

# Rules on Handling Student Academic Dishonesty

(Approved by the Rector on 06 December 2011)

## I. Types of Academic Dishonesty

This section aims to provide UM students an understanding of the most common types of academic dishonesty, with a focus on plagiarism.

Academic dishonesty may be broadly defined as any fraudulent actions or attempts by a person to use unauthorised or unacceptable means in any academic work. It is any type of cheating that occurs in relation to an academic exercise and can come in many different forms including cheating, fabrication, collusion, and plagiarism.

The following are some examples of academic dishonesty. These examples, however, are by no means exhaustive:

1. **Cheating** is intentionally using or attempting to use unauthorised materials, information, or study aids in any academic exercise. It includes but is not limited to:
  - Copying from another student during an exam or on an assignment;
  - Giving or receiving information during an exam;
  - Using unauthorised material during an exam;
  - Obtaining exam questions and/or answers from a student who has already taken the exam;
  - Asking someone to take an exam or write a paper on his/her behalf;
  - Collaborating on homework assignments, take-home tests and quizzes without authorisation from the instructor;
  - Submitting the same paper/thesis, or substantial portions of the same paper/thesis, for credit or degree more than once.
2. **Fabrication** is the invention or falsification of sources, citations, data, or results and recording or reporting them in an academic exercise. Examples include:
  - Citing a source that does not exist;
  - Making up or falsifying evidence or data or other source materials;
  - Falsifying research papers or reports by selectively omitting or altering data that do not support one's conclusions or claimed experimental precision.
3. **Collusion** is facilitation of dishonesty by helping other students engage in academic dishonesty. Though the facilitator may not benefit personally from providing assistance to another, the facilitator's act similarly violates academic integrity. Examples of collusion include:
  - Knowingly or negligently allowing one's work to be used by other students without prior approval from the instructor;
  - Knowingly allowing others to copy answers in exams, tests and other assignments;
  - Taking an exam or writing a paper for another student.
4. **Plagiarism** is defined as the appropriation of another person's ideas, processes, results or words without permission and/or due acknowledgment. It covers all forms of work submitted to the University for assessment (assignments, essays, take-home examinations, projects, theses and all other forms of coursework). Plagiarism is intellectual theft. When using another person's words, ideas or results, whether such words, ideas or results have been published or not, one must obtain permission and/or give that person appropriate credit, or else one will be stealing the intellectual property belonging to another.

## II. Plagiarism

Plagiarism has become more serious with the relative ease of reproducing information that is readily available from the Internet. Students have been discovered to have 'cut and pasted' materials from various electronic sources and passed them off as their own. In academia, plagiarism is regarded as academic dishonesty and a serious offence. Like other forms of academic dishonesty, students who have committed plagiarism will face disciplinary measures ranging from an F grade to expulsion from the University. Students are expected to read the Regulations of the Student Discipline of the University of Macau for the mechanism for handling student disciplinary cases.

Some students have claimed that they were not aware of committing plagiarism. Inadvertent plagiarism is nonetheless considered an offence. Lack of awareness is no excuse, and plagiarism, whether intentional or inadvertent due to ignorance or carelessness, is still a violation of academic integrity. After all, plagiarism is a simple concept of copying without proper acknowledgement. The University has made the Rules easily accessible and all students are expected to read and follow it. If any student has any questions about plagiarism or other issues pertaining to academic integrity, he/she should consult the instructor.

We must be careful to recognise the people from whom we borrow ideas, just as we expect others to acknowledge the ideas that we ourselves have worked hard to develop. To avoid plagiarism, every direct quotation must be identified by quotation marks or appropriate indentation and both direct quotation and paraphrasing must be cited properly according to the accepted format for the particular discipline or as required by the instructor in a course.

