of others in the construction of one's own (Moxley and Archer 2019).

Explicit teaching about sources

In addition to teaching students *how* to cite, attention should also be paid to raising their awareness of *why* writers cite, the purposes of citation and the rhetorical effects which can be achieved with different forms of citation.

Searching for and identifying suitable sources

- Distinguish between primary and secondary sources.
- Discuss what should be cited.
- Teach students how to find valid reliable information on the Internet and how to rate sources.

Teaching about note-taking, paraphrasing and summarizing

- Explain and model how to paraphrase and how to cite.

Teaching referencing styles

- Teach students about academic integrity which includes values such as honesty, trust, respect, fairness and responsibility.
- Teach students explicitly about what constitutes plagiarism, and the basic conventions and rules for appropriating sources.
- Teach and raise awareness around common referencing styles.

Process approaches

- Review first drafts of students to use as teaching points (possibly use peer-review where appropriate)
- Get students to participate in developing a 'plagiarism policy' for the course.
- Use Turnitin reports in process to reflect on citation with students.

Introducing the notion of 'voice'

Talk about how to find your own writing voice in relation to other sources. This can be done by alerting students to the different citation choices available to them. They can:

- Quote or paraphrase from a single source or generalize from a number of sources.
- Foreground the cited author by including the name of the author in the sentence.
- Background the cited author by placing the reference in parenthesis. Use reporting verbs to convey the writer's attitude towards the source original the degree to which the writer agrees with or believes in the source. For example, the verb 'claims' shows more skepticism towards the source than a verb such as 'demonstrates'.

Setting assignments

Address realistic tasks

Set realistic tasks, such as applying theory to a specific context. For example:

- Integrate case study pedagogy and contextual scenarios to create meaningful experiences for students. This not only has the potential to avoid plagiarism, but also allows students to feel engaged with the content of the course, and the application of theory allows for critical thinking, originality and problem solving. An example of a task like this: "Drawing on the theories and concepts introduced on the course, the videos shared and your blog responses over the first four weeks, discuss what happens to identity in our case study of the refugee, Minga Kongo, as he moves across borders". (Humanities first year AXL course). An example in the SET disciplines: "Using the theories and methods covered in this course, discuss the pros and cons of the chlorination options available to the manager of a public swimming pool." (Sciences second year Chemistry course)
- Design questions that allow students to apply relevant theories to source material.

Match learning outcomes and course objectives

Design assignments that match learning outcomes and course objectives. Restricting tasks helps students to refer to a specific context rather than to a general and broad topic.

Create assignments which cannot be answered using chunks of information from the Internet.

- Set up reflection exercises which allow students to write about their experiences and how their thinking has shifted. The following assignment topic is an example of this: "Discuss **the shifts in YOUR understandings** of identity while doing the course. As part of your discussion, draw on the key concepts on the course, and your experiences where relevant to illustrate these shifts". (DOH1002F)
- Ask the students to formulate an opinion or occupy a position, make connections, share their insights, predictions, to evaluate and/or analyse critically.

Use multiple sources

Encourage students to use multiple resources such as books, Encyclopaedias, magazines, databases, newspapers, internet, and then to put these multiple sources in conversation with each other.

Address multiple audiences

Change the audience for an assignment, for example, to a professional body, or a popular readership (like a newspaper article).

Use different modes and media

- Integrate different modes into assignments which require distilling and reshaping of information (for example, incorporate visuals, infographics, film analysis)
- Integrate different media into assignments (for example, slide shows, blogs)

B) Detection of academic misconduct

Convenors, supervisors and others directly responsible for assessments:

Prime responsibility for preventing and detecting academic misconduct in an assessment rests with the academic staff member(s) most directly responsible for the assessment. For most course assessments, this will be the course convenor, who is usually responsible for setting and marking, or coordinating marking the assessment. For dissertations and similar assessments, prime responsibility usually rests with the supervisor(s). In unusual cases, another academic staff member may be delegated responsibility for preventing and detecting academic misconduct in an assessment, subject to approval by the Head of Department.

