



UNIVERSITY OF  
GOTHENBURG

POLICY, RULES AND PLANS  
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# POLICY FOR THE PREVENTION OF PLAGIARISM

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Decision-maker	Vice-chancellor
Responsible Body	Unit for Pedagogical Development and Interactive Learning
Date of decision	22 June 2015
Period of validity	Until further notice
Summary	It is the responsibility and mandate of the University to draw attention to various forms of plagiarism and to use preventive methods to impede plagiarism and promote academic integrity. The purpose of the policy is to show how plagiarism is to be prevented.

## Policy for the Prevention of Plagiarism

It is the responsibility and mandate of the University to draw attention to various forms of plagiarism and to use preventive methods to impede plagiarism and promote academic integrity. The purpose of the policy is to describe various forms of plagiarism and to show ways in which plagiarism is to be prevented at the University of Gothenburg. The Policy includes all students and employees at the University.

This policy is supplemented with an Action Plan for the Prevention of Plagiarism which clearly sets out the division of responsibility between department level and university level. A number of measures are described in the Action Plan in which departments are held responsible to ensure that students and employees are provided with the information and tools they need. The Action Plan also describes the University's support functions whose aim is to increase the ability to prevent plagiarism.

### *Promoting academic integrity and probity*

The work of universities comprises higher education and research. These activities must be of high quality and all results must be achieved in an irreproachable and trustworthy manner. Terms used to describe these activities are academic integrity, probity and honesty. The activities are to be conducted in accordance with current laws and ordinances and also correspond to what is considered to be right, fair and proper in academic environments. In this context, right, fair and proper imply that the achievements of students and researchers correspond to what is or have been claimed and attested, for example, who did what and how it was done.

Generally, the most important measure for the prevention of plagiarism is correct information to employees and students at all levels. It is with the help of information, instruction and training that students develop the values, understanding, knowledge and skills that enable them to practice and promote the scientific principles of academic integrity. The University of Gothenburg is to adhere to ethical principles that follow sound research ethics creating a good reputation and a base for high scientific credibility, thereby making the University attractive to students and researchers.

### *Plagiarism and deception through plagiarism*

Plagiarising means the presentation of someone else's work as your own, or presenting your own previous work as if it was new. Plagiarism can represent an attempt to deceive in accordance with Chapter 10, Section 1 of the Higher Education Ordinance (1993:100) and can result in disciplinary measures being taken. If there are grounds for suspicion of an attempt at deceptive conduct, this must always be reported. The reporting applies to all employees at the University of Gothenburg.

The University's approach to the question of plagiarism during students' studies is defined as two levels of academic misconduct.

Level 1 entails that a teacher finds discrepancies in a student's academic writing, for example, inadequate referencing, citation and paraphrasing that are due to lack of knowledge. It should be dealt with at department level with the help of targeted pedagogical measures.

Plagiarism according to level 2 entails that after conducting an investigation, a department finds that there is a possibility that a student may be guilty of plagiarism with intent to deceive. In this case the student's behaviour is to be reported as a disciplinary issue to the Vice-Chancellor.

The University's *Procedure for the notification of suspicion of a disciplinary offence* determines how this is to be conducted.

Plagiarism is always to be reported when there is a possibility that a student deliberately tries to deceive supervisors and teachers, for example, when citations are manipulated or sections are copied without the necessary sources. This also applies to a student who uses their own previously submitted work without stating that this is the case. A very serious form of plagiarism is when a student submits another student's work in its entirety as their own or actually orders a complete essay that someone else has written. After investigation, the University of Gothenburg is to consider both disciplinary measures and targeted pedagogical measures.

Within higher education, there are also other forms of cheating, for example, the use of unauthorised aids during an examination. This policy, however, mainly focuses on the prevention of plagiarism and deception through plagiarism.

### *External factors*

It is almost impossible to ignore the comprehensive changes brought about by IT and the Internet and what they imply to the processing of texts: publishing, accessibility, use, conversion, merging, paraphrasing etc. This is not only a question of new enabling technologies and expressions. It is primarily a question of new approaches and new delimitations with respect to copyright, distribution and use, and the characterising features of texts and other media. Students, supervisors and teaching staff need to have regular discussions about what is nowadays regarded as plagiarism in relation to issues concerning knowledge-building, when students are co-creators in learning processes in higher education. The increased internationalisation of higher education means that students from different parts of the world are studying at Swedish institutions of higher education. This involves the coming together of different traditions concerning knowledge and perspectives in learning processes. Our work to prevent plagiarism and to promote academic integrity is to be characterised by collaboration, clarity and accessibility.

### *A question of knowledge and a of pedagogy*

The point of departure for this Policy is that knowledge, skills and approach in terms of acceptable academic citation and referencing cannot be considered as prior knowledge that students will have when they start studying in higher education. This implies that knowledge, skills and approach must be included as educational development in first-cycle courses and study programmes to enable students to attain such objectives as "the ability to make independent and critical assessments, the ability to independently identify, formulate and solve problems and also the ability to gather and interpret information at a scholarly level" in accordance with Chapter 1, Section 8 of the Higher Education Act (1992:1434). These are skills that second-cycle courses and study programmes should further develop to give students the ability to integrate and make independent use of their knowledge. The requirement of independence is given strong emphasis and appears to be central in achieving the objectives of higher education.

In essence, this concerns students' academic development; such a developmental process is characterised by progression and good structuring for learning. In this context, this implies that our expectations and demands are to gradually increase as students develop their knowledge, understanding, abilities and skills. Our educational and support efforts are to be adjusted accordingly. They should be comprehensive and basic during the first phase of the educational process, particularly before and after the first examinations. Gradually, they can comprise in-depth elements combined with examinations and discussions concerning

student performances. Teaching that has been designed with a good correspondence between intended learning outcomes, content and examination can be expected to provide students with more opportunities to learn to master academic writing. To detect and prevent plagiarism, various text-matching tools can be used. The results of such analyses can be made known to students in cases where appropriate. Throughout their time at the University, it is important for students and teachers to have easy access to web-based, self-instructive programmes and tutorials that provide practice exercises and opportunities for self-assessment. With the support of a university-level action plan based on clear procedures, the University is to actively work with the prevention of plagiarism.

#### *Application of rules*

The rules and regulations are to be applied in parallel with the application of a pedagogical approach. There are cases in which students not only use unauthorised aids to deceive but also consciously and purposely plagiarise, either partially or completely, other people's work. In the event of suspected deception, for example, plagiarism, the procedure approved by the Vice-Chancellor for reporting suspected disciplinary misconduct is to be followed. It is important that there is an awareness of the problem and that the rules, regulations and procedures are known, particularly at the place where the investigation and assessment are to be carried out, i.e. at department level.

This policy is published on the University of Gothenburg website

“<http://medarbetarportalen.gu.se/styrdokument/Utbildning/>” together with *Action Plan for the Prevention of Plagiarism* and *Procedure for the notification of suspicion of a disciplinary offence*.