GUIDELINES AND RULES ON STUDENT PLAGIARISM

HANDBOOK FOR STUDENTS
(As at 1 June 2005 - for coursework students only)
Students have a right to:

• be treated fairly and consistently in all aspects of assessment policy and practice;

• be informed of all aspects of assessment policies and practices in a course, including the criteria to be met and penalties for breaches. That information should also be in a format appropriate to students with a disability;

• have access to their student file; and

• be informed of appeal processes, and time limits, and appeal against decisions made on the basis of flawed processes.

Students have a responsibility to:

• behave ethically and appropriately, avoiding any action or behaviour which would unfairly disadvantage or advantage either themselves or another student;

• be aware that a major objective of assessment is the promotion of learning rather than the achievement of grades;

• use formal assessment tasks to assess the content and quality of their own work;

• inform themselves on assessment policies and practices, including the University's policies about academic honesty, legitimate cooperation, plagiarism and cheating, and the timely submission of work;

• be aware of the means for seeking assistance and advice on assessment within the School and the University;

• ensure that they understand the requirements for examinations and other assessment tasks;

• ensure that submitted assessment tasks are their own work except when they acknowledge shared ownership of a group project;

• inform themselves of appropriate appeal processes.
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I. WHAT IS PLAGIARISM?

Plagiarism is the presentation of the thoughts or work of another as one's own. Examples include:

- direct duplication of the thoughts or work of another, including by copying material, ideas or concepts from a book, article, report or other written document (whether published or unpublished), composition, artwork, design, drawing, circuitry, computer program or software, web site, Internet, other electronic resource, or another person's assignment without appropriate acknowledgement;

- paraphrasing another person's work with very minor changes keeping the meaning, form and/or progression of ideas of the original;

- piecing together sections of the work of others into a new whole;

- presenting an assessment item as independent work when it has been produced in whole or part in collusion with other people, for example, another student or a tutor; and

- claiming credit for a proportion a work contributed to a group assessment item that is greater than that actually contributed.

For the purposes of this policy, submitting an assessment item that has already been submitted for academic credit elsewhere may be considered plagiarism.

Knowingly permitting your work to be copied by another student may also be considered to be plagiarism.

Note that an assessment item produced in oral, not written, form, or involving live presentation, may similarly contain plagiarised material.

The inclusion of the thoughts or work of another with attribution appropriate to the academic discipline does not amount to plagiarism.

II. UNSW POLICY ON PLAGIARISM

At UNSW plagiarism is considered to be a form of academic misconduct and is viewed very seriously. UNSW is committed to helping students understand the conventions which govern academic communication to assist them avoid action which may result in academic misconduct (further information on the Student Misconduct Rules is available at: https://my.unsw.edu.au/student/academiclife/assessment/StudentMisconductRules.html).

In the interests of maintaining high standards in scholarship and research, the University reminds students that when they are writing essays, theses, and assessment items of any nature, they are ethically bound to refrain from plagiarism in all its forms. Students are advised to inform themselves about University policies and practices concerning assessment and Academic Misconduct (including plagiarism). Wherever possible, students should also take up those opportunities provided to them by the University to improve their academic and/or information literacy.
THE UNSW APPROACH TO STUDENT PLAGIARISM

The UNSW approach to plagiarism is educative. The University wishes to foster a culture of learning informed by values of integrity and honesty and all staff and students are encouraged to consider their rights and responsibilities as set out below and in the Undergraduate and Postgraduate Handbooks. See: http://www.handbook.unsw.edu.au/.

UNSW is also committed to providing a consistent, fair and equitable approach to managing student plagiarism. It is therefore expected that Faculties and Schools will strive to ensure the fair, consistent and equitable treatment of students when handling student plagiarism, and adopt relevant policy, procedures and guidance provided by the University. It is also expected that staff will be conscientious in their evaluation of students’ work and the identification of cases of possible plagiarism. All Faculties and Schools will provide students with discipline-specific examples of good and bad academic practice according to the conventions of the discipline, and provide specific advice regarding those techniques that will be required of students whilst studying at UNSW.

All students will be required to sign the approved Assessment Cover Sheet (available from Faculties and Schools), permitting their work to be subjected to checking for plagiarism when submitting all assessment items, including written assignments, reports, designs, compositions and take home examinations.

