

# **COMMON FACULTY POLICY AND PROCEDURES** **ON PLAGIARISM**

## **1. POLICY PARTICULARS**

DATE OF APPROVAL BY RELEVANT COMMITTEE STRUCTURE: 24 April 2014

DATE OF APPROVAL BY SENATE: 30 May 2014

DATE OF APPROVAL BY COUNCIL: 19 June 2014

### COMMENCEMENT

DATE: August 2008

REVISION HISTORY: 1<sup>st</sup> policy (2003) revised in 2008 / 2014

REVIEW DATE: 2012 / 2017

POLICY LEVEL: All academic departments and institutes/centres offering Rhodes qualifications.

### RESPONSIBILITY:

- IMPLEMENTATION & MONITORING: At undergraduate level, Heads of Departments -> Senate Standing Committee on Plagiarism -> Senate. At honours and master's levels, Heads of Departments and Deans -> Senate Standing Committee on Plagiarism -> Senate. At doctoral level, Heads of Department and Deans -> Committees of Assessors -> Senate Standing Committee on Plagiarism -> Vice Chancellor -> Senate.
- REVIEW AND REVISION: Senate Standing Committee on Plagiarism; Faculties; Teaching and Learning Committee; Senate; Council.

### REPORTING STRUCTURE:

Senate Standing Committee on Plagiarism; Faculties; Teaching and Learning Committee; Senate; Council.

## **2. POLICY STATEMENT**

### **2.1 POLICY DECLARATION**

In establishing this policy for Rhodes University, the faculties recognise that plagiarism by students in the preparation of assignments, practical reports and research projects is a longstanding problem. This problem is one that has in recent times been exacerbated both by the ease of access to information from the Internet and by a lack of understanding on the part of our incoming students about how to use the works of others in an academic context. At Rhodes, a university which measures itself against the highest international standards of academic and professional practice, we need a clear statement regarding what is and is not acceptable, which serves as a common policy across all faculties.

### **2.2 POLICY OBJECTIVES**

This policy has several aims. First, plagiarism must be clearly defined, so that all departments operate on the basis of a similar understanding of plagiarism. Secondly, the policy encourages faculties and departments to commit themselves to educating all students thoroughly about the nature of plagiarism, as well as the conventions that apply to researching and presenting academic material in their respective disciplines. Thirdly, the policy provides for the use of plagiarism detection mechanisms to assist academics in both detecting and preventing incidences of plagiarism. Finally, the policy puts in place various procedures for dealing with students who do commit plagiarism at the various academic or NQF levels of study.

### **2.3 DEFINITIONS**

*Plagiarism*, in an academic, university context, may be defined as taking and using the ideas, writings, works or inventions of another, from any textual or internet-based source, as if they were one's own. This definition covers a wide range of misdemeanours such as: using the direct words of another without using quotation marks (even if the passage is referenced); the unacknowledged copying of a sentence or two of text; copying more extensive blocks of text; the syndication of a single piece of work by more than one student (unless the assignment task is a legitimate group assignment); the borrowing and using of another person's assignment (with or without their knowledge and permission); stealing an entire essay from another student or from the Internet; or infringing copyright. For the purposes of this policy, the intention, negligence or innocence of the student is not relevant to the finding as to whether plagiarism, as a fact, has occurred. However, the state of mind of the student will be highly significant in determining how to deal with the case as far as taking remedial action or imposing a penalty is concerned. (For examples of plagiarism, see Annexure A below.) Although the above definition could be construed to include the buying and submitting of essays prepared by a senior student or an outsider to the University, it may be more appropriate to deal with such cases as a disciplinary offence of fraud in terms of the Student Disciplinary Code. The course of action to take in such cases should be debated by the Head of Department, the Chair of the Senate Standing Committee on Plagiarism, and the Senior Prosecutor for Student Discipline.

*The rules of natural justice*: The rules of natural justice, which are embodied in section 33 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, stipulate that any administrative act

must be lawful, reasonable and procedurally fair. A finding about plagiarism is an administrative decision, or a decision taken by an administrative tribunal after following a fair procedure. More specifically, where an allegation of plagiarism is made against a student, the student must be afforded an opportunity to see and hear the evidence against him or her and to state his or her case to an independent and impartial tribunal, before a decision is made.

*Staff member:* For the sake of convenience, this term is used throughout this document to refer to all those who undertake the responsibility of assessing student work at Rhodes. This includes permanent staff members, part-time staff members and contract appointees, teaching assistants, graduate assistants, student tutors and demonstrators.

### **3. POLICY IMPLEMENTATION**

#### **3.1 THE ACTIONS AND PROCESSES BY WHICH THE OBJECTIVES OF THE POLICY WILL BE ACHIEVED**

##### **A. The Senate Standing Committee on Plagiarism**

A Senate Standing Committee on Plagiarism is a Senate Sub-committee and consists of: the Dean of Teaching and Learning (Chair, *ex officio*); two members elected from the staff of the Faculty of Law; four additional members of the academic staff elected by Senate; and two students who have completed at least two years of full time attendance at the University, nominated by the SRC.

The Senate Standing Committee on Plagiarism monitors the extent of plagiarism at Rhodes, reports to the Senate on matters concerning plagiarism, and should periodically review the content and the implementation of this policy. In addition, members of the Senate Standing Committee on Plagiarism may be called upon from time-to-time to act as a member of either a Senate Plagiarism Tribunal to adjudicate serious cases of plagiarism or a Review Panel to adjudicate reviews from individual departments concerning findings of plagiarism.

The Chairperson of the Senate Standing Committee on Plagiarism will have the power to set aside any activity or penalty which has been taken or imposed relating to plagiarism that does not conform to the procedures laid down in the rest of this document, and to order that these procedures should then be followed.

##### **B. The responsibilities of Departments: educating students about appropriate practice**

An educational reality is that many of the current generation of students are not familiar with the academic conventions that lecturers expect of the work that students submit for assessment. This includes presentation conventions, referencing conventions and the duty not to plagiarise the works of others.

Departments need to acknowledge the importance of their own role in students' acquisition of academic discourse and are responsible for taking active steps to provide students with an explanation as to why, as well as how, sources may be used and cited in building academic knowledge. It must be recognised that these standards need to be taught to students and that students from all educational backgrounds may need time to become familiar with them. In addition, because the nature of referencing and plagiarism may be context specific, individual

Departments are responsible for ensuring that students fully understand the nature of legitimate academic practice, of what constitutes a illegitimate practice, and the potential consequences of such conduct, in that particular discipline.

In this regard, departments should ensure that:

- The departmental handbook includes general information about the nature of plagiarism, references to the University's policy on plagiarism, and indicates that plagiarism is considered to be a serious academic transgression.
- The departmental handbook informs students as to how material from such sources as books, articles, the Internet and the work of other students, may and may not be used in the preparation of assignments. Departments are encouraged to refer students and staff to the very useful guide to information literacy to be found on the Library website at [www.ru.ac.za/library/infolit](http://www.ru.ac.za/library/infolit).
- Such information is referred to in the course material provided to students.
- Dedicated training is undertaken in the formal procedures to be followed in the acknowledgement and citation of the source of material. It is not enough to expect students simply to read and to understand a lengthy and complicated handout or handbook. Such training could occur either in lectures or during the regular tutorial programme or in specialised sessions designed for this purpose.
- Such training should not simply occur at the first year level, but must be reinforced at second and third year level, and also at the postgraduate level. Since students enter Rhodes at all academic levels, it cannot be taken for granted that such students will have received equivalent training, or will have experienced the usual first-year training that most departments offer.
- Students are alerted to the nature of plagiarism, are informed that it constitutes a serious offence, and are informed about the disciplinary procedures that are in place for dealing with suspected cases.
- Where it is appropriate (usually where a student is new to the university, or does not understand plagiarism), cases of plagiarism are dealt with sensitively and by means of counselling and education, rather than simply by imposing sanctions.
- Guidelines as to the extent of the loss of marks and other penalties for plagiarism (where such are appropriate) are published by departments and are made available to the students in the departmental handbook. Such guidelines should be in accordance with the grid in Annexure D.
- Students include an appropriate declaration in work that they submit indicating that it is their own work. (For a generic template that may be adapted by departments to suit their specific needs, see Annexure B.)

