
 REGENT BUSINESS SCHOOL <small>HONORIS UNITED UNIVERSITIES</small> QUALITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM PLAGIARISM POLICY	Approved by:	Managing Director
	Developed by:	Director of Research
	Policy number:	QP 08
	Revision number:	03
	Release Date:	18.04.2023

Related Documents:
Teaching and Learning Policy, Assessment Policy, Postgraduate Research Code of Ethics, Postgraduate Research Policy and Strategy, Deferral Policy, Appeals Policy

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1. QUALITY STATEMENT

Regent Business School (RBS) is committed to the management of the quality of the research function. In the RBS context the system of managing quality refers to meeting of minimum standards (Quality Assurance), maintaining and sustaining standards (Quality Support), continuously improve standards (Quality Development and Enhancement) and monitoring and evaluation standards (Quality Monitoring and Evaluation) hereby creating a quality culture within RBS.

2. PURPOSE

The Plagiarism Policy of Regent Business School (RBS) constitutes the following purposes:


- To provide a clear statement concerning the meaning of plagiarism (i.e. what is and what is not acceptable) to serve as a point of departure across all faculties and offices;
- To establish clear systematic processes, guidelines and procedures that addresses a developmental approach towards the prevention of plagiarism as well as the management of acts of plagiarism and associated disciplinary actions; and
- To identify the responsibilities of faculties and other structures, academic employees and students with regard to acts of alleged plagiarism.

3. SCOPE

This policy provides a framework that governs the management of, detection, action and allegations of matters relating to plagiarism in terms of postgraduate research.

These themes are included in the following sub-sections:

- Detection of plagiarism
- Levels of plagiarism
- Staff and Student Responsibility

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- Institutional Provision of Awareness of Plagiarism
- Reporting of Plagiarism
- Action on the Allegations of Plagiarism
- Procedures for the management of alleged acts of plagiarism

Plagiarism is a serious form of academic misconduct and is treated as such by RBS. RBS recognises that identification of plagiarism is a complicated matter and that contestation on issues of poor referencing or subtle use of undeclared ideas can arise. RBS recognizes that Information known as “common knowledge” does not require source credit.

RBS understands that at undergraduate level “plagiarism” might be seen as a developmental or educational issue-but at postgraduate level, plagiarism is dealt with as a disciplinary offence and is sanctioned accordingly.

RBS’s students and staff are adequately informed and trained to become independent thinkers. They are well informed and aware of plagiarism issues as well as the sanctions associated with the perpetration of plagiarism.


The sanctions associated with plagiarism, by RBS are set on a continuum of severity and vary according to the expected degree of academic development, the severity of the transgression and the legal risk to the Institution.

The author of any academic work, research or dissertation is responsible and accountable for its academic integrity.


4. DEFINITIONS

“Plagiarism” is a form of academic misconduct that may be defined as:

- Any attempt to present the ideas of another as if they are your own;
- Any attempt to represent the words or works of another as if they are your own;
- Utilisation of the ideas or work of another without appropriate acknowledgement;

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- These actions may apply to printed text, images, computer programs, sound recordings, performance or creative works;
- The visible lack of individual contribution in “group work”, should the contributions not be reflected in the final product;
- By stating or implying original authorship of someone else’s written or creative work and incorporating such work or material in whole or in part into his or her own work without properly acknowledging or citing the source;
- Using the patch-writing method (cutting and pasting), where pieces of work by another author including those taken of the internet, are combined with one’s own words and phrases without acknowledging the original author;
- Use of a summary of work that contains the ideas of others and presents the essence of an argument in language that condenses and compresses the original language of the source or author without acknowledging the source and/or author;
- “Buying” a dissertation or parts of it or contracting a ghost writing service to write a dissertation or parts of a dissertation;
- It remains that unintentional plagiarism is still regarded as plagiarism;
- Acts of plagiarism include, but are not limited to written texts (whether electronic or printed, published or unpublished), visual texts, multimedia products, music, spoken text, creative words or another person’s assignment and
- The preparation of learning materials, academic presentations and work submitted for publication.
- Turnitin (anti-plagiarism program) is a commercial, Internet-based plagiarism-detection service launched in 1997. Universities and high schools typically buy licenses to use the software-as-a-service website, which checks submitted documents against its database and the content of other websites with the aim of identifying plagiarism

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For the purposes of this policy the word “staff” may be defined as:

- Teaching and Academic Staff
- Guidance Staff
- Research Staff
- Technical Support Staff
- Part-time staff

5. POLICY PRINCIPLES

5.1 Detection of Plagiarism

To assist in the detection of plagiarism, RBS utilises anti-plagiarism program called TURNITIN. This program is widely used by leading national and international institutions as part of their effort to detect and avoid the practice of plagiarism.


