

**THE OPEN UNIVERSITY OF TANZANIA**



**DIRECTORATE OF RESEARCH, PUBLICATION  
AND POSTGRADUATE STUDIES**

**PLAGIARISM CHECKING  
GUIDELINES FOR POSTGRADUATE  
THESIS/DISSERTATION**

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>DEFINITION OF TERMS .....</b>	<b>ii</b>
1.1 Plagiarism.....	ii
1.2 Collusion .....	ii
1.3 Academic Misconduct.....	iii
1.4 Plagiarism Checker .....	iii
1.5 Academic Integrity.....	iii
1.6 Turnitin.....	iv
<b>PART ONE .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>BACKGROUND INFORMATION .....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Introduction .....	1
1.2 Objectives of the Guidelines .....	1
<b>PART TWO .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>GUIDELINES.....</b>	<b>3</b>
2.1 Roles of Different Actors .....	3
2.1.1 Institute of Educational and Management Technologies (Administrator).....	3
2.1.2 Students .....	4
2.1.3 Supervisor .....	5
2.1.4 Role of the Faculties.....	6
2.1.5 Directorate of Research Publication and Postgraduate Studies .....	6
2.2 Levels of Checking Plagiarism in Theses/Dissertations.....	7
2.2.1 First Level .....	7
2.2.2 Second Level.....	7
2.2.3 Third Level.....	8
2.2.4 Fourth Level.....	8
2.3 Submission Procedures.....	9
2.4 Levels of Tolerance.....	10
2.5 Penalty for Plagiarism .....	10
2.6 Revision .....	10

## **DEFINITION OF TERMS**

### **1.1 Plagiarism**

Is the act of presenting another person's work, ideas or creation from any source without acknowledgment. According to The Open University of Tanzania Prospectus plagiarism constitute the following aspects:

- a) Quoting directly another person's language, data or illustrations without clear indication that the authorship is not your own and due acknowledgement of the source.
- b) Using someone else's original ideas without being properly acknowledged.
- c) Using ideas taken from someone else without reference to the originator.
- d) Cutting and pasting from the Internet to make a 'pastiche' of online sources.
- e) Colluding with another person, including another candidate (other than as might be permitted for joint project work).
- f) Submitting as part of your own report or dissertation someone else's work without identifying clearly who did the work.
- g) Resubmission for assessment of work that is the same as work previously submitted for assessment in the same or in a different department or university.

### **1.2 Collusion**

Means form of agreement between two or more people to act with the intention to deceive an assessor as to who was actually responsible for producing the material submitted for assessment. The agreement may be

overt (openly discussed) or covert (not specifically discussed but implied). In brief it is an authorized collaboration.

### **1.3 Academic Misconduct**

Copying/using words, sentences or paragraphs which are the work of other persons without due acknowledgement. This includes copying from:

- a) Published works e.g. books, articles, theses or reports,
- b) Unpublished works, e.g. assignments, letters/memos/personal communications (including e-mails), and raw data,
- c) Seminar and conference papers,
- d) Teaching material, including lecture notes,
- e) Website content, material published on or sourced from the Internet

### **1.4 Plagiarism Checker**

This is a software which crosschecks your text/content against content already published in various information sources over the Internet, detecting plagiarized passages and highlighting sections that have been previously published elsewhere.

### **1.5 Academic Integrity**

Academic honesty underpins respect for knowledge and its development. Academic staff must be honest in their research and in their dealings with other staff and with students. Students must be honest with themselves and others, in their personal ambition, study and in their involvement in the assessment process.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>*Academic staff trusts students to work honestly, and with effort, to achieve their personal goals. Everyone in an academic community expects to be treated fairly. Fairness is expressed in the institution's standards, practices and procedures, and in all interactions between the institution, its staff and its students. Judgements about the*

## **1.6 Turnitin**

This is one of the Internet based plagiarism software used to prevent plagiarism practices. This software compares digital submitted works (thesis, dissertations, essays etc.) to its extensive online database of the public web content and to its previous submissions. The system searches for text from these sources and provides a report of sources of text found that match the work submitted as well as percentage index indicator. Universities and other higher learning institutions, buy licenses on annual basis which provide them with access to the system for submission of documents for originality/similarity check.