In addition, and as part of the Orientation Week Programme, CHERTL will provide presentations on academic writing and plagiarism to incoming students.

As far as the members of the academic staff are concerned, it is important that staff themselves have the opportunity to be trained about plagiarism. CHERTL will, where it is requested, provide assistance to departments with regard to understanding plagiarism in a modern academic context, and will assist in preparing the presentations and material to be used by individual departments. Plagiarism is also an important topic that should be dealt with in the Assessors' Course, the PGDHE and the MEd courses that are offered in conjunction with CHERTL on teaching and learning in a tertiary environment.

### **C. Detection and prevention**

Academic staff must be aware of the importance the university attaches to the detection and prevention of plagiarism. Members of staff are enjoined, in terms of their professional commitment to best academic practice, to be on the lookout for cases of plagiarism, and to deal with any such cases in accordance with this policy. The most valuable way of preventing plagiarism is for staff to set creative, innovative and original assessment tasks that are not repeated from year-to-year, and/or which are likely to be replicated at other universities around the world. The danger of setting standard or repeated tasks is that answers are readily available from more senior students, in texts or study guides, or are accessible on internet-based sites which archive answers to common questions. Students are tempted to copy such material. In their assessment practice, staff are enjoined, wherever possible, try to set assignments that limit the potential for use of such sources.

To assist staff in detecting cases of plagiarism, as well as to provide a deterrent to students, the University reserves the right to purchase the rights to use acceptable and lawful text-matching software, or to use an internet-based text-matching database. This can be used to cross-check assignments, and to identify situations where a student's work matches the text in a published source or a fellow student's work. However, departments must be aware that such a facility only matches text; it will be necessary for each flagged assignment to be checked by staff to determine whether the highlighted text is in fact plagiarised, or whether it has been properly used, quoted and referenced.

Academic departments are welcome, where they deem it appropriate, to use this facility as part of the educational practice of the submission of assignments to that department. Such departments must ensure that where the facility is used, its operations are properly explained to students. It is necessary to acquire the students' consent to submit work to the database. To prevent any potential infringements of copyright, departments must ensure that this consent is informed and positively acquired for each assignment that is submitted to the database. This can occur on the essay declaration. In addition, CHERTL will be responsible for ensuring that an electronic consent tick-box will appear on the relevant site, and which will have to be completed and its terms agreed to before the students can submit their assignment to the database. Students may not be coerced into submitting their assignments to the database, and may not be prejudiced if they decline to give their consent to do so. In such cases, staff will have to use alternative means (either manual or electronic searching) to investigate potential plagiarism.

CHERTL will be in charge of supporting this plagiarism detection software with assistance from the IT Division, and will provide regular courses to interested members of the university on the workings and operations of the plagiarism detection software and its database.

### **D. Cases of plagiarism at the undergraduate degree level, and where students are undertaking short courses, diplomas and certificates: categories and procedures**

The various procedures applicable to dealing with suspected cases of plagiarism are as follows:

There are three graded categories of plagiarism – categories A, B and C. Where a member of staff is unsure (a) whether plagiarism has been committed at all, or (b) into which category a

case of suspected plagiarism might fall, that staff member should consult the Head of Department for assistance. It must be remembered that many assessors of student work are students themselves, and/or may be inexperienced and unsure of what plagiarism is, and how it should be dealt with.

### Category A offences

Category A offences constitute first time, minor infringements, and are usually handled by the staff member who detects the offence. However, in circumstances where the assessor is a student tutor or demonstrator, it may be appropriate for the matter to be dealt with by the lecturer in charge of the course, or the course co-ordinator, to provide the necessary authority. In cases where the student is new to the University, and/or if it is apparent that the student has committed such plagiarism because of a lack of understanding of what is required, the student should usually be counselled by the staff member concerned: the problem should be explained, the correct practice should be encouraged, and the student should be warned of the serious consequences of committing plagiarism again. This practice would reflect the importance of our educative role as far as plagiarism is concerned. In some cases it might be appropriate to ask the student to re-do the work to demonstrate that he or she has learnt from the experience. Additionally, if it is appropriate, a mark penalty could be imposed. If a penalty is imposed, the relevant staff member should indicate the amount of the penalty and the reasons for this penalty on the assignment or assessment form.

If a student wishes to challenge the finding and the penalty for a category A offence, the student is entitled to appeal to the Head of Department, who must refer the matter to the Departmental Plagiarism Committee for a hearing. (For the procedures to be followed at the hearing, see below.) The student should be informed that the Departmental Plagiarism Committee will hear the matter afresh, and is entitled, in the event of finding that plagiarism has been committed, to impose its own penalty, which may be more onerous than that imposed by the lecturer.

### Category B offences

Category B offences relate to repeated offences of a minor nature, or to relatively minor offences at a more senior academic level than first year, or to first time, more serious offences, where the offence would not attract a penalty of more than the loss of a DP certificate. Where a member of staff is uncertain as to whether an alleged case of plagiarism constitutes a category A or B offence, this matter should be discussed with the Head of Department, and a decision should be taken that is consistent with previous practice in the department. In large departments, Heads of Department may delegate this role to a senior member of staff.

If a category B offence is detected, the matter must be referred to the Head of Department or nominee, who must refer the matter to a Departmental Plagiarism Committee for a hearing.

At the beginning of each academic year the Head of Department should identify three members of staff who will be available to sit as members of a Departmental Plagiarism Committee within each department from time-to-time, where category B cases of potential plagiarism are reported. (Departments with very large numbers may appoint a pool of more than three, if they wish. On the other hand, the extended definition of staff in this policy

applies here, to assist smaller departments with smaller numbers of permanent staff. The School of Languages may be considered as one department for this purpose.)

When a potential category B case is reported, the Head of Department must appoint two of the pool of staff, on a rotational basis, to constitute a Departmental Plagiarism Committee to adjudicate the matter. This will accommodate situations where one of the identified members of staff is the complainant. The staff member who identifies the case may not, under any circumstances, sit in judgment as a member of the panel.

**Procedure to be followed by Departmental Plagiarism Committees (for a diagrammatic representation, see Annexure C)**

The investigation and hearing of category B offences must be completed within fifteen (15) working days from the day that the offence was reported, unless the Chair of the Senate Standing Committee on Plagiarism approves a change in the time frame. It is possible, if deemed necessary, to request other departments in which the student is registered to check their records and to indicate whether or not the student has been found to have committed plagiarism in another department, or for departments to check the Protea plagiarism database that contains information about all plagiarism cases of category B and C in each academic year.

A student charged with a category B offence must be given full written particulars of the allegation against him or her, and copies of the evidence of the suspected plagiarism. The evidence should include the assignment (with the allegedly plagiarised passages suitably marked) and documentary evidence of the original source material (suitably marked). The student must be informed of the time and the place of the hearing in the written particulars. The student may be assisted by another student, or by a staff member. Where a student is alleged to have copied from another student, it may be necessary (if there are allegations and counter allegations) to require both students to attend the hearing, and to hear both versions, in order to assess the probabilities. If it is found that any one of the students/groups did not collude in the syndication/copying of the assignment, that student/group should receive no penalty.

The hearing will be conducted according to the requirements of natural justice. The hearing is an informal one, but there are some important procedural steps that should be followed. Under no circumstances may the hearing occur, and a decision be made, without the student having been afforded an opportunity to attend, and to state his or her case. If a student does not appear, the Committee should adjourn to ascertain where the student is, and why the student did not attend the hearing. Where the student has failed to attend a hearing without proper reason, the student may be reported to the University's Senior Prosecutor for failing to comply with a lawful instruction (an offence in terms of rule 13 of the Student Disciplinary Code). Students will not be able to put off the inevitable by non-attendance. If the student fails to attend for a second time without prior excuse, the matter may continue in his or her absence.

At the commencement of the hearing, the representative of the academic department who detected the alleged plagiarism will present the evidence, and the student (or his or her representative) will have the right to question the department's representative about the alleged plagiarism. In addition, the Committee members will have the right to ask questions of the departmental representative.

The student (or his or her representative) will then have the opportunity to make a statement or to present any evidence in support of his or her case. The Committee members will have the right to ask questions of the student or his or her representative.