All final dissertations, as well as submissions of research projects from the research components of various postgraduate programmes are checked through the anti-plagiarism program. Students are required to provide soft copies of all submissions to facilitate this.

RBS provides academic and support staff with training in the detection of plagiarism and in the use of the anti-plagiarism program.

5.2 Staff

It is the responsibility of staff to stress the nature and consequences of plagiarism to students and to ensure that students are familiar with the institution’s policy on plagiarism.

Academic staff should endeavour to develop a student’s potential as an independent thinker thereby allowing them the freedom to express their own ideas in adequate terms.

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Academic staff act as role models and should at all times set an example of academic integrity in their teaching material, class notes and documentation.

5.3 Student Responsibility

Students must ensure that they:

- Read, understand and comply with the plagiarism policy;
- Ensure that they are familiar with the different types of plagiarism in order to prevent it from occurring;
- Request assistance from staff, should they be unsure about the concept of plagiarism;
- Familiarise themselves with the essential referencing methods and norms of academic writing skills as prescribed by the institution.


5.4 Institutional Provision of Plagiarism Awareness

The Plagiarism Policy is readily available to all students as a document on the RBS website. Students enrolling at RBS receive on enrolment a plagiarism resource outlining what plagiarism is and how to avoid it.

Institutional disciplinary procedures are implemented in a fair, transparent and consistent manner.

5.5 Reporting of Plagiarism

The reporting of allegations or incidents of plagiarism remains the responsibility of all staff and students. This is then reported to the Director of Research. All cases are reported to the research committee, so that the outcomes may be determined

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5.6 Action on the Allegations of Plagiarism

In all instances of dealing with plagiarism, it is the responsibility of the individual academic employee to first assess (in consultation with others as they may deem necessary) the seriousness and level of the infringement (1).

Action is dependent on the seriousness of the infringement with first or minor infringements are handled developmentally whereas serious or repeat offences are treated with more gravity (1).

Factors to be considered include, amongst others, the year or study level of the student; intent to deceive and, if any, the level and effect of infringements (including the level of legal risk to RBS), previous infringements, extent or amount of plagiarism, conventions associated with the particular discipline, degree of developmental preparedness and possible gains if the act of plagiarism goes undetected (1).


5.7 Infringement/Offences

Where significant acts of alleged plagiarism are deemed to have occurred, the following three levels provide guidelines as to the degree/extent of the infringement/offence and lay down a range of formal appropriate courses of action that may be followed.

5.7.1 Level One: Minor First Time Infringements/Offences – Naive Plagiarism

These infringements are minor, first offences, and are considered to have been unintentional. The infringement will constitute Level One plagiarism if any of the following are evidenced in the assessment of a student's work:

- a) Three or more consecutive words that possess similarity with other texts; and
- b) Does not include large quantities of consecutive words (i.e., long phrases, sentences, paragraphs, sections, pages, entire documents).

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The alleged infringement/offence is handled as follows:

a) The academic employee concerned:


- Meets with the student to explain the infringement/offence and the consequences thereof.
- Provides the student with any information or educational advice deemed necessary including referral to a workshop, personal instruction or compulsory reading on writing and referral skills.
- Retains a copy of the work concerned.
- Gives the student an opportunity to resubmit the work within a given time-frame after which a new mark will be given.
- Gives the student a written warning (2).
- Records his/her name on the plagiarism register on e-common.

b) Should the student choose not to resubmit the work, he/she is allocated 0% for the work and a report is submitted to the relevant faculty/departmental committee for noting.

c) Should the student deny the alleged infringement/offence or challenge the outcome, the matter will be submitted to the relevant appeals committee.

5.7.2 Level Two: Repeated Minor or First Time Major Infringements/Offences – Negligent Plagiarism, Confined in Scope (2)


This level includes first offenders who deny allegations of plagiarism, Second Level One plagiarism offenders, students who have submitted the work of other students or first-time acts of major plagiarism which may not have been intentional. The infringement/offence will constitute Level Two plagiarism if any of the following are evidenced in the assessment of a student's work:

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- a) A second occurrence of Level One plagiarism;
- b) The inclusion of large quantities of content comprising more than three consecutive words (i.e., long phrases, sentences, paragraphs, sections, pages, entire documents) and at or below 30% of the entire text within the student's work;
- c) The omission of quotations and appropriate references from text that is used from other authors;
- d) Authored texts, which are included in the document, are appropriately referenced but do not contain quotation marks.