To assist students to avoid plagiarism, the following initiatives will be implemented as part of a pilot program within UNSW from Session 2, 2005:

- appointment of a centrally-located Student Ethics Coordinator (SEC);
- appointment of Associate Deans (Education) or equivalent as Faculty Student Ethics Officers (FSEOs);
- optional appointment by Heads of School of School Student Ethics Officers (SSEOs);
- introduction of a new four-level scheme for dealing with incidents of plagiarism;
- creation of a Central Plagiarism Register (CPR);
- six-month trial of a similarity detection tool (Turnitin®) in several Faculties and Schools.

Together these strategies are designed to strengthen the culture of academic integrity within UNSW whilst providing mechanisms for improved coordination, cooperation and communications with students about relevant UNSW policy and its implementation. (For further information on the above strategies see Guidelines and Rules for Faculties and Schools on Student Plagiarism: Handbook for Staff. This Handbook is being made available to students in the interests of transparency). Specific strategies to assist students have also been adopted by UNSW in the following areas:

i. The Learning Centre

The Learning Centre website is the central University online resource for staff and student information on academic honesty and understanding and avoiding plagiarism. It can be found at: http://www.lc.unsw.edu.au/plagiarism. The Learning Centre also provides substantial educational written materials, workshops, and individual assistance to aid students, for example, in:

- correct referencing and citation practices;
- paraphrasing, summarising, essay writing, and time management;
- appropriate use of, and attribution for, a range of materials including text, images, formulae and concepts.

Students are reminded that careful time management is an important part of study and one of the identified causes of plagiarism is poor time management. Students should allow sufficient time for research, drafting, and the proper referencing of sources in preparing all assessment items. Information on, and assistance with, good time management is available at The Learning Centre, if required (see: http://www.lc.unsw.edu.au/onlib/time.html).

ii. Online Information Literacy Tutorial (OILT)

From Session 1, 2005, all commencing students in their first session of enrolment (undergraduate and postgraduate) are required to enrol in the online Information Literacy Tutorial (ELISE) provided by the UNSW Library. This Program will assist students in:

- attaining the necessary standard of information literacy required for commencing University study; and,
• understanding the basic principles regarding the ethical use of information, thereby helping students avoid unintentional plagiarism or poor academic practice.

To ensure continuing students are provided the opportunity for similar education, all existing students will be expected, by end Session 2, 2006, to have completed the online information literacy tutorial (LILT), or equivalent, provided by the UNSW Library.

iii. Students Enrolled in Research Programs

Whilst it is intended that the broad principles outlined in this document will apply to all students of the University, it is recognised that special requirements may necessarily exist in respect of students enrolled in research programs. The issue of student plagiarism for students enrolled in research programs is therefore pending advice from the following: Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research); Dean of Postgraduate Studies, Graduate Research School; and the Committee on Research.

In the interim, research students should seek advice from relevant academic staff if in any doubt as to the requirements of the discipline, the Program in which they are enrolled, or the work required of them.

3 N.B. Some Faculties/Schools provide discipline-specific versions of LILT in conjunction with UNSW Library.
4. **DETERMINING THE APPROPRIATE RESPONSE TO PLAGIARISM AT UNSW**

All plagiarism is unacceptable at UNSW. The University recognises, however, that many factors may give rise to plagiarism and that plagiarism can, for example, occur inadvertently. Less serious cases of plagiarism are therefore often best dealt with on an educative, rather than punitive, basis between relevant Academic Staff/student advisors and students.

In determining how best to handle an incident of plagiarism, the amount of plagiarism identified in an assessment item may provide an important indication as to whether an Informal or Formal Educative Response is appropriate, or, in more serious cases, whether the matter should be treated as a Formal Offence. However, other factors will also be relevant to that inquiry.

Where a formal response is appropriate, four levels of response are available. These are referred to as the Four Levels of Plagiarism. A formal response may be an educative response or a punitive response.

Where plagiarism has been identified, it will be necessary to decide:

- whether the plagiarism should be dealt with at an informal or a formal level; and
- if a formal response is required, the level of response which is appropriate.

These two inquiries require a determination as to whether the alleged plagiarism is Significant. Plagiarism which is Significant will vary as to its degree of seriousness.