## PART ONE

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### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

#### 1.1 Introduction

Plagiarism is one of the major problems affecting many higher learning institutions not only in Tanzania but in many parts of the globe. It is a problem because it involves many students attempting to earn credit by using the work of another person. Plagiarism also steals from the ideas, expressions and works of the innovative people who come up with them. Acts of plagiarism amount to fraud and academic dishonesty whose consequences are serious. According to The Open University of Tanzania examination regulation, plagiarism is a serious academic offence and students found guilty of plagiarism are subjected to disciplinary actions. In order to curb plagiarism, the University has put in place mechanism (*i.e. subscribing the anti-plagiarism software Turnitin to check the content for its originality / similarities*) to ensure that students are exposed to methods of avoiding plagiarism. The University further reminds the students that the onus of avoiding plagiarism is theirs. These guidelines are intended to assist students (postgraduate students) to avoid plagiarism in their theses and dissertations and provide guidance for examiners to ensure cases of plagiarism are reported to the relevant authorities for appropriate action.

#### 1.2 Objectives of the Guidelines

The major objectives of these guidelines are five-fold:

- a) To nurture original thinkers and intellectuals who are suited to enhance OUT academic profile;
- b) To maintain academic integrity and quality;

- c) To promote creativity and innovation;
- d) To ensure increased awareness and use of the anti-plagiarism software;
- e) To put in place various procedures and disciplinary actions.

## **PART TWO**

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### **GUIDELINES**

The Open University of Tanzania has installed the Turnitin software<sup>2</sup> to detect plagiarism, training and interpretation of generated report is extremely important. These guidelines are tailored to provide necessary guidance to avoid plagiarism. The guidelines are divided into five main parts namely: the role of different actors, levels of checking plagiarism, submission process, level of tolerance and penalties associated with plagiarism.

#### **2.1 Roles of Different Actors**

In undertaking the plagiarism check different actors will be involved. These include; IEMT, the student themselves, the supervisor, coordinators at departmental and faculty levels and Directorate of Postgraduate Studies. The role of each actor is elaborated below.

##### **2.1.1 Institute of Educational and Management Technologies (Administrator)**

2.1.1.1 Turnitin software has basically three user levels: Administrator, Instructor (supervisors, coordinators and associate deans) and Student. All these users have different privileges in the system where the student has the least number of privileges.

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<sup>2</sup> The university may install other software in the near future



2.1.1.2 Institute of Educational and Management Technology (IEMT) (administrator) is responsible for administration of the Turnitin software which include creation of account for supervisors.

2.1.1.3 Further IEMT is responsible for facilitating Turnitin training to both students and Instructors (academicians).

2.1.1.4 The IEMT will also handle technical issues related to Turnitin software in collaboration with software providers

## **2.1.2 Students**

2.1.2.1 After indicating their intention to submit their dissertation/thesis, postgraduate students will have to attend training related to Turnitin software use organized by DRPS, Faculties and or IEMT.

2.1.2.2 Students will be required to use acquired skills in reducing the plagiarism in their academic work.

2.1.2.3 Students are responsible for checking their thesis/dissertation in anti-plagiarism software (Turnitin).

2.1.2.4 Students must create a unique user profile consisting of an e-mail address, user password, and optional personal information, and a set of user preferences.

2.1.2.5 To begin using Turnitin, student must first login, thereafter she/he can upload research work and make self-check many times as

necessary to ensure they can clear the similarities captured by software before final submission for examination.

2.1.2.6 No dissertation or thesis will be accepted before passing the anti-plagiarism test.

### **2.1.3 Supervisor**

2.1.3.1 A Supervisor has the important responsibility of guiding the candidate in his/her Thesis/dissertation writing.

2.1.3.2 Although the writing of the thesis is entirely the responsibility of the student, it is the Supervisor's responsibility to ensure that the student submits a thesis already tested for plagiarism before it has to be taken to examiners.

2.1.3.3 Supervisor shall educate students about good academic practice and how to avoid plagiarism including the use of Turnitin software.

2.1.3.4 Supervisor can create a class and add student manually by creating a student account or provide class name, ID and password so that student can join him/herself.

2.1.3.5 Once the assignment is submitted by a student it will be uploaded to the software by the supervisor. The software will generate the originality report showing parts of the dissertation/thesis that may have been plagiarized, together with a list of probable plagiarized sources used by a student.

#### **2.1.4 Role of the Faculties**

2.1.4.1 All faculties are responsible to describe to their students and academic staff of the definition, implications and resulting punishments in case they are found guilty of plagiarism.

2.1.4.2 The faculties must acquit their students with this guideline and ensure that they are fully aware that all students are deemed to be individually and collectively responsible.