Prime responsibility for *preventing* academic misconduct requires these individuals to:

- Acquire and maintain an up-to-date awareness of relevant assessment designs that are most resistant to academic misconduct ways in which students might perpetrate academic misconduct in their assessments, and the most effective strategies, tools and techniques to detect academic misconduct. This awareness could, for example, be obtained by regularly attending CILT workshops on course design, academic integrity, and/or academic misconduct detection techniques.
- Address academic misconduct in the course documentation and/or the introduction to a course. Academic misconduct should be defined; examples of academic misconduct relevant to the course should be identified; the reasons academic misconduct is wrong should be articulated; and students should be warned of the seriousness of the consequences, both academic and disciplinary.
- Anticipate the ways in which academic misconduct could be perpetrated on each assessment, and:
 - develop an assessment design that is most resistant to academic misconduct. In addition to publicly available sources, guidance can be

obtained from colleagues, Heads of Department, and CILT. CILT is available for course design consultations and provides comprehensive guidance for ensuring academic integrity for a wide range of assessments here: <http://www.cilt.uct.ac.za/cilt/resources/assessing-learning>

- https://docs.google.com/document/d/1vNKO_MqmWwImp9MeglhHa0OzGY3CcCiVN8cgD5X-6H4/edit
- develop a detection strategy for each assessment. As far as possible, this should make use of relevant best-practice academic misconduct detection tools and techniques. Again, guidance can be obtained from the sources mentioned above.
- Report on the above to the Head of Department

Prime responsibility for *detecting* academic misconduct requires these individuals to, for each assessment:

- Implement the detection strategy developed for that assessment, and:
 - take reasonable steps to identify and investigate cases of suspected academic misconduct
 - report cases of suspected academic misconduct to the Head of Department, who will report these to the Faculty Academic Misconduct Committee
 - apply appropriate academic consequences to each case of suspected academic misconduct, in consultation with the Head of Department and the Faculty Academic Misconduct Committee where appropriate.

Once a course has been concluded, proper exercise of prime responsibility also requires these individuals to:

- Write a brief report testifying to the effectiveness of the prevention and detection measures for all assessments, and the treatment of any cases of suspected misconduct, including the academic consequences of this suspected misconduct.
- Attach this report to the material sent to external examiners for review.
- Submit this report to the HOD.
- Ensure that this report is shared with the person directly responsible for the next iteration of the course

Heads of Department

Heads of Department are responsible for the quality control of the academic misconduct strategies.

They are required to:

- Collate all of the academic misconduct reports into an integrated academic misconduct report for the Department that is submitted to the Faculty Academic Misconduct Committee and the Faculty Examinations Committee (FEC) at the end of each semester.
- Give critical feedback to courses, as necessary, to improve academic misconduct prevention and detection.

Faculty Academic Misconduct Committee

The Faculty Academic Misconduct Committee is responsible for Faculty-wide oversight and reporting on academic misconduct. They are required to:

- Consult with Heads of Department, individual Faculty staff, CILT and others, to develop guidance, as necessary, for the prevention and detection of academic misconduct in future.
- Report to the Faculty Board annually on academic misconduct. This report must include statistics about cases of suspected academic misconduct; the academic consequences for these cases; effective prevention and detection tools, techniques and strategies which members of the Faculty Board may not know about; any other salient guidance for preventing and detecting academic misconduct.

Appendix 2 A guide for students

How to avoid plagiarism

In academic work, researchers build on the ideas of others. This is a legitimate and accepted way of doing research. Plagiarism is using someone else's ideas or words and presenting them as if they are your own. It is therefore a form of academic misconduct or cheating. Because plagiarism is an offence, all universities take a very serious view of anyone who is found to have committed plagiarism. Those who are suspected of plagiarism will be referred to the Vice-Chancellor or nominee for possible disciplinary action in terms of the rules on disciplinary jurisdiction and procedures.

Not all plagiarism is deliberate, but even inadvertent plagiarism will be severely penalized. It is therefore your responsibility to know what will be regarded as plagiarism and to know how to avoid it.