In determining whether the plagiarism is Significant, and assessing its seriousness, consideration should be given to the following matters:

- Whether the material is considered important or of consequence to the assessment item in which it appears, also taking into account the nature of the plagiarism and the context in which it is found;
- The extent or amount of the plagiarism in an assessment item (quantified if possible);
- The proportion of the overall course mark represented by the assessment item;
- The nature of the course and the assessment item;
- The degree to which the alleged plagiarism affects any underlying thesis on which the assessment item is based;
- The conventions associated with the particular academic discipline;
- The year or study level of the student;
- The background of the student;
- Whether the student has completed an approved academic literacy tutorial or online test on avoiding plagiarism;
- Whether the student has previously been warned for plagiarism and is the subject of an entry on the Central Plagiarism Register (CPR - see later for further information);
- Any apparent intention to deceive by a student; and, if any
- The level and effect of that intention.

Whilst the determination as to significance will generally fall to individual Academic Staff in the first instance, in the event of any doubt, advice will be sought from the relevant Head of School or FSEO. In the event of any dispute as to whether the plagiarism is Significant, responsibility for final determination rests with the relevant Head of School or FSEO (where referred to the latter for consideration).

By way of example only, the copying and pasting by a student of a sentence of written text from an Internet website into an average-sized, text-based, undergraduate assessment item of 2,000 words without appropriate attribution may, although unacceptable plagiarism, be considered to be non-Significant when committed by a junior student, and therefore may be dealt with informally in an educative way by the academic staff member concerned. However, the same plagiarism may be considered to be Significant when committed by a more experienced student in an undergraduate or postgraduate assessment item or higher degree research paper, and may therefore warrant consideration for treatment with a Formal Educative Response or as a Formal Offence, depending on the circumstances.

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* Where the word ‘Significant’ appears subsequently in this document, and it is intended that it be used within the meaning ascribed above, the word appears with a capital ‘S’.
5. INFORMAL EDUCATIVE RESPONSES

Where, in light of all the relevant factors above (see Determining the Appropriate Response to Plagiarism at UNSW) the plagiarism is considered to be non-Significant and an Informal Educative Response is appropriate, individual Academic Staff will counsel the student and provide any advice or assistance necessary. No penalties are applied and no further administrative action is required. Staff will, however, continue to assist with advice concerning good academic practice and the conventions of the relevant academic discipline. Such remedial measures can also be applied for plagiarism at any other level in addition to any penalty applied.

At this level, entries are not made onto the Central Plagiarism Register.

However, where, in light of all the relevant factors above, the plagiarism is considered to be Significant and formal action is appropriate, the plagiarism will be considered under UNSW’s Four Levels of Plagiarism, as follows:

6. SIGNIFICANT PLAGIARISM AND THE FOUR LEVELS OF PLAGIARISM (FORMAL ACTION)

UNSW’s Four Levels of Plagiarism are intended to provide greater certainty when dealing with student plagiarism formally, whilst providing appropriate discretion. The Four Levels set out the range of formal actions available to Academic Staff for handling cases, as follows (for full details see Responses at Faculty/School Level):

i. Formal Educative Responses

Level 1: Where, in light of all the relevant factors, the plagiarism is considered to be Significant and a Formal Educative (and not punitive) Response is appropriate, the matter will be dealt with by:

- individual Academic Staff counselling the student; and
- referring the student to The Learning Centre; and/or
- requiring the student to revise and resubmit the assessment item in which plagiarised material has been found.

However, prior to proceeding as a Level 1 incident, staff will first enquire through the relevant Head of School as to whether an entry currently exists on the Central Plagiarism Register. If a single previous entry appears, the matter will instead be dealt with as a Level 2 Incident. In the event of third and subsequent entries appearing, the matter should be dealt with as a Formal Offence (Level 3 or above) unless the relevant Head of School or FSEO considers that a Formal Educative (and not punitive) Response is appropriate. In such cases, the administrative arrangements for that level will then apply.

Level 1 incidents require an entry to be made onto the Central Plagiarism Register.

Level 2: Where, a second or subsequent incident of Significant plagiarism occurs and a Formal Educative (and not punitive) Response is appropriate, Academic Staff will:

- issue a verbal warning; and
- return the assessment item to the student unmarked, accompanied by a written notice
requesting that the assessment item be properly referenced and returned for marking by a nominated date. The properly referenced item should then be marked; and

- refer the student for remedial interview with the Head of School or FSEO; and

- refer the student to The Learning Centre for remedial attention.