The Committee should then adjourn to consider its decision. The standard of proof is on a balance of probabilities. Ordinarily, the question at issue is whether plagiarism (as defined above) has occurred; matters of intention, negligence or otherwise are to be considered at the stage of penalty, if plagiarism is found to have occurred.

If the Committee at any stage feels that the case is so serious that it falls into Category C, it should refer the matter to the Head of Department, in order that the matter might be referred to the Chair of Senate Standing Committee on Plagiarism.

If the Committee finds the student not to have committed plagiarism of any kind, the matter must be referred to the Head of Department to make arrangements for the re-assessment of the assignment. If the Committee finds that the student has committed plagiarism, the student must be re-called, this fact should be communicated to the student, and the student should be given an opportunity to make a statement in mitigation of penalty. The Committee will be entitled to ask questions of the student or his or her representative at this stage. The Committee should then adjourn to consider the penalty to be imposed.

The Committee should be guided by this policy's general guidelines on penalties in the first instance, to try to ensure that cases are dealt with fairly and equally. (For such guidelines, see Annexure D.) However, since each case of plagiarism has its own circumstances, Committees should be sensitive to its specific facts. Factors that may be taken into account are: the extent of the plagiarism; the academic level of study at which the plagiarism occurred; the training the student has received on plagiarism and proper referencing in the department, and in other departments; how much the assignment counts towards the final result; mitigating factors (eg educational deficiency in the student's understanding of plagiarism; academic and scholastic background; acknowledgement of wrongdoing; expression of remorse); aggravating factors (eg second offence; lying; falsely attempting to blame another student in a copying case).

As far as the educational issue is concerned, if it is found that there is some legitimate deficiency in the student's understanding of the concept of plagiarism and what was required in the compilation of the assignment, counselling and remedial action may be appropriate, either as an alternative to, or in conjunction with, other forms of penalty. For example, students may be required to re-do the work, or to do alternative work, to the satisfaction of the relevant lecturer or the Committee, either for a substitute mark or simply for DP purposes, in order to demonstrate that a lesson has been learnt. The Committee may order that this occur with or without a mark penalty, depending on the facts and circumstances of the case and the student involved. Committees should be aware that the experience of a hearing in its own right can be an intimidating experience and salutary lesson for students, and may take this into account in dealing with the student.

If the Departmental Committee decides to impose a penalty for plagiarism, the Departmental Committees may impose a mark penalty, order that no marks be awarded, and/or may revoke the student's DP certificate. The Committee may suspend any penalty, either wholly or in part, or may recommend such suspension.



Wherever possible, the student should immediately be re-called, and be informed of the penalty that he or she is to receive.

Once the hearing process is complete, the Departmental Plagiarism Committee must, in addition, provide the student with written reasons for its decision, both in regard to its finding and in regard to the penalty imposed. The document should also indicate to the student that if he or she is aggrieved with the finding or penalty, he or she is entitled to request that the decision of the Departmental Plagiarism Committee be reviewed, and should be referred to the procedures laid down for this in the University's Plagiarism Policy in this regard. The relevant academic Head of Department and the complainant lecturer must also receive a copy of the findings, and such findings must be retained by the Head of Department or his or her nominee, for record-keeping purposes. Such findings must be made available within five (5) days of the hearing.

In order to assist in informing the general body of students about plagiarism, and to prevent students from being tempted to commit plagiarism, it is recommended that departments publish findings of the Departmental Plagiarism Committee prominently on noticeboards. However, the names and personal details of the students must be expunged from the notice to protect the privacy rights of the students.

Where a student has his or her DP removed for plagiarism, this fact should be communicated to the Registrar's Division. Such a removal of a DP should be indicated on the student's academic record by the letters DPWP (DP Withdrawn for Plagiarism), to distinguish it from the removal of a DP for other reasons.

If a student wishes to challenge the finding and the penalty for a category B offence, the student is entitled to submit a request for review to the Chair of the Senate Standing Committee on Plagiarism within five (5) days of receiving the written reasons referred to above. The Head of Department must immediately refer the matter to the Chair of the Senate Standing Committee on Plagiarism. The student should be informed at this stage that the Chair of the Senate Standing Committee on Plagiarism will refer the matter to a Review Panel, and that that Review Panel is entitled, in the event of it confirming that plagiarism has been committed, to impose its own penalty, which may be more onerous than that imposed by the Departmental Committee.

#### **Procedure to be followed by the Senate Standing Committee on Plagiarism in cases where decisions of Departmental Committees are taken on review**

A student who has been found to have committed a category B offence by a Departmental Plagiarism Committee will be entitled to request that the decision of the Departmental Plagiarism Committee be reviewed by a Review Panel of the Senate Standing Committee on Plagiarism.

The student will be required to initiate the process by writing to the Chair of the Senate Standing Committee on Plagiarism and requesting such a review, within five (5) working days of receiving their written notice of finding and penalty from the Departmental Plagiarism Committee.

The grounds upon which the student can seek a review are as follows:

- (a) That the finding of the Departmental Plagiarism Committee is not supported by the evidence put before it; or
- (b) That the penalty imposed was so excessive as to be unjust; or
- (c) That there was a material irregularity in the proceedings conducted in the Department.

The ground (or grounds) for review must be specified in the letter, and an explanation should be provided by the student.

In such instances, the Chair of the Senate Standing Committee on Plagiarism, upon receiving such a request, must appoint a Review Panel from amongst the members of the Senate Standing Committee on Plagiarism. The Review Panel will comprise two members of the academic staff and one student representative. One of the academic staff will chair the Review Panel.

The Chair of the Senate Standing Committee must pass on a copy of the student's review letter to the Head of the relevant academic department. The Head of Department must ensure that copies of the evidence seen at the original hearing, and a copy of the findings of the Departmental Committee are forwarded to the Chair of the Review Panel. The Department is also entitled to submit a written comment in response to the grounds described in the student's review letter.

The Review Panel will conduct a review of the matter on the appointed day. The Review Panel must decide the outcome of the review on the basis of a consideration of the student's essay, the original source material from which the work was allegedly plagiarised, the written findings of the Departmental Committee and the written submissions of the student and the Department to the Review Panel. The Review Panel has the power to confirm, alter or quash the finding about plagiarism, and to confirm, reduce, alter, increase or set aside the penalty imposed. In cases where the Review Panel decides to reduce or increase the penalty, it has the power to impose any reasonable penalty it deems fit.

The test to be applied by the Review Panel is two-fold. First the Panel must consider whether the Departmental Committee followed the correct procedures in coming to its findings. If there is a procedural deficiency, or if additional evidence is raised which was not available at the original hearing, and which is material and germane to the issue, the Review Panel may order that the finding of the Departmental Committee be set aside, and that a fresh Departmental Committee be constituted to re-hear the matter. If the review is directed at the findings or the penalty, the Review Panel must consider whether the findings or the penalty imposed by the Departmental Plagiarism Committee are reasonable (even if the Review Panel's findings might have been different in minor detail) or if the findings are unsupportable and induce a sense of shock.

The decision of the Review Panel, where necessary, will be by majority vote.

The Review Panel must inform the student, in writing, of its findings within five (5) working days of the conclusion of the review. In addition, the relevant Head of Department must also be informed, for record-keeping purposes.

## Category C offences

Category C offences concern major, extremely serious infringements by students which the Departmental Plagiarism Committee deems worthy of adjudication by a Disciplinary Committee of the Senate Standing Committee on Plagiarism. At the undergraduate level, category C offences should be limited to major cases that are so serious that they warrant a potential penalty of more than the removal of a DP. For situations where postgraduate level work merits classification as a category C offence, see the section on postgraduates below.

Where the Departmental Plagiarism Committee identifies a case that it considers serious enough to constitute a category C case, it must refer the matter to the Head of Department, who is responsible for reporting the matter to the Chair of the Senate Standing Committee on Plagiarism. The Head of Department must include with the correspondence copies of the offending material and the sources from whence the plagiarism is alleged to have occurred (both suitably marked).

### **Category C hearings**

A Senate Plagiarism Tribunal comprising the Chairperson of the Senate Standing Committee on Plagiarism (Chair), two staff members (one of whom should be a member of the Faculty of Law) and one student representative selected from the members of the Senate Standing Committee on Plagiarism will adjudicate hearings of category C offences. The Chair will constitute the panel and establish a time for the hearing.

