

BUS. P. 23
2009/2010

The University of the West Indies

**Undergraduate Student Anti-
Plagiarism Policy**

**Office of the Board for Undergraduate
Studies***

April 9, 2010

***: This Policy was prepared in collaboration with the Offices of Graduate Studies and Research and benefited from the input of the PVCs, Graduate Studies and Research, who have prepared a related “Policy on Graduate Student Plagiarism.”**

Introduction

Plagiarism represents the very antithesis of the goals of the academy, which focus on the creation of new knowledge and its dissemination in a form that encourages on-going creativity.

Definition of Plagiarism

Plagiarism is defined as the **unacknowledged use** of the words, ideas or creations of another. The principal categories of **unacknowledged use** are *unacknowledged quotation*, or failure to credit quotations of another person's spoken or written words and *unattributed borrowing*, or failure to credit another person's ideas, opinions, theories, graphs, diagrams. Unattributed borrowing also includes the failure to credit another person's work when paraphrasing from that work. Cosmetic paraphrasing is also plagiarism. This can occur when an acknowledgement is made but the words are so close to the original that what is deemed to have been paraphrased is, in fact, a modified quote. A more technical form of plagiarism is *wrongly attributed borrowing*, where one does not acknowledge the work from which one obtained an idea, but quotes, instead, from the original source, which may well convey a broader research effort than what actually took place.

There is a related issue of collusion. Collusion is the collaboration between two or more students in the preparation, writing or production of a course assignment, or part thereof, under circumstances where the students knew or had reason to know that the assignment, or part thereof, was intended to be the product of each student's individual effort. Although there is a distinction between plagiarism and collusion, students who collude by agreeing to present as their own work the work of others will also be subject to this plagiarism policy, to the extent that the collusion results in a document presented for assessment. Note, this is not a prohibition against team work by students, which is encouraged in many courses, but one against students presenting as their own work the work of others without appropriate attribution.

Categories of Plagiarism

There are two categories of plagiarism: level one and level two.

Level One

Level one cases are those which involve small quantities of work in which there has been no acknowledgement or inappropriate acknowledgement of authorship. The breaches could include borderline, cosmetic paraphrasing, negligent referencing or a few incorrect or missing citations.

Level Two

Level two cases are those in which the plagiarism breaches are sufficiently significant that they go beyond sloppy or negligent referencing and represent a prima facie case of academic dishonesty. This is obviously the case where a majority of the work presented by the student represents unacknowledged use of material. But even where unacknowledged use of material is represented in only a minority of an assignment in quantitative terms, if the unacknowledged material is central to the assignment then the lack of attribution of this material can be assessed as representing extensive plagiarism.

Penalties for Plagiarism

There are different penalties and procedures for dealing with the different levels of plagiarism.

Penalties for Level One Plagiarism

All cases of Level One Plagiarism shall be handled at the level of course examiners, with marks deducted at the discretion of the first examiner.

Penalties for Level Two Plagiarism

All cases of Level Two Plagiarism must be reported to Campus Examination Committees. If upon investigation of these alleged incidents, these committees find that the charge of Level Two Plagiarism stands, the penalty shall range from a grade of zero for the assignment to expulsion from the University, with or without the possibility of subsequent re-entry depending on the severity of the charge. In making a determination of the severity of the penalty, Campus Committees are expected to take into consideration the circumstances of the particular case, the seniority of the student and also whether this is the first or a repeated incidence of Level Two Plagiarism.

In cases of Level Two Plagiarism, students have a right to be told of the specific charges they are alleged to have breached, to have access to the documentation relevant to the charge, to be heard by the Campus Examinations Committee, and to have access to representation of their choice.

The right of appeal for students charged with Level Two Plagiarism will be to the University Senate. Such students have the right to have access to the relevant documentation, including the report of the Campus Committee on Examinations.

Plagiarism constitutes fraudulent misrepresentation, and as such, if a case of Level Two Plagiarism is identified after the granting of a degree, the University reserves the right to revoke the degree or diploma under the authority provided to the Senate of the University in Statute 15 of the University's Charter, which allows for revocation of degrees or diplomas previously awarded to individuals who are subsequently convicted of a crime or

found guilty of what in the opinion of the University constitutes dishonourable or scandalous conduct.

A Summary of Procedures for Dealing with Cases of Plagiarism

1. Where a case of plagiarism is alleged this shall be accompanied by a determination of the level of plagiarism.
2. If the case is seen as one of Level One Plagiarism, the matter shall be reported to the First Examiner for the Course, if the person making the allegation is not the First Examiner. The First Examiner shall deduct marks from the assignment at her or his discretion.
3. If the case is seen as one of Level Two Plagiarism, the individual alleging plagiarism shall report the matter to the Campus Examinations Committee.
4. In cases of alleged plagiarism, students should be informed of the specific regulations they are alleged to have breached, have the right to be heard at Campus Examinations Committees, have access to all documentation relevant to the charge, and be entitled to representation of their choice.
5. Campus Examinations Committees shall investigate the allegations, and, if they find that the charge holds, impose penalties for Level Two Plagiarism within the range of penalties identified in this policy document. Within these ranges, Campus Examination Committees shall apply penalties based upon their judgment of the severity of the offense.
6. Students found by Campus Examination Committees to be guilty of Level Two Plagiarism have a right of appeal to the University Senate and have a right to have access to the relevant documentation, including the report of the Campus Committee on Examinations.

Student Education and Accountability

In implementing this anti-plagiarism policy UWI will provide avenues for educating students and staff about plagiarism and the fact that it represents the very opposite of the ideals of the academy. Course outlines will provide the requisite information on plagiarism. Students will also be required to submit a signed declaration with each item of work submitted stating that the work being submitted is their own work, that they understand what constitutes plagiarism and that they have not plagiarised. Students will also be required to submit assignments in electronic form and to license the University to allow their work to be analysed using plagiarism detection technology.