The alleged infringement is handled as follows:

- a) This alleged infringement/offence is reported by the staff member to the Director of Research who will then in consultation with the Head of Quality Assurance or Academic Dean call for an Investigative Committee on Plagiarism as appointed by the Director of Research.
- b) The maximum penalty that may be imposed by the relevant Faculty / Academics Committee is cancellation of registration of the module concerned, documentation of the offence in the faculty records and placement of the student's name on the plagiarism register.
- c) Decisions taken by the relevant Committee are submitted to the Academic Dean (Academic Head) for ratification.
- d) The decision is subject to appeal by the Academic Dean (Academic Head) who may refer the matter back to the relevant Committee or who may refer the case to the Director of Research.
- e) The Committee gives the student an opportunity to resubmit the work within a given time-frame after which a new mark will be given, amounting to not more than 50%.

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5.7.3 Level Three (1 & 2): Repeat Offences and/or Major Offences that are Possibly Intentional and Suggest Collusion or Deliberate Dishonesty – Intentional Plagiarism, (Broad in Scope)

These are major acts of plagiarism that developmental and educational approaches have not had the effect of curbing. The infringement will constitute Level Three plagiarism if any of the following are evidenced in the assessment of a student's work:

- a) A third occurrence of Level One plagiarism;
- b) A second occurrence of Level Two plagiarism;
- c) The inclusion of large quantities of content comprising more than three consecutive words (i.e., long phrases, sentences, paragraphs, sections, pages, entire documents) and above 30% of the entire text within the student's work;

The alleged infringement/offence is handled as follows:

- a) It is referred to the Student Ethics Committee appointed by the Director of Research and is investigated.
- b) In the event of a student being found guilty, the student's name is placed on the plagiarism register and all documentation related to the offence is filed in his/her administrative file and a file administered by the Director of Research.

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- c) The student is not given the opportunity to resubmit a piece of work or a thesis and will receive 0% for work submitted. The student will be asked to deregister as a student from RBS or sanctioned by RBS without any financial compensation from the Institution (The sanction imposed on the student is at the discretion of the Management of RBS).
- d) At this level, a student may be sanctioned for a period of no less than 12 months from the infringement, after which they will be allowed to re-register and embark on a new assignment.
- e) In the case of a student found guilty of Level Three plagiarism offences during a dissertation or research project, the student needs to register again (following the sanction period) for this stage, submit a new and unrelated topic, redevelop and resubmit the research proposal, and redo the dissertation under a new supervisor.

6. ALLEGED PLAGIARISM BY RBS EMPLOYEES

Alleged plagiarism by any of RBS's employee's is regarded in a very serious light and will be investigated in accordance with the RBS's disciplinary codes with a view to disciplinary action.

The relevant Faculty/Departmental Head in consultation with the Research Director handles relatively minor acts of alleged plagiarism. They may assign appropriate but limited penalties within a fair and consistent administrative process. The Committee protects individual academics from making subjective decisions and is subject to the normal appeals process(2).

Evidence of transgressions and infringements/offences of the plagiarism policy is filed by the office of the Research Director and presented at the Research Committee.

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6.1 Publication of Sanctions

Transgressors will have their names, level of offence, a short report, and sanction conferred entered onto RBS's Plagiarism Register.

The publication of sanctions in such cases is based solely on the discretion of RBS.


6.2 Plagiarism Report

Annual reports on the cases of plagiarism will be presented to the research committee in descriptive statistics format.

7. PROCEDURES FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF ALLEGED PLAGIARISM

7.1 Preparatory Phase

- a) It is the responsibility of the individual academic, who is of the opinion that an act of plagiarism has been committed, to initially assess the seriousness of the infringement – this may be carried out in consultation with the Director of Research and others as necessary.
- b) The decision regarding the seriousness of the alleged infringement will determine whether it will be dealt with at an informal developmental and educative level or a formal level (2).
- c) The criteria against which the seriousness of the alleged infringement is assessed includes, amongst others, the following:
 - Level of preparedness of student (i.e., degree of induction to and opportunities for application of the academic conventions of writing and referencing);

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- Year or level of study;
- Intent to deceive and, if any, the level effect of the infringement;
- Extent or amount of plagiarism in the work being assessed (quantified, if possible);
- The nature of the infringement (e.g. context in which it was found, proportion of overall and/or module assessment mark, conventions associated with the relevant discipline);
- Repetition of minor infringements or a more serious infringement; and
- Possible gains should the infringement remain undetected (1).


d) On determination of the seriousness of the alleged infringement, the academic concerned will deal with the student at the informal developmental and educational level or proceed to level one, level two, or level three of the formal process.