A student charged with a category C offence must be given full written particulars of the allegation against him or her. The evidence should include the assignment or thesis (with the allegedly plagiarised passages suitably marked) and documentary evidence of the original source material (suitably marked). The student must be informed of the time and the place of the hearing in the written particulars.

The hearing must take place as soon as is reasonably possible, but not later than ten (10) working days after the matter is referred to the Chair of the Senate Standing Committee on plagiarism, unless the Chair decides otherwise (for example, examinations are in progress and a hearing would be disruptive to the student, or it is vacation time).

The student charged with having committed plagiarism, as well as the member of staff in the department that discovered the plagiarism (or the Head of Department, in cases of plagiarism in theses) should be invited to attend the hearing. The student may be assisted by another student, or by a staff member or by a legal practitioner. If a legal practitioner acts for the student, this will be at the student's own expense.

The hearing must be conducted according to the requirements of natural justice. Under no circumstances may the hearing occur, and a decision be made, without the student having been afforded an opportunity to attend, and to state his or her case. If a student does not appear, the Committee should adjourn to ascertain where the student is, and why the student did not attend the hearing. Where the student has failed to attend a hearing without proper reason, the student may be reported to the University's Senior Prosecutor for failing to comply with a lawful instruction (an offence in terms of rule 13 of the Student Disciplinary Code). Students will not be able to put off the inevitable by non-attendance. If the student

fails to attend for a second time without prior excuse, the matter may continue in his or her absence.

The representative of the academic department should present the evidence, and the student (or his or her representative) will have the right to question the department's representative about the alleged plagiarism. In addition, the Tribunal members will have the right to ask questions of the departmental representative.

The student (or his or her representative) will have the opportunity to make a statement or to present any evidence in support of his or her case. The Tribunal members will have the right to ask questions of the student or his or her representative.

The Tribunal should then consider its decision. The standard of proof is on a balance of probabilities. If the Tribunal finds the student not to have committed plagiarism of any kind, the matter should be referred to the Head of Department to make arrangements for the re-assessment of the assignment. If the Tribunal finds that the student has committed plagiarism, the student should be re-called, this fact should be communicated to the student, and the student (or his or her representative) should be given an opportunity to make a statement in mitigation of penalty. If necessary, the Tribunal may ask questions of the student or his or her representative at this stage. The Tribunal should then adjourn to consider the penalty to be imposed. Similar factors to those described above in category B hearings may be instructive.

The Tribunal may recommend that a student found guilty of a Category C offence should be excluded from Rhodes University, either permanently or for a period of time. If permanent exclusion is recommended, this must be confirmed by Senate and Council. Alternatively it has the power to order: that a Duly Performed certificate should be refused; reduce the mark awarded to the work; that a mark of 0 should be granted; that work be re-done to the satisfaction of the Head of Department or lecturer; issue a written warning, or impose a combination of the above penalties, as appropriate. The Tribunal may suspend any penalty, either wholly or in part, or may recommend such suspension. Like the Departmental Plagiarism Committees, this Tribunal too has an educational role, and, where necessary, may exercise a discretion to deal with the student appropriately, as an alternative to, or in conjunction with, imposing any form of penalty as described above. However, it should be remembered that cases of category C usually merit severe censure.

Wherever possible, the student should immediately be re-called, and be informed of the penalty that he or she is to receive. However, since category C offences may require serious consideration by the Senate Plagiarism Tribunal, it may occasionally be appropriate to inform the student and his or her representative that the matter of penalty requires consideration, and that the student will be informed by the Chair in due course of the final outcome.

Once the hearing process is complete, the Tribunal must, in addition, provide the student with written reasons for its decision, both in regard to its finding and in regard to the penalty imposed. The relevant academic Head of Department must also receive a copy of the findings, and such findings must be retained by the Head of Department or his or her nominee, for record-keeping purposes. Such findings must be made available within five (5) days of the hearing.

Where a student has his or her DP removed for plagiarism by the Tribunal, this fact should be communicated to the Registrar's Division by the Chair of the Senate Committee. Such a

removal of a DP should be indicated on the student's academic record by the letters DPWP, to distinguish it from the removal of a DP for other reasons.

### **Clemency**

A student who has been found to have committed plagiarism in category, C, or who has had his or her review from a decision of a Departmental Plagiarism Committee turned down by a Senate Review Panel, has the right to appeal to the Vice-Chancellor for clemency. Such an appeal must be made in writing to the Vice-Chancellor within five (5) working days of having received the written reasons referred to above. The Vice-Chancellor, after considering the written submission of the student, the findings of the Senate Plagiarism Tribunal and the respective views of the relevant Dean and Head of Department, should make a decision in terms of the ordinary principles applicable to cases of clemency.

**E. Policies and Procedures for dealing with cases of plagiarism at the postgraduate level** (*Please note that this section, and section F., should be included in the Higher Degrees Guide.*)

### **General**

Postgraduate work can occur in the form of course work or by way of research tasks (from long papers through to full theses). As far as course work is concerned, the policies and procedures are similar to those that apply to undergraduates, the only difference being the degree of seriousness at a higher NQF level of study. Specific guidelines for the practice at each level are given below. As far as research is concerned, supervisors of postgraduate research work are expected to follow the university policy on postgraduate supervisory practice and the guidelines contained in the Higher Degrees Guide, especially insofar as these refer to reviewing drafts of students' work, identifying potential plagiarism, and encouraging students to acquaint themselves with best practice and the use of text-matching software and databases.

### **Procedures applicable before the stage of submission for assessment**

Preventative and remedial action should be taken on any draft work (either course work or research work) presented by students before the stage of submission, particularly if the student has some legitimate educational problem with writing and referencing. However, if the supervisor detects plagiarism once it gets to the stage where a final draft is submitted, or at the stage where the student wishes to submit the work for examination, this matter should be referred to the relevant plagiarism committee prior to the thesis going out for examination, so that the matter may be dealt with internally. The normal procedures applicable to category B and C discussed in section D above will apply.

### **Procedures applicable after the stage of submission for assessment**

#### *Postgraduate Diploma students*

Such students should be treated in the same way as Honours students (see immediately below).

### *Honours Students*

Honours students should be treated according to the principles set out below:

#### Course work

Plagiarism in Honours course-work and assignments should not ordinarily be treated as a category C offence, unless the student is a repeat offender.

#### Research papers

In cases where potential plagiarism is identified by an internal or an external examiner, that examiner should be requested to provide a thorough report indicating the nature and extent of potential plagiarism, and to indicate the sources from which plagiarism has occurred.

Allegations of plagiarism in an Honours-level research paper should not automatically be treated as a category C offence. It will be up to the Head of Department and the Departmental Plagiarism Committee to assess the seriousness of the case. Only very serious infractions would merit referral to the Chair of the Senate Standing Committee for adjudication.

### *Coursework Master's*

Coursework Master's students should be treated according to the principles listed below.

#### Course work

Plagiarism in Master's course work and assignments would not ordinarily be treated as a category C offence, unless the student is a repeat offender.

#### Research papers, mini-theses, mini-dissertations

In cases where potential plagiarism is identified by an internal or an external examiner, that examiner should be requested to provide a thorough report indicating the nature and extent of potential plagiarism, and to indicate the sources from which plagiarism has occurred.

The Departmental Plagiarism Committee will be required to assess the seriousness of the case. However, allegations of plagiarism in a coursework Master's research paper/mini-thesis/mini-dissertation should normally be treated as a category C offence, and should be referred by the Head of Department to the Chair of the Senate Standing Committee on Plagiarism for adjudication. Where the Head of Department is directly involved as a supervisor/examiner, the Dean of the Faculty, or a senior member of the Department nominated by the Dean, should perform this task.

### *Master's by thesis*

In accordance with the rules on the examination of Master's theses, the following procedure should be adopted:

The Head of Department, whose task it is to collate the examiners' reports and to make an initial recommendation, should refer the allegation of plagiarism to the relevant Dean of the Faculty for his or her consideration. Where the Head of Department or the Dean is directly

involved as a supervisor/examiner, the Deputy Dean, or a senior member of the Faculty nominated by the Dean, should perform this task.