For all Level 2 incidents, the Head of School and FSEO will be informed and the student advised in writing of the potential penalties for plagiarism.

Where the Academic Staff member considers that the plagiarism is considered to be sufficiently serious to be treated as a Formal Offence, no further investigation will be conducted by the staff member, and the matter will be referred immediately to the relevant Head of School for consideration.

The involvement of the Head of School/FSEO should have the combined effect of providing the student with an opportunity for clarifying with a senior staff member the expectations of the student in relation to academic honesty within the Faculty/School, reinforcing the serious nature of plagiarism, and an opportunity for a verbal and written warning to be issued. The involvement of The Learning Centre ensures a further opportunity for the student to receive independent advice in respect of general academic literacy issues and improving citation practices/referencing technique where required.

Prior to proceeding as a Level 2 incident, staff will first enquire through the relevant Head of School as to whether an entry currently exists on the Central Plagiarism Register. If a single, previous entry appears, the matter will be dealt with as a Level 2 Incident. In the event of two or more entries, a decision needs to be made by the relevant Head of School/FSEO as to whether the matter should receive a Formal Educatve Response or be dealt with as a Formal Offence (Level 3 or above). In such cases, the administrative arrangements for that level will then apply.

Level 2 incidents require an entry to be made onto the Central Plagiarism Register.

ii. Formal Offences

**Level 3:** Where, in light of all the relevant factors, the plagiarism is considered to be Significant and of a more serious nature, or a third or subsequent Level 1 or 2 incident occurs, and, in the joint opinion of the relevant staff member and Head of School/FSEO, the matter is considered to warrant action as a Formal Offence, it will be referred immediately to the Head of School or FSEO for investigation. If necessary, consideration may be given as to penalty. Level 3 would not normally apply to students who have not completed the relevant online information literacy programs.

Level 3 offences are Formal Offences and are dealt with only by a Head of School or FSEO, at which point penalties may be imposed by those persons only, although considerable discretion as to penalty is available.

Where a determination is made that a Level 3 offence has occurred, an entry is to be made on the Central Plagiarism Register, even where no penalty is imposed.

**Level 4:** The most serious incidents of Significant plagiarism are considered to be Level 4 offences. Those offences are where, in light of all the relevant factors and in the joint opinion of the relevant Head of School and FSEO, the circumstances indicate that the likely penalty for the plagiarism will exceed that provided for lower level offences, and the breach is gross in nature, such that it should be considered a serious Student Academic Misconduct offence under Student Misconduct Rules. Those offences will be referred to the Vice-Chancellor, who will refer those matters for investigation and consideration by the Director, UNSW Student Services, under Student Misconduct Rules. Penalties may include exclusion or expulsion from the University, or the imposition of a fine.

Where a determination is made that a Level 4 offence has occurred, an entry is to be made on the Central Plagiarism Register, even where no penalty is imposed.

For further information as penalties see UNSW Responses at Faculty and School Levels (Four Levels of Plagiarism).

**Note:** a matter may at any time be referred for action as a Formal Offence where an Academic Staff member considers that a breach is gross in nature. If so, the Academic Staff member may refer the matter to the relevant Head of School or FSEO for joint consideration (See Four Levels of Plagiarism).
7. DETERMINING SIGNIFICANT PLAGIARISM USING SIMILARITY DETECTION TOOLS (SDTs)

Students should note that from June 2005, the University may make use of electronic aids, such as a Similarity Detection Tool, to confirm the level of plagiarism in an assessment item. This tool will provide an electronic means for identifying the source of materials used in written assessment items and thereby assists students and staff in ensuring that appropriate acknowledgement occurs. The sources against which the SDT will compare student work include those found on the World Wide Web, many electronic journals and databases, and assessment items submitted by students at UNSW and other universities throughout the world. The SDT will not be a substitute for discussions between staff and students about the importance of original work, correct approaches to referencing or, as mentioned previously, the exercise by Academic Staff of careful judgement as to whether similar material has been plagiarised or not.

From Session 1, 2006 all students (including part-time, full-time, and non-award students) will, in their first session of study at UNSW, be required to submit electronically a minimum of one assessment item in a nominated course (a Practice Assignment Review (PAR)) for assessment using the SDT. The student will be required to:

- print the originality report associated with that PAR; and,
- review the results of that PAR with Academic Staff associated with the delivery of that course.

