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Avoiding Plagiarism   13 October 2017

Written academic work, particularly theses and dissertations, must fulfil the requirements of good academic practice. This includes the requirement that written work is the original work of the person submitting it and that no source materials or aids other than those indicated were used. When submitting their work, students and doctoral candidates must affirm by means of a declaration of original authorship that this requirement has been met. Plagiarism is understood to mean the appropriation of someone else's work, either in part or in whole, without acknowledging the sources used or identifying the original author; it is regarded as an act of intentional and significant deception. The examiners will notify the Examination Board or the Doctoral Committee of any instances of plagiarism. The penalties imposed will depend on the severity of the transgression. In less serious cases, the candidate may be awarded a lower mark or, if permitted by the relevant examination regulations, the work may be returned to the candidate for revision. Cases of repeated or severe plagiarism may result in one of the following sanctions: the candidate is awarded a fail grade (5.0 on the German grading scale); the academic assessment or examination phase is terminated and the candidate loses their right to be examined (i.e. the option of retaking the assessment or examination is revoked and the candidate has to withdraw from the programme); the candidate is deemed to have failed their doctoral degree examination. Furthermore, plagiarism may result in criminal prosecution if copyrighted materials have been used without permission.

The term 'plagiarism' covers the following activities (based on materials provided by ETH Zurich [1–4]):

a) Appropriating another person's results or intellectual property (ideas, theories, arguments, etc.) either verbatim or with rewording without clearly identifying the source. The materials used may be, but are not limited to, texts, data, computer code, pictorial or graphical representations that have been taken from books, articles in academic journals or conference proceedings, other theses or dissertations, the internet or other sources.

b) Use of a ghost writer: Submitting academic work under your own name that was actually written for you by another person.

c) Full plagiarism: Submitting someone else's work under your own name.

d) Self-plagiarism: Submitting the same piece of work, either in part or in whole, for different assessments or examinations.

e) Translation plagiarism: Translating a foreign-language text either in its entirety or in the form of extracts and claiming these as your own without citing the source.

f) Paraphrasing: Taking extracts from texts written by someone else and making minor changes to the wording or structure without properly citing or referencing the source in your work.

g) Taking an extract from another author's text, paraphrasing it and then failing to include a citation at the appropriate point in your work (e.g. hiding the plagiarized source in a footnote at the end of your work).

You may find the following practical guidance useful:

- Citations placed within the main body of the text or in figure captions should generally be in abbreviated form (examples: [1]; [Miller 2017]) and should be located as closely as possible to the section of text to which they relate so that the connection between the citation and the relevant passage of text is unambiguous. The full bibliographic details of your sources usually appear in the list of references that you include at the end of your work. The information provided in the list of references (or 'bibliography') should be complete and clearly structured so that the reader can properly identify and check the sources used.

- Direct quotes must be placed in quotation marks, even if only parts of a sentence or certain terms are being quoted. It is generally good practice to restrict direct quotes to short passages of text, as one of the purposes of your written work is to demonstrate your ability to present scientific or academic content in your own words.

- If you quote an author without checking the original source, you must cite this as a secondary source (primary sources are preferred to secondary sources).

- If you use source material from the internet, and the author of the work you wish to cite is not explicitly named, you must nevertheless cite the web address (URL) and the date you accessed the website.

- You do not need to cite sources of knowledge that can be considered to be general or basic to a particular academic subject area, If, however, the presentation of this general or basic knowledge has been taken from specific sources (e.g. from textbooks or other works), these sources must be cited.

- If you are the author or co-author of an academic article or text and you use material from this source, you must still comply with the above rules.

Further information is available from numerous internet sources (e.g. [5]), some of which include practical guidance [6]. To avoid plagiarism, it can be useful to review the most important elements while writing your work and again before you submit it. Following the recommendations in [3,4], we suggest that you work through the checklist below:

Citation checklist:

- ☐ Are you acquainted with the citation conventions used in your discipline? If not, please ask your academic supervisor for guidance.
- ☐ Have you clearly distinguished between your own work and the ideas and intellectual property of others and have you identified the latter as such?
- ☐ If you have quoted, paraphrased or borrowed other peoples' ideas, have you named all of the original authors?
- ☐ Have you set all direct quotes in quotation marks?
- ☐ Have you included all of your sources in your list of references / bibliography?
- ☐ Have you also included citations for internet sources?
- ☐ Have you included citations that identify the sources of any tables, figures, illustrations, etc. that you have used?

Please also ensure that you comply with the provisions in:

- *Richtlinie zur Vermeidung von und zum Umgang mit wissenschaftlichem Fehlverhalten in der Universität des Saarlandes* [Guidance on Preventing and Responding to Scientific Misconduct at Saarland University] from 27 July 1999 (Official Bulletin, p. 54) [7]
- *Grundsätze der Universität des Saarlandes zur Sicherung guter wissenschaftlicher Praxis* [Principles of good scientific practice at Saarland University] from 6 June 2001 (see Official Bulletin, p. 342 for the German version, or see the English translation) [8]
- The examination regulations or doctoral degree regulations that apply to you and that are available on the relevant faculty website or from the Joint Examinations Office for STEM subjects.

Additional information can be found in the memorandum 'Safeguarding Good Scientific Practice' issued by the German Research Foundation (DFG).

References

[1] ETH Zurich, Student Information Portal (German), https://www.ethz.ch/studierende/de/studium/leistungskontrollen/plagiate.html (accessed 18 Sept. 2017)

[2] ETH Zurich, Student Information Portal (English) https://www.ethz.ch/students/en/studies/performance- assessments/plagiarism.html (accessed 18 Sept. 2017)

[3] ETH Zurich, Student Information Portal (German), '*Zitier-Knigge – Über den Umgang mit fremdem Gedankengut*', https://www.ethz.ch/content/dam/ethz/main/education/rechtliches-abschluesse/leistungskontrollen/plagiat-zitierknigge.pdf (downloaded 18 Sept. 2017)

[4] ETH Zurich, Student Information Portal (English), 'Citation Etiquette – How to handle the intellectual property of others', https://www.ethz.ch/content/dam/ethz/main/education/rechtliches-abschluesse/leistungskontrollen/plagiarism-citationetiquette.pdf (downloaded 18 Sept. 2017)

[5] http://www.plagiarism.org (accessed 21 Sept. 2017)

[6] http://www.plagiarism.org/article/preventing-plagiarism-when-writing (accessed 21 Sept. 2017)

[7] www.uni-saarland.de/fileadmin/user_upload/Fakultaeten/NatTech_II/Physik/Promotionen/DB99-54.pdf (downloaded 18 Sept 2017); also available at http://www.uni-saarland.de/fakultaet/nt/promotion/7.html => Legal texts

[8] www.uni-saarland.de/fileadmin/user_upload/Fakultaeten/NatTech_II/Physik/Promotionen/DB01-342.pdf   or the English translation www.uni-saarland.de/fileadmin/user_upload/Fakultaeten/NatTech_II/Promotionen/WisPrax-06062001_englisch_DB01-342_English.pdf (downloaded 18 Sept. 2017); also available at http://www.uni-saarland.de/fakultaet/nt/promotion/7.html => Legal texts

[9] Available at http://www.dfg.de/foerderung/grundlagen_rahmenbedingungen/gwp/ (accessed 18 Sept. 2017) or in printed form: '*Sicherung guter wissenschaftlicher Praxis* / Safeguarding Good Scientific Practice', WILEY-VCH- Verlag GmbH & Co. KGaA, Weinheim, revised edition 2013, ISBN-978-3-527-33703-3