The Dean, after considering the reports, must refer the matter to the Chair of the Senate Standing Committee on Plagiarism, who must constitute a Senate Plagiarism Tribunal to adjudicate the matter. The student must be informed of the allegation against him or her, and must be afforded all the rights to which a student is normally entitled with regard to the adjudication of the issue (for procedures, see section D above). The external examiner(s) must be requested to provide a thorough report indicating the nature and extent of potential plagiarism, and to indicate the sources from which plagiarism has allegedly occurred, if this did not occur in the original report.

If the Senate Plagiarism Tribunal finds that there is no case of plagiarism, the matter must then be referred back to the Head of Department (or appropriate nominee) for that person to make an academic recommendation on the result of the thesis, in the light of any and other examiners' reports. The Dean of the Faculty and the Faculty Board should then follow the ordinary procedures with regard to deciding the final academic result.

If the Senate Plagiarism Tribunal finds that the student has committed plagiarism, the Tribunal is required to indicate (a) the seriousness of the extent of the plagiarism; and (b) to make recommendations with regard to the academic result. (For serious cases, the Tribunal could, for example, recommend outright failure, but if the plagiarism was minor, corrections could be recommended.) These findings and recommendations should be referred back to the Head of Department (or appropriate nominee) for that person to make an academic recommendation on the result of the examination. This recommendation must be referred to the Dean of the Faculty. The recommendations of the Tribunal must accompany the Head of Department's findings. The Dean of the Faculty and the Faculty Board should then follow the ordinary procedures with regard to deciding the final academic result.

In addition, the Senate Plagiarism Tribunal retains its disciplinary powers to impose a sanction in the form of an exclusion of some kind, if such is warranted.

### *Doctoral Students*

In accordance with the rules on the examination of PhD theses, the following procedure should be adopted:

Upon receipt of the examiners' reports from the Registrar, the relevant Dean or Dean's nominee must call a meeting of the candidate's Committee of Assessors (COA) to consider the allegation.

If the view of the COA is that the allegation of plagiarism requires investigation, the matter must be referred immediately to the Chair of the Senate Standing Committee on Plagiarism who must constitute a Senate Plagiarism Tribunal to adjudicate the matter. The student must be informed of the allegation against him or her, and must be afforded all the rights to which a student is normally entitled with regard to the conduct of the hearing (for procedures, see section D above). The external examiner(s) must be requested to provide a thorough report indicating the nature and extent of potential plagiarism, and to indicate the sources from which plagiarism has allegedly occurred, if this did not occur in the original report.

If the Senate Plagiarism Tribunal finds that there is no case of plagiarism, the matter must then be referred back to the COA for that committee to make an academic recommendation on the result of the thesis, in the light of any and other examiners' reports. The decision should be communicated to the Registrar and the Vice-Chancellor, who should then follow the ordinary procedures with regard to deciding the final academic result.

If the Senate Plagiarism Tribunal finds that the student has committed plagiarism, the Committee is required to indicate (a) the seriousness of the extent of the plagiarism; and (b) to make recommendations with regard to the academic result. Generally speaking, in a PhD thesis plagiarism of any kind would usually attract severe censure. These findings and recommendations should be referred back to the COA for that committee to make an academic recommendation on the result of the examination. This recommendation must be referred to the Registrar for the attention of the Vice-Chancellor. The recommendations of the Tribunal must accompany the COA's decision. The Vice-Chancellor and Senate should then follow the ordinary procedures with regard to deciding the final academic result.

In addition, the Senate Plagiarism Tribunal retains its disciplinary powers to impose a sanction in the form of an exclusion of some kind, if such is warranted.

#### **F. Revocation or deprivation of degrees that have already been awarded**

From time-to-time it may become apparent, after a research degree by thesis has been conferred, that the thesis is plagiarised to a greater or lesser degree. In such situations, it may be necessary to consider revoking the degree. This is a drastic and unusual step, requiring careful consideration and clear procedures.

In a situation where an allegation of plagiarism is made against a thesis after the degree has been conferred, this allegation must be put before a special meeting of the Higher Degrees Committee of the relevant Faculty by the relevant Dean. If, after considering the matter, the Higher Degrees Committee feels that there is a *prima facie* case of plagiarism, the matter must be referred to the Chair of the Senate Standing Committee on Plagiarism. The Chair of the Senate Standing Committee on Plagiarism must convene a Plagiarism Tribunal that is specifically constituted and empowered to conduct a hearing into the matter.

This Tribunal in this situation should comprise: the Chairperson of the Senate Standing Committee on Plagiarism (Chair); three members of Senate (one of whom should be the Dean or Deputy Dean of Law); and one member of Council. The Chair must appoint the panel and establish a time for the hearing.

A graduate charged with the offence must be given full written particulars of the allegation against him or her. The evidence should include the thesis (with the allegedly plagiarised passages suitably marked) and documentary evidence of the original source material (suitably marked). The hearing must take place as soon as is reasonably possible, bearing in mind that the graduate may be some distance away. For this reason, it may be necessary to negotiate the time of the hearing with the graduate. The graduate should be informed of the time and the place of the hearing in the written particulars.

The graduate charged with having committed plagiarism, as well as the Head of Department concerned must be invited to attend the hearing. The graduate may be assisted by another student, or by a staff member or by a legal practitioner. If a legal practitioner acts for the



graduate, this will be at the graduate's own expense. The graduate may, if he or she elects to do so, forfeit a personal appearance, and make written representations to the panel, which will constitute the graduate's evidence. This choice must be made expressly by the graduate. If this choice is made, the evidentiary steps below will not be necessary, and the matter may be dealt with on the papers.

The hearing must be conducted according to the requirements of natural justice. The Head of Department will present the evidence, and the graduate (or his or her representative), if he or she elects to appear in person, will have the right to question the department's representative about the alleged plagiarism. In addition, the Tribunal members will have the right to ask questions of the departmental representative.

The graduate (or his or her representative) will have the opportunity to make a statement or to present any evidence in support of his or her case. The Tribunal members will have the right to ask questions of the student or his or her representative.

The Tribunal will then consider its decision. The standard of proof is on a balance of probabilities. If the Tribunal finds that the graduate did not commit plagiarism of any kind, the matter should be referred back to the Higher Degrees Committee to make the appropriate recommendation to Senate and Council. If the Tribunal finds that the student has committed plagiarism, the graduate should be re-called, this fact should be communicated to the student, and the graduate (or his or her representative) should be given an opportunity to make a statement in mitigation of penalty. If necessary, the Tribunal may ask questions of the graduate or his or her representative at this stage (the response may be in writing, if necessary). The Tribunal should then consider the penalty to be imposed.

In a situation where the Tribunal finds that the thesis was tainted by plagiarism, the Tribunal is entitled to recommend the revocation of the degree, or any other appropriate penalty. Wherever possible, the graduate should (if present) immediately be re-called, and be informed of the penalty that he or she is to receive. However, since such offences may require serious consideration by the Tribunal, it may be appropriate to inform the graduate and his or her representative that the matter of penalty requires consideration, and that the graduate will be informed by the Chair in due course of the final outcome.

Once the hearing process is complete, the Tribunal must, in addition, provide the graduate with written reasons for its decision, both in regard to its finding and in regard to the penalty imposed. Such findings must be made available within five (5) days of the hearing.

If the Tribunal recommends revocation of the degree, this must be communicated to the Higher Degrees Committee of the relevant Faculty. This Committee must direct these findings to the University Senate and Council for consideration and approval. These bodies should consider the recommendations, and decide on the issue in accordance with the ordinary rules of order of these committees. A minute of the resolution must be compiled, and the reasons for the decision of Senate and Council must be made available to the graduate at the conclusion of these proceedings. The Registrar will be responsible for communicating this information to the student.

If Senate and Council approves of the deprivation of the degree, it will be necessary to recall the degree parchment from the student for destruction, and the Registrar must take the necessary steps to ensure that the degree is revoked administratively.