7.2 Formal Responses (1)

7.2.1 Level One: Minor First Time Infringements/Offences – Naive Plagiarism

In the light of all the relevant criteria, should it be established that the infringements/Offences are minor and first offences and considered unintentional, the academic employee concerned:

- a) Meets with the student to explain the infringement and the process that will be followed as well as the possible outcomes
- b) Issues the student with a written warning
- c) Retains a copy of the original work in question
- d) Returns the original assignment to the student unmarked and accompanied by a written request that the work be properly referenced and returned for marking by a stipulated date. The student is informed that the properly referenced assignment will be remarked with the new mark amounting to no more than 50%

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- e) Records the student's name on the plagiarism register with the student being advised in writing of other potential penalties that can be imposed for plagiarism
- f) Refers the student for any remedial assistance that may be required
- g) Monitors the student's progress and continues to assist when necessary (2)


Should the student:

- a) Accept the penalty, the matter ends there
- b) Elect not to resubmit the work, he/she is allocated 0% for the assignment and a report is submitted to the Plagiarism Committee, or equivalent, for noting
- c) Deny the alleged infringement or challenge the outcome, the matter is referred, via the Head of Department, to the Plagiarism Committee for further action
- d) Should a student wish to appeal against the penalty, he/she may do so by referring the matter, via the Head of Department, to the Academic Dean (1).

7.2.2 Level Two: Repeat Minor or First Time Major Infringements/Offences – Negligent Plagiarism, Confined in Scope (1)

- a) This level refers to first offenders who deny allegations of plagiarism or who wish to appeal against the penalty imposed, second plagiarism offenders, students who have submitted the work of other students or first-time acts of major plagiarism which may not have been intentional
- b) The alleged infringement is referred to the Disciplinary Committee via the Head of Department
- c) The Disciplinary Committee investigates the alleged infringement based on evidence provided and student records, where applicable
- d) The student concerned must be asked whether he/she wishes to appear before the Disciplinary Committee

Penalties that may be imposed by the Disciplinary Committee include:

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- Confirmation or repeal of the penalty imposed under a Level Two plagiarism infringement/offences;
- A written warning;
- Resubmission of the assignment;
- Allocation of a mark of 0%, but no greater than 50%, for the assignment;
- Cancellation of registration for the module concerned; and
- A decision that the infringement is of such a serious nature that it be referred directly to the Research or Ethics Committee.

In the event of the student being found guilty, the student's name is placed on the plagiarism register and all documentation related to the offence is filed in the faculty records.

In the event of the student being found not guilty, the allegation will be withdrawn and the academic employee who laid the complaint informed accordingly.


Decisions taken by the Disciplinary Committee are submitted to the Head of the relevant faculty for ratification.

Students are provided with written reasons for any sanctions imposed.

The decision is subject to appeal by the Academic Dean who may refer the matter back to the Disciplinary Committee or refer the case to the Director of Research (1).

7.2.3 Level Three: Repeat Offences and/or Major Offences that are Possibly Intentional and Suggest Collusion or Deliberate Dishonesty – Intentional Plagiarism and Broad in Scope

The alleged offences considered at level three are those where, in the opinion of the Disciplinary Committee and the Academic Dean, the circumstances are such that the matter

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cannot be dealt with appropriately at departmental or faculty level and the penalty is likely to exceed that of lower-level infringements.

If a student has been found guilty of Level Three Plagiarism, any degree or certificate that may have been awarded where the plagiarised paper has formed part of the award may be overturned and withdrawn by RBS.

8. ASSESSMENTS: SANCTIONS FOR PLAGIARISM OFFENCES


Plagiarism is a serious form of academic misconduct, and each case should be considered on its own merit. Students may not fully understand the concept of plagiarism and referencing, offences should be dealt with sensitively, and this lack of understanding should be considered when sanctions are given.

The following considerations should be considered when imposing a penalty:

- The gravity of the plagiarised content on the assessment work submitted;
- The seniority of the student in regard to the year and level of their studies;
- The student's state of affairs and home situation;
- Whether the student has used the anti-plagiarism program before;
- Whether the student has read and understood the Plagiarism Policy and made use of the support department at RBS;
- Whether the student has previous cases related to plagiarism; and
- Whether the student had any intentions to plagiarise.

8.1 First-time Offence in a Formative Assessment

Students who have plagiarised for the first time in a formative assessment will lose 10%. Corrective guidance should be provided to the student. This should include details on what the student did wrong and how this should be corrected in future submissions.