What makes plagiarism difficult to avoid and dangerous is that it can take many forms.

Forms of plagiarism

Academic writing requires you to discuss existing literature but at the same time to come up with your own ideas; to rely on the findings of others, but also to say something new and original; to give an exposition of key readings on the topic, but to express it in your own structure and words. It is academically difficult to manage a path between these seemingly contradictory demands.

Plagiarism can range from deliberate academic misconduct to accidental academic carelessness, and can range from serious and clear forms of plagiarism to instances that are less obvious.

Obvious forms of plagiarism include:

- Buying or borrowing a paper and copying it.
- Hiring someone to write the paper or thesis for you.
- Cutting and pasting large portions of text from the web or from someone else's paper or book without any quotation marks (or clear indentation for block quotes) or proper reference to the source. The ease of cutting-and-pasting from electronic sources makes this a form of plagiarism that is particularly widespread.
- Word-for-word copying of a sentence, or paragraph without any proper acknowledgement.
- Direct translation into English of a paper – or large sections of writing – originally written in another language
- Citing sources that you didn't actually use.
- Using substantive extracts from your own earlier work without acknowledgement.
- Using language models such as chatbots, and any service or software that provides answers to assessments, or writes or re-writes assignments or parts thereof.

Less obvious forms of plagiarism include:

- Not giving proper credit to someone else's ideas or findings.

When is it proper to give credit and when not? As a general rule, you need to give a reference for any text, diagram, table, illustration or idea if it comes from:

- a. a book, journal, website, or any other public medium.
 - b. what someone has said in an interview you have conducted.
 - c. someone's personal correspondence in the form of a letter or email.
- You don't need to give a reference or give credit if the idea, text, diagram, table, illustration or idea comes from:
 - a. your own insights, work or experiences. Ideas from papers you have co-authored, however, still need to be acknowledged.
 - b. writing up your own fieldnotes or lab reports.
 - c. "common knowledge", common sense observations, well-established facts, historical events (but you should give a reference if you use an historical *document*) and myths. It is sometimes difficult to know exactly when something is "common knowledge", but a general rule to follow is: if the same observation is made in multiple sources without any attached references, or if it is something that the general public is well aware of, then no references are needed.
 - Improper paraphrasing.

The rule to "put it in your own words" is not always helpful, because many of the accepted key words in academic discourse have precise meaning or are accepted expressions that you shouldn't change. However, whenever you do written work you must distinguish what you have written from what you are paraphrasing or quoting. To paraphrase is to summarise someone else's ideas in your own writing style, sentence structures and, where applicable, own words. This is a particularly demanding task for writers whose first language is not English and requires a reference to the source.

- Failing to give a proper reference

You may copy a short section word for word (not a large piece of text) but you must give proper credit to the source of the quotation or the paraphrased argument, idea or reasoning.

- Not acknowledging outsourcing of substantive data analysis

You may have someone else do the descriptive statistics or statistical data analysis for you, but you need to acknowledge the extent to which it is not your own analysis. In cases where the statistical analysis (model fitting or estimation) forms the central thesis, instead of just being a minor section, or where the thesis is in a discipline that requires you to demonstrate this skill of analysis, it is unacceptable to outsource it, even if you do acknowledge it.

How to avoid plagiarism

When you start reading and taking notes, carefully distinguish between material that is quoted, material that is paraphrased in your own words and own structure, and material that is your own

and expressed in your own words. The way you can distinguish between these different types of sources is to use a different colour for each one, or to put a big Q for “quote”, P for “paraphrase” or M for “mine” after the relevant section. Make sure that you keep scrupulous track of the author, year, title, and page from which you are taking the quote. UCT students have access to RefWorks and EndNote to manage references. (See section on “Resources” below.)

- Fully reference and acknowledge the work of others

While academic staff will teach you about systems of referencing, and how to avoid plagiarism, you too need to take responsibility for your own academic career. Knowing how to give proper credit, cite appropriately, acknowledge the original source and reference accurately is an essential step in avoiding plagiarism. There are numerous referencing conventions and you should use a referencing convention that is accepted in your discipline. There are many guides on how to reference properly. See “Referencing Conventions” below for resources and guides.