The submission process will be guided by the Academic Staff member responsible for delivering that course.

Provision will be made for students with limited access to computers to submit assessment items electronically within the University. Students may, however, also be required to submit printed copies of their assessment item in the usual manner, subject to Faculty/School requirements.

The results of any assignment will instead be reviewed privately between the student and the relevant Academic Staff member with a view to educating students in good academic practice and referencing. Where appropriate, students may be required to resubmit their work for formal assessment and/or be referred to The Learning Centre for additional assistance. It is at the discretion of the Head of School as to whether normal assessment arrangements and marking will apply to that assessment item designated as a Practice Assignment Review.

In all subsequent sessions of enrolment, students will have limited access to the SDT for the purpose of checking ‘soft’ copies of their own work prior to its final submission. Under this arrangement, assessment items may be submitted to the SDT as Assignment Reviews and at least two opportunities will be provided for students to do so in those courses which require formal assessment items to be submitted electronically using the SDT.

However, notwithstanding whether the SDT is used in a course, students should be aware that all formal assessment items, whether in hard copy or electronic form, are potentially subject to penalties for breaches of the University’s Student Misconduct Rules. Students should, as a matter of general practice, retain an electronic version of their assessment item in any course where it is practicable to do so.

The work of an individual student will not normally be tested separately from their peer group, unless it is agreed by the relevant Academic Staff member, investigating officer, Head of School and/or relevant FSEO that the circumstances justify such a course of action. If a student is unable to supply the required item for electronic testing, a plagiarism investigation should be conducted in the normal manner without use of the SDT. Students should be aware that this may include scanning of the hard copy of the original assessment item using appropriate software for the purposes of submitting the assessment item for checking to the SDT.
8. RESPONSES AT FACULTY/SCHOOL LEVEL

For Faculties and Schools, a scheme of Four Levels of Plagiarism is recommended (see below). In order to ensure uniformity in respect of penalties generally, a University Officer with responsibility for imposing penalties should consult with the relevant FSEO, Director, UNSW Students Services, or Student Ethics Coordinator prior to imposing any penalty for any Formal Offence (Level 3 or 4).

For interpretation of the term ‘Significance’, see Determining the Appropriate Response to Plagiarism at UNSW (p.4).

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>FOUR LEVELS OF PLAGIARISM AT UNSW</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CRITERIA</td>
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<td>Formal Educatve Responses</td>
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<th>LEVEL 1</th>
<th>Academic Staff</th>
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<td></td>
<td>Where, in light of all the relevant factors, the plagiarism is considered to be Significant and a Formal Educatve (and not punitive) Response is appropriate, Academic Staff should first enquire with the Head of School or FSEO as to whether a previous entry has been recorded on the Central Plagiarism Register. If no previous entry exists, the Academic Staff member should:</td>
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<td>• counsel the student; and</td>
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<td>• refer the student to The Learning Centre for remedial attention; and, if necessary</td>
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<td>• return the assessment item to the student unmarked, accompanied by a written notice requesting that the essay be properly referenced and returned for marking by a nominated date. The properly referenced item should then be marked.</td>
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<td>If a previous Register entry exists, the matter should be treated as a Level 2 incident (below).</td>
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<td>For all Level 1 incidents, the Head of School and FSEO should be informed, an appropriate entry recorded on the Central Plagiarism Register, with the student also advised in writing of the potential penalties for plagiarism.</td>
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<td>Where the Academic Staff member considers that the matter is sufficiently serious to be treated as a Formal Offence, no further investigation should be conducted by the staff member, and the matter should be referred immediately to the relevant Head of School for consideration.</td>
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<tr>
<th>LEVEL 2</th>
<th>Academic Staff &amp; HoS/FSEO</th>
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<td>Where a second or subsequent incident of Significant plagiarism occurs and it is considered that a Formal Educatve (and not punitive) Response is appropriate, Academic Staff should:</td>
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<td>• issue a verbal warning; and</td>
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<td>• return the assessment to the student unmarked, accompanied by a written notice requesting that the essay be properly referenced and returned for marking by a nominated date. The properly referenced item should then be marked; and</td>
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<td>• refer the student for remedial interview with the Head of School or FSEO; and</td>
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<td>For all Level 2 incidents, the Head of School and FSEO should be informed, an appropriate entry made on the Central Plagiarism Register, with the student also advised in writing of the potential penalties for plagiarism.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Where the Academic Staff member considers the plagiarism sufficiently serious to be treated as a Formal Offence (Level 3 or 4), no further investigation should be conducted by the staff member, and the matter should be referred immediately to the relevant Head of School for consideration.</td>
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## Four Levels of Plagiarism at UNSW

