



PLAGIARISM POLICY

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Da Vinci Institute is an accredited private higher distance education provider offering qualifications on NQF levels five to ten, which are registered on the Higher Education Qualifications Sub-Framework (HEQSF). This policy forms part of the institutional Integrated Quality Management System and details the principles for ensuring that programme offerings adhere to required academic standards and empower students to contribute to the transformation of their communities, society, and the economy of the future. This approach is underpinned by the Business- and Community-based Action Learning discourse on the co-creation and distribution of relevant knowledge.

The digital revolution allows for greater access to research resources, in particular, electronic resources, which has resulted in an increase of plagiarism cases being reported in higher education. Typically, the reason for this, is that students are not familiar with the correct referencing conventions and are unaware of the seriousness and consequences of submitting work that is not the student's own. The Institute places a high value on ethics and integrity and as a result, plagiarism is prohibited and any and all cases of alleged plagiarism will be viewed in a serious light.

The Institute prides itself in acknowledging the importance of cultivating well-informed and well-balanced business leaders who will be ethical and who will operate with integrity. The notion of co-creating knowledge assumes that students will engage the voices of others, but with the necessary recognition of such contributions.

The accomplishment of the above, necessitates a Plagiarism Policy to ensure the integrity and credibility of the academic content submitted by students and staff to be assessed by The Institute's academic role-players.

2. DEFINITIONS

Term	Definition
Plagiarism	Plagiarism is defined as the act of using the ideas, arguments, writings, inventions or words of another as if they were ones' own without acknowledging and/or referencing the source.
Academic misconduct	In the research environment, academic misconduct entails any practice that constitutes a serious deviation from what is generally accepted within the scientific community in the submission, performance and reporting of research or any other written work submitted for assessment purposes.
Copyright Infringement	Copyright infringement is the use of works under copyright, infringing the copyright holder's exclusive rights such as the right to reproduce, distribute, display or perform the copyrighted

Term	Definition
	work, or to make derivative works without permission from the copyright holder, which is typically a publisher or other business representing or assigned by the work's creator.

3. REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

This policy is benchmarked against, and should be read in the context of the relevant legislation underpinning the principles against which institutional policies, processes and standard operational procedures are developed, implemented and maintained. These include:

A. Relevant Legislation

- I. Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996 (1996)
- II. Criteria for Programme Accreditation (CHE, 2004)
- III. Distance Higher Education Programmes in a Digital Era: Good Practice Guide (CHE)
- IV. Higher Education Act (Act 101 of 1997)

B. Applicable Da Vinci documents and other guidelines

- I. D15 - Conducting Ethical Research Policy
- II. D18 - Invigilated Assessment Policy
- III. D19 - Assessment and Moderation Policy
- IV. E1 - Code of Conduct Policy
- V. E4 - Student Representative Council Policy
- VI. Student Contract
- VII. Onboarding Guide
- VIII. King IV™ Code.

4. SCOPE

The policy applies to all undergraduate and postgraduate programmes and academic work submitted to The Institute. It further applies to all and every Da Vinci stakeholder (e.g. academic role-players, namely students, clients/sponsors, staff, including lecturers, moderators, examiners, supervisors, subject matter experts and learning material designers).

5. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy includes the following:

- a) Defining and describing what is meant by plagiarism
- b) Guiding students and other Da Vinci stakeholders in the use of knowledge sources or intellectual property of others

- c) Recording The Institute's approach towards plagiarism and outlining the procedures that apply when alleged plagiarism is suspected.

6. POLICY STATEMENT

- a) Plagiarism constitutes academic misconduct and all cases of plagiarism are deemed unethical, which will result in disciplinary actions, and the penalty will depend on the seriousness and level of the infringement
- b) 'Plagiarism' refers to any attempt to benefit oneself, or another by deceit or fraud by deliberately reproducing the work of another person or persons without due acknowledgement
- c) Submissions with similarity indexes above the acceptable percentage per NQF levels, (approximately 25% at NQF level 5, 20% at NQF level 6, 15% at NQF level 7 and 10% at postgraduate level) may be scrutinised for potential plagiarism. The responsibility lies with the student to check that the similarity is within an acceptable range before final submission.
- d) No more than 10% of a student's work submitted can consist of direct quotes
- e) The Institute reserves the right to take action on any evidence of plagiarism. In such cases the burden of establishing otherwise shall rest with the party against whom such an allegation is made
- f) The Student Contract requires students to read and confirm their understanding of the Plagiarism Policy
- g) All Students have access to the following resources and services for support and assistance:
- I. The Information Officer
 - II. The Student Support Specialist
 - III. Harvard Referencing guide
 - IV. Academic Writing guide
 - V. Academic Writing interventions, such as referencing and paraphrasing workshops and webinars.
 - VI. Similarity software that is utilised to provide students with continued personalised feedback on improper citation or potential plagiarism by comparing their work against the world's largest academic database, using pattern recognition algorithms. The purpose of this feedback is to serve as a developmental tool to assist students in avoiding plagiarism. The Institute will support and assist students in mastering paraphrasing and referencing techniques to avoid plagiarism, however, students carry the full responsibility in this regard and should actively seek assistance from The Institute when needed to avoid plagiarism.
- h) On final submission, a Similarity Report is generated, that is checked by the relevant Assessor/Lecturer and/or the Programme Convener. Should plagiarism be suspected, the Programme Convener refers the submission to the Registrar. The Registrar evaluates and investigates the matter and takes the relevant action according to policy.
- i) In addition, all cases of alleged plagiarism identified by any method or means will be presented to the Registrar for evaluation, and the relevant action will be taken

7. LEVELS OF PLAGIARISM

The Institute encourages students to debate ideas with others for the purpose of refining their arguments. All submissions must however be the original work of the student.