- Use your own expressions and present your work in your own writing style

It is tempting to use someone else’s elegantly structured phrase/s or sentence/s, but doing so without proper quoting (acknowledging your use of their exact words) constitutes plagiarism. It is not enough to change just a word here and there when paraphrasing, you need to use your own sentence construction. Of course, there are accepted key words in specific academic discourses that have precise meaning or are accepted expressions; you shouldn’t try to put these precise and commonly accepted expressions in your own words. When in doubt, ask your lecturer or tutor.

- Organise your work and structure your reasoning in your own way

Don’t merely give properly acknowledged summaries of other people’s work (paraphrasing); develop your own sequence of reasoning and line of argumentation.

- Use TURNITIN

Turnitin is an internet-based service that checks the extent of unoriginal content in your paper or thesis. It will identify all the parts where you have copied text from elsewhere. Where you have acknowledged doing so with direct quotes, that is acceptable. Of course, you should not have too many direct quotes since you are required, after all, to demonstrate your own academic writing and critical thinking skills. Identified copied content that is not acknowledged is plagiarism and you must reword and restructure these identified sections. Note that Turnitin is not a guarantee that there is no plagiarism – it is only a guide. See more about Turnitin [here](#).

Note that you should not submit the same re-worked draft multiple times because the system will then compare your new version with the earlier versions.

Referencing conventions

Your lecturer is responsible for ensuring that you are (or become) familiar with, and observe, one of the internationally recognised guides to scholarly conventions on presentation, documentation of sources and referencing. It is your responsibility to question any part of this that you do not understand, to apply the rules, and to be aware of the consequences of plagiarism.

There are many ways of referencing, and the University has not set one way as preferable to another. The Library and Writing Centre, however, recommend one of the following forms:

- the Harvard referencing system,
- American Psychological Association (APA)
- Modern Language Association (MLA)

For advice and guides on referencing see:

UCT Library Referencing Help: <http://www.lib.uct.ac.za/lib/research/referencing>

If you are confused because each lecturer tells you to reference your work in a different way, discuss this with them.

Resources

The Library Staff, the Writing Centre and the Office for Research Integrity are willing to assist you, by providing details of referencing conventions, and helping you to use them.

UCT Libraries: <http://www.lib.uct.ac.za/> (link to “Ask a Librarian” on the home page)

UCT Writing Centre: <http://www.writingcentre.uct.ac.za/writing/talk/contacts>

UCT Office for Research Integrity: <http://www.researchsupport.uct.ac.za/office-research-integrity>

Reference Management Tools available to UCT students (EndNote and RefWorks):
<http://www.lib.uct.ac.za/lib/research/referencing>

Appendix 3

Plagiarism declaration and other useful documents

Each time your work is assessed, you will need to insert the declaration like this.

Plagiarism Declaration:

1. I know that plagiarism is a serious form of academic misconduct.
2. I have read the document about avoiding plagiarism, am familiar with its contents and have avoided all forms of plagiarism mentioned there.
3. Where I have used the words of others, I have indicated this by the use of quotation marks.
4. I have referenced all quotations and properly acknowledged ideas borrowed from others.
5. I have not and shall not allow others to plagiarise my work.
6. I declare that this is my own work.
7. I am attaching the summary of the Turnitin match overview (when required to do so).

Signature: _____

Declaration to be included in your thesis

In the front of your thesis, a signed and dated declaration in the following format must be included:

Declaration

I,, hereby declare that the work on which this thesis is based is my original work (except where acknowledgements indicate otherwise) and that neither the whole work nor any part of it has been, is being, or is to be submitted for another degree in this or any other university. I authorise the University to reproduce for the purpose of research either the whole or any portion of the contents in any manner whatsoever.