## **G. The keeping of records and reporting by departments**

All academic departments are required to keep records of all cases of plagiarism. In addition, each department should ensure that plagiarism findings of category B and C be recorded on the Protea database set up for this purpose. This database will contain all the cases of plagiarism across the University in each academic year, in categories B and C. This database may be accessed by Heads of Department (or their authorised nominees) to allow departments to ascertain whether a student has committed serious plagiarism before. Additionally, individual departments are requested to communicate to other Departments whether or not a particular student has been found to have committed plagiarism in that department, if a request for such information is received from that other department.

In February of each year, the Dean of Teaching and Learning must compile a report, to be submitted to the Senate Standing Committee on Plagiarism, and thereafter, Senate, on incidences of plagiarism across the University in the previous academic year. Although the Protea plagiarism database will be the main resource for statistical data for this purpose, the Dean of Teaching and Learning may, where necessary, request individual Heads of Department to submit supplementary information for the purposes of compiling the report.

### **3.2 REVIEW PROCEDURE**

The policy should be reviewed by the Senate Standing Committee on Plagiarism every third year. Any proposed revisions should then be considered by Faculties and the Teaching and Learning Committee and thereafter Senate, so that any policy changes are in place before the beginning of the next academic year. The review of this Plagiarism Policy will therefore be due at the first meeting of the Senate Standing Committee on Plagiarism in 2012.

## ANNEXURE A: EXAMPLES OF PLAGIARISM

The following examples, a number of which come from the website at Princeton University provide a range of plagiarism from verbatim copying to thorough paraphrasing. The examples and comments offer guidance about how a source may be used and when a source must be cited.

Departments may use the material in this annexure in their departmental guides, may adapt it to suit their specific needs, or may feel free to develop a discipline-specific set of examples.

The material below the line comes from:

<http://www.princeton.edu/pr/pub/integrity/pages/plagiarism.html>

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### Original source:

From: Alvin Kernan, *The Playwright as Magician* New Haven: Yale University Press (1979) pp102-103.

“From time to time this submerged or latent theater in *Hamlet* becomes almost overt. It is close to the surface in Hamlet’s pretense of madness, the ‘antic disposition’ he puts on to protect himself and prevent his antagonists from plucking out the heart of his mystery. It is even closer to the surface when Hamlet enters his mother’s room and holds up, side by side, the pictures of the two kings, Old Hamlet and Claudius, and proceeds to describe for her the true nature of the choice she has made, presenting truth by means of a show. Similarly, when he leaps into the open grave at Ophelia’s funeral, ranting in high heroic terms, he is acting out for Laertes, and perhaps for himself as well, the folly of excessive, melodramatic expressions of grief.”

### 1. Example of verbatim plagiarism, or unacknowledged direct quotation (lifted passages are underlined):

Almost all of Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* can be understood as a play about acting and the theatre. For example, there is Hamlet’s pretense of madness, the “antic disposition” that he puts on to protect himself and prevent his antagonists from plucking out the heart of his mystery. When Hamlet enters his mother’s room, he holds up, side by side, the pictures of the two kings, Old Hamlet and Claudius, and proceeds to describe for her the true nature of the choice she has made, presenting truth by means of a show. Similarly, when he leaps into the open grave at Ophelia’s funeral, ranting in high heroic terms, he is acting out for Laertes, and perhaps for himself as well, the folly of excessive, melodramatic expressions of grief. (No reference of any kind appears.)

**Comment:** Aside from an opening sentence loosely adapted from the original and reworded more simply, this entire passage is taken almost word-for-word from the source. The few small alterations of the source do not relieve the writer of the responsibility to attribute these words to their original author. A passage from a source may be worth quoting at length if it makes a point precisely or elegantly. In such cases, the passage should be copied exactly, placed in quotation marks, and the author and specific reference must be cited.

## 2. Example of lifting selected passages and phrases without proper acknowledgement (lifted passages are underlined):

Almost all of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* can be understood as a play about acting and the theatre. For example, in Act 1, Hamlet adopts a pretense of madness that he uses to protect himself and prevent his antagonists from discovering his mission to revenge his father's murder. He also presents truth by means of a show when he compares the portraits of Gertrude's two husbands in order to describe for her the true nature of the choice she has made. And when he leaps in Ophelia's open grave ranting in high heroic terms, Hamlet is acting out the folly of excessive, melodramatic expressions of grief. (No reference of any kind appears.)

**Comment:** This passage, in content and structure, is taken wholesale from the source. Although the writer has rewritten much of the paragraph, and fewer phrases are lifted verbatim from the source, this is a clear example of plagiarism. Inserting even short phrases from the source into a new sentence still requires placing quotations around the borrowed words and citing the author. If even one phrase is good enough to borrow, it must be properly set off by quotation marks. In the case above, if the writer had rewritten the entire paragraph and only used Alvin Kernan's phrase "high heroic terms" without properly quoting and acknowledging its source, the writer would still have committed plagiarism.

## 3. Example of paraphrasing the text while maintaining the basic paragraph and sentence structure:

Almost all of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* can be understood as a play about acting and the theatre. For example, in Act 1, Hamlet pretends to be insane in order to make sure his enemies do not discover his mission to revenge his father's murder. The theme is even more obvious when Hamlet compares the pictures of his mother's two husbands to show her what a bad choice she has made, using their images to reveal the truth. Also, when he jumps into Ophelia's grave, hurling his challenge to Laertes, Hamlet demonstrates the foolishness of exaggerated expressions of emotion. (See Kernan *The Playwright as Magician* pp 102-103.)

**Comment:** Almost nothing of Alvin Kernan's original language remains in this rewritten paragraph. However the key idea, the choice and order of the examples, and even the basic structure of the original sentences are all taken from the source. Although it would no longer be necessary to use quotation marks, it would absolutely be necessary to place a citation at the end of this paragraph to acknowledge that the content is not original, as has been done. Better still would be to acknowledge the author in the text by adding a second sentence such as "Alvin Kernan provides several examples from the play where these themes become more obvious" and then citing the source at the end of the paragraph. In the case where the writer did not try to paraphrase the source's sentences quite so closely, but borrowed the main idea and examples from Kernan's book, an acknowledgment would still be necessary.

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## 4. Example of lifting the direct words of another, and using a reference, but not using quotation marks (This example does not come from the Princeton site, although it uses the same example for the sake of continuity.)

Almost all of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* can be understood as a play about acting and the theatre. For example, there is Hamlet's pretense of madness, the "antic disposition" that he puts on to

protect himself and prevent his antagonists from plucking out the heart of his mystery. When Hamlet enters his mother's room, he holds up, side by side, the pictures of the two kings, Old Hamlet and Claudius, and proceeds to describe for her the true nature of the choice she has made, presenting truth by means of a show. Similarly, when he leaps into the open grave at Ophelia's funeral, ranting in high heroic terms, he is acting out for Laertes, and perhaps for himself as well, the folly of excessive, melodramatic expressions of grief. (Kernan *The Playwright as Magician* pp 102-103.)

**Comment:** In this case the words are taken directly from the original source, verbatim. The student has contented him or herself with simply putting a reference at the end of the sentence. This is still plagiarism, as the student is representing the words of another as his or her own, that the passage is written in his or her own words, and that it is only the general information that was gleaned from the source. But it is a more minor form of plagiarism. Where such a case occurs, staff and Departmental Plagiarism Committees need to investigate clearly whether the student has been trained in the use of quotations and quotation marks in assessing how to deal with the student. This may be a situation where the plagiarism is not intentional, but may have occurred because of a lack of understanding of how to write and use quotations correctly. More senior students would, of course, be expected to know how to use quotations, and a student's claim that he or she did not understand would be less likely to be believable or mitigating.

#### **Final note: Essays comprised of quotations**

Students should be encouraged to use direct quotations sparingly. A cobbled-together assignment that is simply made up of a "cut and paste" selection of correctly referenced quotations will not constitute a case of plagiarism. But since none of the work in the assignment will be the personal written contribution of the student, such an assignment will of necessity have to attract a mark of 0. In such a situation, the problem is an academic one, and will have to be explained to the student, for the student's educational benefit.

## **ANNEXURE B: A GENERIC DECLARATION FORM**

The template provided below may be used and adapted by individual departments to suit their academic needs.