### Criteria

**Formal Offences**

<table>
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<th>Level 3</th>
<th>HoS/FSEO only</th>
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<tr>
<td>Where, in light of all the relevant factors, the plagiarism is considered to be Significant and of a more serious nature, or a third or subsequent Level 1 or 2 incident occurs, and, in the joint opinion of the relevant staff member and Head of School/FSEO, the matter is considered to warrant action as a Formal Offence, it should be referred immediately to the Head of School or FSEO for investigation. If necessary, consideration should be given to one of the following penalties:</td>
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<td>• A written warning; or</td>
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<td>• Reduction in marks up to and including zero for the assessment item. Re-submission may be offered; or,</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Reduction in marks up to zero for the assessment item. Re-submission is not an option; or</td>
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<td>• Reduction in marks for the Course; or</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Failure in the Course.</td>
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In the event of a subsequent, but non-Significant, incident of plagiarism, the relevant Head of School or FSEO may determine that the matter is one to which a Formal Educative (and not punitive) Response is appropriate. If so, the administrative arrangements for that level should then apply.

Level 3 would not normally apply to students who have not completed the relevant online information literacy programs.

Where a determination is made that a Level 3 offence has occurred, an entry is to be made on the Central Plagiarism Register, even where no penalty is imposed. The details of the offence will also be recorded on the student’s file, with the student advised in writing of this action and the potential penalties for future plagiarism.

Where the Head of School and FSEO are jointly of the opinion that the matter cannot be dealt with appropriately at School or Faculty level, and is sufficiently serious to warrant a penalty in excess of those provided above, the matter may be referred to the Vice-Chancellor as a Level 4 offence for consideration under Student Misconduct Rules as Student Academic Misconduct. Penalties may include exclusion or expulsion from the University, or the imposition of a fine.

**Level 4**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>HoS/FSEO only</th>
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<tr>
<td>The most serious incidents of Significant plagiarism are considered to be Level 4 offences. Level 4 offences are those where, in the joint opinion of the relevant Head of School and FSEO, the circumstances indicate that the likely penalty will exceed that provided for lower level offences, and the breach is gross in nature, such that it should be considered a serious Student Academic Misconduct offence under Student Misconduct Rules. Those offences should be referred to the Vice-Chancellor, who will refer those matters for investigation and consideration by the Director, UNSW Student Services, under Student Misconduct Rules. Penalties may include exclusion or expulsion from the University, or the imposition of a fine.</td>
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Level 4 would not normally apply to students who have not completed the relevant online information literacy programs.

Where a determination is made that a Level 4 offence has occurred, an entry is to be made on the Central Plagiarism Register, even where no penalty is imposed.

For all Level 4 incidents, an entry will be also recorded on the student's file, with the student advised in writing of this action and the potential penalties for future plagiarism.

In the event of any disagreement as to whether an offence warrants consideration as a Level 4 offence, the Director, UNSW Student Services, and Student Ethics Coordinator should be consulted. In the event consensus cannot be reached, the final determination rests with the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic).

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6 Either ELISE or Faculty-specific equivalent, or The Learning Centre Academic Integrity and Plagiarism Test.

7 Under Student Misconduct Rule 2.1, “Exclusion” means the cancellation of enrolment of a student and the withdrawal for a specified time of all rights and privileges as a student of the University, including the right to re-enrol as a student and the right to enter or to be on University grounds.

8 Either ELISE or Faculty-specific equivalent, or The Learning Centre Academic Integrity and Plagiarism Test.
## General Advice
Academic Staff may deal with non-Significant instances of plagiarism educatively, by counselling the student. In those cases, no penalty is applied and no further action is required.