Signature:..... Date:

University of Cape Town
Avoiding plagiarism: A guide for students
A checklist to help you avoid plagiarism in your work⁴

	Tick
<p>I have acknowledged the sources of all the ideas (or tables, diagrams, illustrations) I have taken from someone else.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>I have given proper credit wherever I have referred to, borrowed or used the ideas, findings, tables, diagrams, or illustrations I have found in another text.</i> <i>It is not necessary to give a reference to ideas that are common knowledge, well-accepted facts, or my own work.</i> 	
<p>Where I have used the exact words from another text, I have placed these in quotation marks and inserted a full reference in the text.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>I have used direct quotations sparingly.</i> <i>Where I have used quotations, I have ensured that the purpose of doing so is clear, and that I used it as an important step in the development of my own argument.</i> <i>Long quotes (longer than 6 lines) are blocked and indented in the text.</i> 	
<p>Where I have paraphrased the work of another, I have done so with integrity and have used my own words and my own sentence structure.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Although I have used my own words and own structure, I have acknowledged that the idea was someone else's and I have therefore supplied the reference in the text.</i> 	
<p>I have exercised caution when making my original notes from the readings I have consulted by carefully recording where I have written down the exact words (quotations), where I have paraphrased, and where I have noted my own ideas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Where I used the author's exact words, I put them in quotation marks and have supplied the reference in the text.</i> 	
<p>I am familiar with the referencing convention I have adopted in my work and have ensured that all the references are correct and complete.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>I have inserted the references in the text where applicable and have listed all the references I have used in a complete list at the end of the work.</i> 	
<p>I have NOT copied nor bought the work from someone else, nor used language models such as chatbots, and any service or software that provides answers to assessments or writes or re-writes assignments or parts thereof.</p>	
<p>I have NOT cut and pasted from other sources, except in the few cases where I have placed these in quotation marks to indicate that I have used someone else's exact words.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>I have used these as direct quotes with proper acknowledgement.</i> 	
<p>Any analysis I have run is my own work except where I have acknowledged appropriately.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Where demonstrating my own skill of analysis is required, I have not outsourced this part of my work.</i> 	

⁴ Adapted from "[Checklist to help you prevent plagiarism in your work](#)", Curtin University, Australia and from "[Avoiding plagiarism](#)", Purdue University, USA.

<p>I have submitted my work to Turnitin to check for unoriginal content.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><i>I am attaching a summary of the Turnitin match overview that indicates the extent of unoriginal (including directly quoted and acknowledged) text.</i><i>I understand that Turnitin is merely a guide and provides no guarantee that there is no plagiarism</i>	
<p>I have inserted a declaration in my work testifying that I have adhered to the rules regarding plagiarism.</p>	

Appendix 4

Resources for staff and students

<http://www.plagiarism.org/>

This site is sponsored by Turnitin. It provides resources on plagiarism for students, instructors, and researchers. It provides links to useful resources such as different definitions of plagiarism and how to prevent plagiarism when writing.

<http://www.plagiarism.com/>

This is a consulting service that assists academic institutions with plagiarism forensics. Their services include developing policies and procedures that deal with issues of academic misconduct and plagiarism.

<https://honorcouncil.georgetown.edu/whatisplagiarism/#>

The Georgetown University Honor Council provides a concise and interactive web page dealing with the ins and outs of plagiarism in academic writing, with a user-friendly tabbed system catering to all the issues and questions students might have on this issue when approaching their writing.

<https://plagiarism.iu.edu/tutorials/task1/activation.html>

Indiana University provide a helpful interactive step-by-step approach on how to recognize plagiarism in writing, which can serve as a useful reference for students, tutors and markers alike. With short video accompaniments, the step-by-step process allows users to see examples of various texts containing plagiarism and non-plagiarism, explaining in detail how these approaches differ around the same texts. The site also assesses the user's understanding of what they have learned on the subject by providing a levelled multiple-choice assessment task on whether texts have been plagiarized or not. This practical application is very useful and rises in complexity as the user goes through the activity.