### **PLAGIARISM DECLARATION**

- 1. I know that plagiarism means taking and using the ideas, writings, works or inventions of another as if they were one's own. I know that plagiarism not only includes verbatim copying, but also the extensive use of another person's ideas without proper acknowledgement (which includes the proper use of quotation marks). I know that plagiarism covers this sort of use of material found in textual sources and from the Internet.**
- 2. I acknowledge and understand that plagiarism is wrong.**
- 3. I understand that my research must be accurately referenced. I have followed the rules and conventions concerning referencing, citation and the use of quotations as set out in the Departmental Guide.**
- 4. This assignment is my own work, or my group's own unique group assignment. I acknowledge that copying someone else's assignment, or part of it, is wrong, and that submitting identical work to others constitutes a form of plagiarism.**
- 5. I have not allowed, nor will I in the future allow, anyone to copy my work with the intention of passing it off as their own work.**

Signed .....

Date .....

## ANNEXURE C: GUIDELINES ON PROCEDURE TO BE FOLLOWED BY DEPARTMENTAL PLAGIARISM COMMITTEES FOR CATEGORY B CASES

### *Preparatory Procedures*

Potential case of plagiarism detected, the evidence (suitably marked) must be prepared by the staff member who detected the problem, and the matter discussed with HoD, who decides that the matter is one of category B.



The HoD or nominee must select a Departmental Plagiarism Committee of two members, and to appoint one of these staff members to be Chair. The evidence must be handed to the Chair of the Committee.



The Chair, with the assistance of the secretarial staff, must inform the student, in writing, of the matter, must make copies of the evidence available to the student, and must make arrangements for a hearing.

### *The Hearing*

The parties shall convene at the appointed place and time.



The staff member who discovered the problem must be invited to present the evidence.



The student (or his/her representative [student or staff member only]) and the Committee will have the opportunity to put any questions they have to the staff member. Once this is complete, the staff member may be excused.



The student (or his/her representative) must be given an opportunity to make a statement, either acknowledging wrongdoing or denying responsibility, and may present any evidence in support of his or her case. If the student admits to plagiarism, the Committee may proceed immediately to addressing the matter of penalty (see **X** in the right hand block below).



The Committee may ask questions of the student or the representative.



The Committee must adjourn to consider whether plagiarism has been committed or not.



| If Plagiarism has NOT been committed  | If Plagiarism HAS been committed   |
|---|--|
| Refer the matter back to the HoD to make arrangements for reassessment of the assignment. | <p style="text-align: center;">Recall the student and inform the student of the finding.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">↓</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>X</b> Give the student an opportunity to make a statement concerning penalty.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">↓</p> <p style="text-align: center;">The Committee may ask questions of the student.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">↓</p> <p style="text-align: center;">The Committee should adjourn to discuss and determine penalty.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">↓</p> <p style="text-align: center;">The Committee should recall the student and advise the student of the penalty, or inform the student later, if necessary. The student should also be informed that the University Policy allows for a review.</p> |

### *After the Hearing*

The Chair must (with the assistance of the secretarial staff, where necessary and appropriate):

- Write up a short report of the findings reached at the hearing, and the reasons for the decisions taken, both with regard to plagiarism and penalty, if relevant.
  - Ensure that the student receives a copy of this finding, within 5 days of the hearing.
  - Make arrangements with the secretarial staff: (a) to have the finding published on student notice boards in the department (with personal details deleted); (b) to have copies of the finding made available to the lecturer, course co-ordinator and HoD; (c) to have the findings and the evidence filed in the Secretary's Office; and (d) record the findings on Protea.
- 

### **Mock template for drawing up committee findings:**

#### **PLAGIARISM HEARING**

History Department, Rhodes University, 23 April 1972

In the matter of: X (st no: 669X0000) and Q (st no: 669Q0000) – a History III essay

Committee: Professors Maxwell and Hunt

#### *Complaint:*

A complaint was received from the Lecturer in the course that the students had presented a plagiarised and syndicated piece of work in an essay on the history of Rhodes University.

#### *Finding:*

After hearing the evidence of the students, and examining the respective essays and the book referred to by the lecturer, the students were found to have committed plagiarism. This was so in that they had (a) copied large amounts of material, word-for-word, without acknowledgement, from a published source (RF Currey *Rhodes University 1904-1970: A Chronicle*), and that (b) the two essays were in effect the same, as far as 95% of the content was concerned, and therefore constituted a syndicated piece of work.

#### *Evidence on Penalty:*

After hearing the two students, the committee also took into consideration that this was a first offence, and that the students had conceded that they had plagiarised, and did not try to mislead the committee in any way. However, the committee felt that these factors were outweighed by the seriousness of both acts of syndication and copying, as well as the nature of the exercise (a major essay at third year level). The students had also conceded that they had been trained extensively in plagiarism and referencing, and that they understood the plagiarism declaration form that they had signed.

#### *Penalty:*

In accordance with the grid in Annexure D of the Plagiarism Policy, the committee agreed that the students should receive 0, and the DP certificates of the students be removed (DPWP).

Signed...



## ANNEXURE D: GUIDELINES ON PENALTIES FOR VARIOUS TYPES AND CATEGORIES OF PLAGIARISM

The guidelines that follow are designed to encourage consistency of treatment across academic departments, where it is decided that a penalty is necessary. If a decision to impose a penalty is taken, these suggested penalties should instruct the Panel, **unless there are clear indications that the application thereof will lead to injustice on the particular facts of the case, or other factors suggest another penalty, in which case the Panel has the discretion to depart from the guidelines. It must be stressed that the guidelines are premised on the assumption that departments have complied with their duties to educate students about proper referencing practice and the nature and consequences of plagiarism, and have reinforced this at all levels.**

- **In several situations below, the re-submission of work is recommended.** This penalty is punitive on the student, but also has an important educational purpose – to see if the student can learn a lesson. The imposition of this penalty will depend on the nature of the assessment task, and whether setting another piece of work is logistically possible or feasible. In some Faculties, especially those which run pracs, requiring students to re-submit alternative work may be impossible. In such cases, alternative penalties will have to suffice. The imposition of such a penalty remains at the discretion of the committee.
- When this document refers to a replacement assignment counting, for example, for ½ the value of the original, it means that if the original assignment was out of 20, then the student’s second assignment will be assessed out of 10 only, but the mark will count as if it were out of 20 when the final class mark is calculated.

### PLAGIARISM BY UNDERGRADUATES

*CATEGORY A* (to be dealt with by staff member, or course lecturer/course co-ordinator)

| Form of Plagiarism  | Suggested Penalty  |  |
|---|--|--|
|   | 1 <sup>st</sup> Year (bearing in mind that students do need time to get used to what is required of them)  | Subsequent years   |
| Minor plagiarism from textual/internet sources in an assignment that simply counts for DP purposes, but not for marks (eg tutorial work that must be handed-in, and which is assessed for feedback purposes alone). | Student to be counselled and warned of future consequences. Where suitable, the student should be given an alternative task to do for DP purposes. | Student to be given a final warning, and the student must, where suitable, be given an alternative task to do for DP purposes. |

|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| <p>Minor plagiarism from textual/internet sources in minor assignments (eg tutorial assignments or prac reports) that count less than 10% of the final mark for the course.</p> <p>Minor plagiarism from textual sources in major assignments (eg full research essays) that count more than 10% of the final mark for the course.</p> <p>Minor examples of a student using another person's copied words without quotation marks, but giving a reference.</p> <p><b>[* By "minor" is meant a few sentences up to about 15% of the assignment.]</b></p> <p><b>Cases of syndication in work that does not count for marks, or where the exercise counts less than 5% of the final mark. (For a full definition of syndication, see the category B grid below)</b></p> | <p>Mark penalty of up to –40% off the mark that the student would have received if there had been no plagiarism. The extent of the penalty depends on how much the assignment counts towards the final mark. The student must be counselled and warned of consequences of future conduct.</p> <p>Mark penalty of up to –30% off the mark that the student would have received if there had been no plagiarism. The extent of the penalty depends on how much the assignment counts towards the final mark. The student must be counselled and warned of consequences of future conduct.</p> <p>Mark penalty of up to –30% off the mark that the student would have received if there had been no plagiarism. The extent of the penalty depends on how much the assignment counts towards the final mark. The student must be counselled and warned of consequences of future conduct.</p> <p>0 and/or DP warning, and the students must be called in and warned of the consequences of future conduct. Such cases can easily be considered category B, and can be referred for a hearing, if the Department feels it is appropriate.</p> | <p>Mark penalty of up to –50% off the mark that the student would have received if there had been no plagiarism. The extent of the penalty depends on how much the assignment counts towards the final mark. The student must be counselled and warned of consequences of future conduct.</p> <p>Mark penalty of up to –40% off the mark that the student would have received if there had been no plagiarism. The extent of the penalty depends on how much the assignment counts towards the final mark. The student must be counselled and warned of consequences of future conduct.</p> <p>Mark penalty of up to –40% off the mark that the student would have received if there had been no plagiarism. The extent of the penalty depends on how much the assignment counts towards the final mark. The student must be counselled and warned of consequences of future conduct.</p> <p>0 and/or DP warning, and the students must be called in and warned of the consequences of future conduct. Such cases can easily be considered category B, and can be referred for a hearing, if the Department feels it is appropriate.</p> |
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*CATEGORY B* (to be heard by a Departmental Plagiarism Committee)