## Investigations
Individual Academic Staff may deal only with non-Significant plagiarism and Level 1 or 2 incidents which require only a Formal Educative Response, unless appointed as an Investigating Officer. Where a Formal Offence (Level 3 or 4) is, or is likely to be, alleged, individual Academic Staff are not to become involved in any further investigation, but refer to the matter to the relevant Head of School, who will appoint an appropriate investigating Officer. Investigating Officers should not conduct any investigation in relation to a student currently enrolled in a Course in which they are involved. Where a Head of School has appointed a School Student Ethics Officer (SSEO), all investigations may be undertaken by that Officer. However, where investigations are undertaken by an SSEO, the final determination as to penalty should be referred either to the relevant Head of School or FSEO.

### Guidelines for Determining Penalties
In order to ensure a level of consistency between Schools, a Head of School should consult with the FSEO, Director UNSW Student Services, or Student Ethics Coordinator prior to issuing any penalty.

In determining penalties for Formal Offences, the circumstances to be taken into account by a Head of School or FSEO should include:

- the intention to deceive; and, if any,
- the level of deception;
- the extent of the plagiarism (quantified if possible);
- the proportion of the overall course mark represented by the assessment item;
- the nature of the course and the assessment item;
- the degree to which the alleged plagiarism affects any underlying thesis on which the assessment item submitted is based;
- the conventions associated with the particular academic discipline;
- previous Formal Educative Responses or Formal Offences (if known);
- the level of the student;
- the background of the student;
- the student’s knowledge of Student Misconduct Rules;
- the conventions associated with the particular academic discipline;
- aggravating factors (e.g. theft of another student’s work, dishonesty);
- mitigating factors (e.g. extenuating personal circumstances).

In order to ensure a level of consistency between Schools, the Head of School should consult with the FSEO prior to issuing any penalty. The Student Ethics Coordinator (Student Ethics Coordinator) and Director, UNSW Student Services, may also be consulted if required.

In finalising all decisions in respect of investigations and penalties, the decision maker should record detailed reasons for the decision in writing, including reference to the above circumstances, as applicable.

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9. See Student Misconduct Rule 5.6(a).
9. GUIDE FOR DETERMINING ACTIONS OR PENALTIES FOR ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

Students should be aware that the following scale, based on that in use by the University of Newcastle, may be used by academic staff in assessing the seriousness of a particular case. Under this model, academic discipline conventions and student knowledge, experience, and dishonesty, receive consideration in the context of a scale of importance. Such an approach provides due recognition of academic conventions whilst ensuring that the level, nature and extent of any dishonesty continue to be key elements in determining more serious offences. Poor academic practice is distinguished from dishonest practice, although the seniority of the student may still be an important consideration in either circumstance. Although the Guide may assist in the determination of actions or penalties, each case must be evaluated on its merits, and the Guide should not be taken as a substitute for advice contained elsewhere in this document.

The Nature and Extent of the Academic Dishonesty:
Rating: Low Medium High
How much of the work is not the student’s own?
Where is the misconduct located? e.g. in the body of work or in the appendices? In the research methods or in a conclusion?

The level of the student:
Rating: Low Medium High
Is the student in first, second, third, final or a postgraduate year?
Would the level of the student’s career indicate that the student should be aware of academic conventions?

Student Knowledge of Academic Regulations:
Rating: Low Medium High
Has the student been alerted to their responsibilities in relation to academic conduct (Appropriate dissemination of regulations etc)?
Is it a first offence?
Has the student been exposed to an academic skills course or module?
How recently has the student arrived in the country/institution? Are cultural influences a possible factor?
In the light of the above, what would you expect a student to know of the academic regulations?
Is the offence limited by poor in-text referencing with no evidence of a wish to deceive?
Did the action intend to deceive the assessor?

Academic Discipline Conventions:
Rating: Low Medium High
What are the generally accepted rules of the discipline in relation to academic conduct and misconduct?
(Note these are academic conventions not industry conventions).
Is the conduct under investigation in breach of these conventions?

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10. **GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES FOR STAFF**

Whilst University staff are encouraged to undertake a range of strategies to help students avoid plagiarism, the University also recognises that the consequences of not handling plagiarism incidents appropriately can be serious for all concerned.

Students should be assured, therefore, that a range of guidelines and procedures for Academic and General Staff have therefore been developed for staff in order to further ensure the equitable treatment of students and due process for students in plagiarism investigations. For further information, students may refer to the Guidelines and Rules on Student Plagiarism: Handbook for Staff.