<https://www.accreditedschoolsonline.org/resources/preventing-plagiarism/>

Accredited Schools Online boast a detailed and insightful article on the topic of plagiarism prevention. In an attempt to better understand the concept of plagiarism, the article outlines possible strategies and resources for students and educators, intentional versus accidental forms of plagiarism, how to identify plagiarism and mention of a famous case on the issue as a discussion point. This is an incredibly useful resource for anyone in academia and outlines some of the methods for preventing these issues, examples of best practice and most crucially, a lengthy list of extra resources for students and educators alike.

<https://writing-speech.dartmouth.edu/learning/materials/sources-and-citations-dartmouth>

Dartmouth's detailed webpage is aimed at various citation and plagiarism issues. While this is quite a broad-spectrum approach to the issue, there is useful content here relating to post-

grad academic issues around collaboration, publishing and how to acknowledge sources and research assistance correctly.

<https://www.northwestern.edu/provost/policies/academic-integrity/how-to-avoid-plagiarism.html>

Northwestern University's website provides an extensive discussion on the issue of 'How to Avoid Plagiarism', with a lengthy list of issues and examples. The site also outlines the various kinds of materials besides authors' publications sourced in academic writing (lecture notes, images/tables etc.).

<https://slate.com/news-and-politics/2007/01/why-do-we-care-about-plagiarism.html>

SLATE's article titled, 'The Copycat Syndrome' discusses the issue of plagiarism, providing less of a reference for students and more of a history and debate on the issue, citing multiple publications and arguments from those in the field. SLATE unpacks the issues surrounding the increased preoccupation with plagiarism in academia (and beyond) which makes for a fascinating read. The article reveals the ethical and political underpinnings of this issue in relation to popular culture and questions "whether writers who borrow from other artists are fakers" or just slackers, and how to decide which "to condone and which to condemn?"

<https://www.edsurge.com/news/2017-11-13-how-social-media-encourages-plagiarism-and-six-ways-you-can-fight-it>

This article, titled 'How Social Media Encourages Plagiarism (and Six Ways You Can Fight It)' addresses the current issues relating to plagiarism in student's writing. Highlighted in this article is the role of technology and social media in encouraging plagiarism through its structure and general conventions. The article assesses why plagiarism is wrong, how to prevent it, and crucially, how technology and social media can also be used as tools to combat plagiarism and empower students, through reference-checking technology like Turnitin at UCT. The article provides 6 useful tech-based tips for teachers to help their students avoid plagiarizing and are perfect for current remote learning.

<https://liahelp.com/plagiarism>

The LiaHelp website briefly outlines the issue of plagiarism through its listing of the variety of ways in which plagiarism most commonly occurs. These include verbatim and mosaic plagiarism, inadequate and uncited paraphrasing, uncited quotations and lastly, the use of material from another student. Listing these issues in this manner provides a useful reference for students who wish to avoid falling into these traps.

<https://www.scribbr.com/plagiarism/how-to-avoid-plagiarism/>

The Scribbr website provides a succinct video with a step-by-step on how to avoid plagiarism for students and some free reference slides for more visual learners. While the site does advertise its own plagiarism checking software, it also highlights the danger of downloading free-to-use software off the web (a good time to emphasize the value of Turnitin at UCT). The

site gives a good example of a text which has been paraphrased, compared to the original version of the text, and crucially, the plagiarized form as well.

Two courses on Coursera.

- Avoiding Plagiarism

<https://www.coursera.org/lecture/digital-literacy/4-1-avoiding-plagiarism-fw8RA>

- How to Avoid Plagiarism Lecture

<https://www.coursera.org/lecture/advanced-writing/how-to-avoid-plagiarism-lecture-vBjPe>

From Rhodes University (6-minute videos – mostly aimed at postgraduates, but may also be suitable for undergraduates)

<https://postgradenvironments.com/2021/05/12/how-to-avoid-plagiarism/>

<https://postgradenvironments.com/2021/05/12/what-is-intentional-plagiarism/>

<https://postgradenvironments.com/2017/09/22/misuses-turnitin-text-matching-software/>