| Form of Plagiarism  | Suggested Penalty (in all cases below the decision must be recorded by the Department on Protea as a Category B finding).   |   |
|---|---|---|
|   | 1 <sup>st</sup> Year (bearing in mind that students do need time to get used to what is required of them)   | Subsequent years  |
| <p><i>Plagiarism from textual/internet sources</i></p> <p>Second offences in Category A.</p> <p>Major plagiarism in an assignment that simply counts for DP purposes, but not for marks.</p> <p>Approximately 20-30% of the assignment plagiarised in an assignment counting less than 10% of the final mark for the course.</p> <p>Approximately 20-30% of the assignment plagiarised in an assignment counting 10-20% of the final mark for the course.</p> <p>Approximately 20-30% of the assignment plagiarised in an assignment counting 20% or more of the final mark for the course.</p> <p>Approximately half the assignment plagiarised (all cases).</p> | <p>0 and the student could be asked to complete another assignment for DP purposes, not for marks.</p> <p>The student should, if possible, complete another assignment for DP purposes, and a case of category B plagiarism to be recorded on Protea.</p> <p>0 and the student should, if possible, complete another assignment for DP purposes, not for marks.</p> <p>Range: The student should, where possible, complete another assignment, to count for <math>\frac{1}{3}</math> the value of the marks of the original assignment; up to 0 plus another assignment for DP purposes later in the year.</p> <p>Range: The student should, where possible, complete another assignment, to count for <math>\frac{1}{2}</math> to <math>\frac{1}{3}</math> the value of the marks of the original assignment.</p> <p>0 and the student should, where possible, complete another assignment for DP purposes, not for marks.</p> | <p>0 and the student could be asked to complete another assignment for DP purposes, not for marks.</p> <p>The student should, if possible, complete another assignment for DP purposes, and a case of category B plagiarism to be recorded on Protea.</p> <p>0 and the student should, if possible, complete another assignment for DP purposes, not for marks.</p> <p>0 and the student should, where possible, complete another assignment for DP purposes, not for marks.</p> <p>Range: The student should, where possible, complete another assignment, to count for <math>\frac{1}{3}</math> the value of the marks of the original assignment; up to 0 plus another assignment for DP purposes.</p> <p>Range: 0 and the student should, where possible, complete another assignment for DP purposes, not for marks; up to 0 + DPWP.</p> |

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| <p>75 to 100% of the assignment plagiarised (all cases)</p> <p>Serious examples of using another person's copied words without quotation marks, but giving a reference.</p> <p><i>Syndication in assignments counting 5% or more of the final mark</i></p> <p>Syndicate assignments are assignments where two students submit identical pieces of work, or work that contains selected passages that are identical. Group assessment tasks are excluded from the definition, unless two groups submit identical assignments. Here both students/groups should be sanctioned.</p> <p><i>Copying from another student without that student's knowledge</i></p> <p>Situations where a student submits work that is identical to another student/group, or work that contains selected passages that are identical, but this time because the student/group has appropriated the work from another student/group without the other student/group's knowledge or collusion. This can include agreeing to hand in the other student's essay, and then taking material from the original essay, breaking into a res room, hacking into computer files, stealing printing from a printer, stealing a flashstick, and so forth.</p> <p>Second offences of plagiarism of approximately 25% of the assignment</p> | <p>Range: 0 and the student should, where possible, complete another assignment for DP purposes, not for marks; up to 0 + DPWP by the second semester.</p> <p>Depending on extent, range from mark penalty to another assignment to count for less marks, to 0.</p> <p><i>(a) The students worked together, then reproduced the same material, but without proof of collusion:</i> Range - Depending on extent of syndication, complete another assignment for a lesser value of marks (if feasible), up to 0 and complete another assignment for DP purposes, if feasible.</p> <p><i>(b) The assignment counts for marks, and the students knowingly reproduced the same material:</i> Range - Depending on the extent of the syndication, 0 (in which case the students should, where possible, do another assignment for DP purposes), up to 0 + DPWP</p> <p>0 + DPWP AND refer the matter to the Senior Prosecutor for potential disciplinary proceedings.</p> <p>0 + DPWP</p> | <p>0 + DPWP</p> <p>Depending on extent, range from mark penalty to another assignment to count for less marks, to 0.</p> <p><i>(a) The students worked together, then reproduced the same material, but without proof of collusion:</i> Range - Depending on extent of syndication, complete another assignment for a lesser value of marks (if feasible), up to 0 and complete another assignment for DP purposes, if feasible.</p> <p><i>(b) The assignment counts for marks, and the students knowingly reproduced the same material:</i> Range - Depending on the extent of the syndication, 0 (in which case the students should, where possible, do another assignment for DP purposes), up to 0 + DPWP</p> <p>0 + DPWP AND refer the matter to the Senior Prosecutor for potential disciplinary proceedings.</p> <p>0 + DPWP</p> |
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*CATEGORY C* (to be heard by a Senate Plagiarism Tribunal)

| <b>Form of Plagiarism</b>  | <b>Suggested Penalty (to be recorded as a Category C finding)</b>   |
|--|---|
| <p>Serial offences of minor plagiarism at the undergraduate level (a 3<sup>rd</sup> time or more), indicating a total disregard for the rules, and an unwillingness to make the effort to remedy the problem despite several previous sanctions.</p> <p>Second offences of major plagiarism in major assignments at the undergraduate level (cases of plagiarism of 50% or more of a subsequent assignment).</p> <p>Second offences of syndication and/or taking and copying from another student's work without permission.</p> | <p>All these offences have the potential to attract serious penalties, ranging from mark penalties to re-doing work to DPWP to exclusion (whether suspended or not). If permanent exclusion is recommended, this must be confirmed by Senate and Council.</p> |

PLAGIARISM BY POSTGRADUATES

Ordinarily, plagiarism by a postgraduate, unless extremely minor, would not be classed in Category A.

*CATEGORY B* (to be heard by a Departmental Plagiarism Committee)

| <b>Form of Plagiarism</b>   | <b>Suggested Penalty (to be recorded as a category B finding)</b>   |
|---|---|
| <p>Plagiarism from textual sources in Honours or Postgraduate Diploma coursework and Master's coursework assignments.</p> <p>Relatively minor plagiarism from textual sources in Honours research papers.</p> | <p>0 (in which case another assignment should, where possible, be re-done for DP purposes, but not to count for marks) to 0 + DPWP. In such situations, DPWP should normally only apply to that component of the course, not the entire Honours year.</p> |

*CATEGORY C* (to be heard by a Senate Plagiarism Tribunal)

| <b>Form of Plagiarism</b>   | <b>Suggested Penalty (to be recorded as a category C finding)</b>  |
|---|--|
| <p>Second offences, including situations where the student has committed plagiarism as an undergraduate.</p> <p>Serious plagiarism in Honours research papers.</p> <p>Taking and copying material from another student in Honours and coursework Master's.</p> <p>Any plagiarism in Master's half-theses, dissertations and full theses, and in PhD theses.</p> | <p>All these offences have the potential to attract serious penalties, ranging from mark penalties to DPWP to exclusion (whether suspended or not). If permanent exclusion is recommended, this must be confirmed by Senate and Council.</p> |