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The name of the student must be added to the Plagiarism Register.

8.2 Second-time Offence in a Formative Assessment

Students who have committed plagiarism for a second time in a formative assessment will lose 50%. Further corrective guidance should be provided to prevent further incidences of plagiarism.

The second offence must be recorded on the Plagiarism Register.

8.3 Third-time Offence in a Formative Assessment

Students who have committed plagiarism for the third time will be given a zero grade (0%) for the submitted assessment.

The offence must be recorded in the Plagiarism Register.


8.4 Plagiarism Offences in Summative Assessments

Any plagiarism detected in summative assessments will result in a zero grade (0%), irrespective of whether it was a first-time offence or not.

The student's name must be added to the Plagiarism Register.

9. SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

Document No:	Document Name:
	Confirmation of Student Letter
	Non-Disclosure Agreement
	Code of Research Ethics

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	Research Ethics Approval Letter
	Research Check List
	Plagiarism Declaration Form (Student Affidavit)
	Student Declaration Form
	Research Process
	Harvard Referencing Guide

10. POLICY LIFE CYCLE

Policies are reviewed as and when required.

11. REFERENCES


- RBS Governance Framework
- Curtin University of Technology
- Griffith University School of Environmental Planning: Course Guide 2000
- University of South Africa (2005) *Policy for Copyright Infringement and Plagiarism* [pdf]. Available at: [www.unisa.ac.za/static/corporate_web/Content/Apply%20for%20admission/Documents/Policy copyright infringement plagiarism 16November2005.pdf](http://www.unisa.ac.za/static/corporate_web/Content/Apply%20for%20admission/Documents/Policy%20copyright%20infringement%20plagiarism%2016November2005.pdf) [Accessed: 14 October 2021].
- University of Pretoria Plagiarism Prevention Policy: Document number: S 5106/19

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ANNEXURE : COMMITTEE STRUCTURE

1. TERMS OF REFERENCE: THE RESEARCH COMMITTEE (RC)

- Assure management of quality in the research function
- Propose mechanisms to promote, sustain and enhance research activities
- Advise Management on the formulation and implementation of research policy
- Ensure that the RBS has carried out its responsibilities with regard to the admission of research students
- Ensure that the necessary supervision and resources to support the students are adequate
- Ensure that the proposed research topics and research projects are both appropriate and can be completed within the prescribed period of registration
- Approve dissertation topics and research projects of students
- Appoint of supervisors for dissertations and research projects
- Recommend and approves the appointment of external examiners for dissertations and research projects
- Submit dissertations and research projects for internal and external examination
- Present the supervisors' and external examiners' reports, including the actual percent awarded to the Examination Board for approval.
- Co-ordinate planning, reporting, and quality assurance activities of the Research and Research Ethics Committee;
- Implement and evaluate staff development activities with a focus on teaching, research and community service.

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2. COMPOSITION OF THE RESEARCH COMMITTEE (RC)

This committee is comprised of:

- Director of Research (Chair)
- Academic Dean
- Head of Postgraduate Research (Deputy Chair)
- Head of Institutional Research
- Director of Teaching, Learning and Assessment
- Heads of School
- Librarian (as and when required)
- Senior Lecturers (as and when required)
- Lecturers (as and when required)
- External Academic Staff (as and when required)
- Secretary


3. TERMS OF REFERENCE: THE RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (REC)

- Assure management of quality of ethical standards
- Recommend codes of ethics and amendments to these codes for approval
- Ensures that the codes of ethics are adhered to especially about research proposals and projects
- Take responsibility for all ethics related queries at RBS
- Maintain ethical standards of practice in teaching, learning and research
- Protect the welfare of researchers and
- Preserve the individual rights and welfare of the participants used in research.

4. COMPOSITION OF THE RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (REC)

This committee is comprised of:

- Director of Research (Chair)
- Academic Dean

 <p>REGENT BUSINESS SCHOOL <small>HONORIS UNITED UNIVERSITIES</small></p> <p>QUALITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM</p> <p>PLAGIARISM POLICY</p>	Approved by:	Managing Director
	Developed by:	Director of Research
	Policy number:	QP 08
	Revision number:	03
	Release Date:	18.04.2023

- Associate Director: Research
- Head of Postgraduate Research (Deputy Chair)
- Head of Institutional Research
- Director of Teaching, Learning and Assessment
- Registrar
- Deputy Registrar
- Quality Assurance Manager/Officer
- Heads of School
- Independent Representative (External to RBS)
- Legal Representative (as and when required)
- Student Representation (as and when required)
- Secretary