2.1.4.3 To facilitate the University in preventing plagiarism, upon receipt of final Dissertation/thesis from the students. Further, faculties shall be responsible for the making of a careful check all the submitted soft copy of the Theses or research work.

2.1.4.4 Associate Dean will endorse anti plagiarism report together with dissertation and submit to DRPS for examination purpose.

2.1.4.5 With regards to peculiarity in the level of plagiarism on the issue of methodology or part of the discussion will be determined by specific faculty guideline and endorsed by Head of Department or Associate Deans.

#### **2.1.5 Directorate of Research Publication and Postgraduate Studies**

2.1.5.1 The Directorate of Research, Publication and Postgraduate Studies (DRPS) will deal with final checkup of plagiarism to the student work. Thesis/dissertation should not be submitted to the examiners without anti plagiarism report.

2.1.5.2 DRPS will issue final verification after dissertation/thesis successfully pass ant-plagiarism test.

## **2.2 Levels of Checking Plagiarism in Theses/Dissertations**

There shall be at least four tiers of checking theses and dissertation for plagiarism as hereunder.

### **2.2.1 First Level**

2.2.1.1 The first level of checkup for plagiarism will be done by candidates themselves. This checkup shall be done when the candidate is submitting their final drafts to supervisors for certification and signing before the work is forwarded to examiners.

2.2.1.2 The student will sign on a special form and on their certification page of dissertation as a declaration that they have undertaken this exercise.

2.2.1.3 They should also state the level of plagiarism that plagiarism checker will have returned.

2.2.1.4 They should also forward such work alongside remarks on why the level of plagiarism is more than the tolerable cut off point (which is currently set to 30%) in their work.

### **2.2.2 Second Level**

2.2.2.1 The second level of checkup for plagiarism will be done by supervisors. This tier of checkup will be done before certifying candidates' final drafts of dissertations or theses that have to be

taken to examiners. Like candidates, supervisors will equally jot down the level of plagiarism that their plagiarism checker will have returned in the work in question.

2.2.2.2 If the level of plagiarism is more than the tolerable 30 percent cut off point and the supervisors find it justifiable. Then the supervisor should also forward the work to postgraduate coordinator with his/her remarks on the reasons of high scale of plagiarism in the work.

2.2.2.3 If a thesis or a dissertation is found to have plagiarized materials of more than 30 percent, it will be returned to its author for correction or for rational justification.

### **2.2.3 Third Level**

2.2.3.1 The third level of checkup will be done by the head of department in the faculties before the candidates' final drafts are submitted to the Directorate of Research, Publication and Postgraduate Studies (DRPS) for conveyance to internal and external examiners.

2.2.3.2 Postgraduate coordinators should write the levels of plagiarism that their plagiarism checkers will have returned in the work. If they discovered the higher level and finds it rational, they should also send the work alongside their remarks.

### **2.2.4 Fourth Level**

2.2.4.1 The final checkup will be done by the DRPS. This checkup for plagiarism will be done after the copy that has been passed by

examiners, has been defended successfully and has incorporated suggested corrections, if any.

2.2.4.2 The DRPS will stamp the dissertation/theses as an everlasting proof that the work has passed the plagiarism test.

2.2.4.3 Thereafter the DRPS will issue the final certificate of plagiarism check called the Plagiarism Verification Certificate. The format of the submission forms is shown in appendix III of this guideline.

### **2.3 Submission Procedures**

2.3.1 Students are required to submit electronic copy- preferably in pdf and word format in CD- of their thesis/dissertations intended to be subjected to a plagiarism check to the head of the department.

2.3.2 Submission of CD and thesis/dissertation must be accompanied by a declaration by the candidate.

2.3.3 Upon submission student shall fill thesis/dissertation submission form. The format of the submission forms is shown in appendix II of this guideline.

2.3.4 If DRPS will detect probable plagiarism, the formal procedure for plagiarism and the Academic Misconduct will be used as stated in OUT Prospectus of 2015/2016. This is essential for the University to be able to protect the integrity of the thesis process through formal sanctions.

## **2.4 Levels of Tolerance**

- 2.4.1 The level of tolerance of plagiarism in theses and dissertations will be 30% above which the candidate will have to review his/her work unless there is rational justification.

## **2.5 Penalty for Plagiarism**

- 2.5.1 Where a student submit dissertation or thesis for examination and is found to have been plagiarized, his or her case shall be presented to the relevant examination boards and the board shall make recommendations to the relevant authorities as per university regulations.

## **2.6 Revision**

These guidelines may be revised by directives issued from time to time by the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic).



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