At any Postgraduate level, students are expected to be well-versed in Academic writing requirements. Consequently, non-acknowledgement, inaccurate acknowledgement or insufficient paraphrasing, for any coursework material, will immediately result in a level two (2) offence. For any research component, the transgression will be considered a level three (3) offence (see Table below).

The levels of plagiarism are categorised into four (4) levels. These levels are described in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Levels of Plagiarism

Level 1:	
Type of offence:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-acknowledgement or inaccurate acknowledgement and citation – first time offence • Insufficient paraphrasing – first time offence.
Remedial Action:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Registrar to issue the student with a disciplinary letter, indicating corrective measures • The student will be allowed to resubmit his/her assignment within a specified timeframe.
Penalty:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10% deduction off the final mark for the assessment
Level 2:	
Type of offence:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-acknowledgement/inaccurate acknowledgement - repeat offence of level one • Insufficient paraphrasing – repeat offence of level one.
Remedial Action:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Registrar to issue a disciplinary letter indicating corrective measures. • The student is required to participate in a compulsory Academic writing intervention
Penalty:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide evidence of successful completion of the academic writing intervention • Resubmission, addressing all plagiarism-related issues • The final mark of the re-submission will be capped at 50%.
Level 3:	

<p>Type of offence:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-acknowledgment/inaccurate acknowledgement - repeat offence of level two • Insufficient paraphrasing – repeat offence of level two • Intentional passing off someone else's work or parts of their work as the student's own work will immediately result in a level 3 offence. This would implicate the student who shares work with another student, who without their knowledge plagiarises the work in part or in totality. Note, an additional misconduct charge may also be laid as per the E1 - Code of Conduct Policy.
<p>Action:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Registrar will have a telecom or set up a meeting with the student to discuss the allegation • The Registrar will inform the student that the matter will be escalated to the Research and Ethics Committee for deliberation • The Registrar will be responsible for processing the matter and presenting the case to the Research and Ethics Committee • The Committee evaluates the matter based on the evidence presented and decides whether a hearing is required • The Registrar will notify the student of the decision of the Research and Ethics Committee in writing • In the case of a hearing, the student will be obliged to attend the hearing. This meeting could be conducted via technologically-mediated platforms • The hearing will be constituted by the Chair of the Research and Ethics Committee, the Registrar and one other member of the Research and Ethics Committee • The student may request the attendance of a Student Representative Council (SRC) member at the hearing • At the hearing, the student will have the opportunity to share any mitigating circumstances that the student believes may have affected his/her conduct or performance • Should the student not attend the hearing as requested, the panel will proceed to make a determination in the case, without offering the student a further opportunity to make a representation • A final standing decision will be taken by the Research and Ethics Committee • The Registrar will notify the student of the Research and Ethics Committee's decision in writing

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Registrar will inform the Senate of the decision • Records will be kept of the hearing and the decision of the Research and Ethics Committee • Students are allowed to appeal the decision of the Research and Ethics Committee, to the Registrar in writing • The Registrar will present the appeal to the Senate • The decision of the Senate is final • The Registrar will notify the student of the Senate's decision in writing.
Penalty:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The penalty will depend on the outcome of the hearing and the severity of the plagiarism • The penalty will include one of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Awarding of 0% for the submission that may result in re-registering for the module ○ Suspension from all academic activity for up to a year

Level 4:	
Type of offence:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intentional passing off someone else's work as the student's own work - repeat of a level 3 offence. Note, an additional misconduct charge may also be laid as per the E1- Code of Conduct Policy. • Offences of such a nature that displays no reasonable prospects of honest academic conduct.
Action:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Registrar will have a telecom or set up a meeting with the student to discuss the allegation • The Registrar will inform the student that the matter will be escalated to the Research and Ethics Committee for deliberation • The Registrar will be responsible for processing the matter and presenting the case to the Research and Ethics Committee • The Committee evaluates the matter based on the evidence presented and decides whether a hearing is required. • The Registrar will notify the student of the decision of the Research and Ethics Committee in writing • In the case of a hearing, the student will be obliged to attend the hearing. This meeting could be conducted via technologically-mediated platforms.

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Penalty:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • De-registration with the possibility of re-registration after a period of five years

8. GENERAL

In the event that a student is found guilty of an act of plagiarism following the completion of a programme at The Institute, such assessment(s)/mark(s) will be nullified, and where necessary, the records will be amended on the relevant regulatory databases.

In the case of a level 4 finding, a student can apply for a rehabilitation process after a period of 12 months, where evidence or circumstances can be presented to justify rehabilitation. This will be considered on a case-by-case basis by the Executive Dean: Academic, who may consult with the Registrar and/or the relevant chair of the disciplinary committee.

9. REVIEW OF THIS POLICY

Regular review and amendment of this policy will be done in line with the approved institutional and regulatory requirements, when required or every three years. This will take place in consultation with the relevant quality assurance structures at departmental and institutional level, under the auspices of the official custodian of this policy, namely the Executive Dean: Academic.