Obviously, if you make a copy of an assignment done by a classmate and submit it as your own, you are guilty of plagiarism but there are many other forms of plagiarism. Some common examples of plagiarism are:

1. Verbatim plagiarism or word-for-word plagiarism  
The most common type of plagiarism is copying word for word from a source (e.g. the published works, the essays or theses of other persons, etc.) without using quotation marks and without citing the source. Even if you add some words of your own around the text that you copied directly from a source, you must identify the quote by placing quotation marks around it in order to distinguish it from your own words, and you must also acknowledge the source by providing a citation.
2. Substantial copying with minor modifications  
If you reproduce another person's text with only minor changes, such as adding/deleting a few words, rearranging the order of words or phrases, and changing the sentence structure (e.g. using passive voice to replace active voice in the original), and do not give proper attribution, you are committing plagiarism.
3. Mosaic plagiarism  
If you copy phrases or sentences from a source or a variety of sources or merely change a few words here and there, and then join those bits and pieces together without carefully identifying the quotes with quotation marks and citing the sources, the result is a mosaic of other people's ideas and words. You are responsible for making clear distinctions between your ideas and the ideas of the others who have informed your work and for following the correct citation style to avoid plagiarism.
4. Apt phrase  
If you use an author's distinctive term or phrase without proper attribution, it is plagiarism. If you want to use the author's original words, you must put those words in quotation marks and provide a citation.

---

## 5. Paraphrase

Paraphrasing means taking another person's ideas and putting those ideas in your own words. Paraphrasing does not mean replacing a word or two in someone else's sentence with synonyms. When you paraphrase, your task is to distill the source's ideas in your own words and restate the ideas in your own words. It is a fine way to use another person's ideas to support your own argument as long as you attribute the material to the author and cite the source. However, if you rephrase someone else's text in your own words without attribution, you will be representing someone else's ideas as your own and that is plagiarism.

The rule of thumb here is simple: Whenever you use published ideas that are not your own, you need to give credit to the source and cite properly according to the accepted format for the particular discipline or as required by the instructor in a course (For unpublished ideas, on top of the above, you need to obtain permission from the author(s).). Make sure that the sources are properly referenced. Plagiarism occurs when you present as your own work, without due acknowledgment, any material that was obtained from another source, regardless of how or where you acquired it, and regardless of whether you committed plagiarism intentionally or unintentionally.

It is every student's duty to find out what plagiarism is. The University has set out these rules to provide more information but the above illustrations may not cover every situation. There are books explaining plagiarism and guides to referencing in the UM Library. If you feel uncertain about what constitute plagiarism and how to avoid it, consult your instructor or the Librarian.

Advanced technology has made plagiarism easier. At the same time, advanced technology has also made detection of plagiarism easier for instructors. It is highly likely that your fellow classmates are also referring to the same texts, and your instructor has probably read the sources before reading your paper. When you copy, the shift in writing style will also be obvious to your experienced instructor. Avoid plagiarism by all means. The University would like to remind all students that plagiarism is theft of someone else's work and it ruins the purpose of education. If you resort to copying due to pressure to meet assignment deadlines or insufficient understanding of the subject, or if you have difficulty in writing your paper and citing your sources properly, consult your instructor.

Submission of assignments, papers and theses electronically via UM's e-learning management system, namely UMMoodle, or another software system as prescribed by the University, is strongly advised across the entire University. With the integration of UMMoodle and the plagiarism prevention tool, Turnitin, made available to all UM teachers, instructors can now more easily evaluate the originality of students' works by comparing them with online sources and Turnitin-owned sources. For postgraduate theses, supervisors and examination committees at UM are strongly advised to check the submitted theses using the designated plagiarism detection software before proceeding with an examination even if the theses have not been submitted via UMMoodle. Should any student feel uncertain about how to submit assignments and theses via UMMoodle, please consult one of the UM staff members at the helpdesk of the Information and Communication Technology Office.

Effective from 1 January 2012, it is a university-wide requirement for students to submit a signed statement together with their theses (and other assignments as requested by individual teachers) to declare that they have not committed any type of academic dishonesty in their works and that they have included proper citations for all those materials extracted from other sources (see below a template for such a self-declaration). It is students' responsibility to ensure that they have not committed any type of academic dishonesty, instead of waiting for their instructors to check and 'police' them.

Self-declaration template:

I declare that the thesis/assignment here submitted is original except for the source materials explicitly acknowledged and that this thesis/assignment, or parts of this thesis/assignment have not been previously submitted for the same degree/course or for a different degree/course.

I also acknowledge that I am aware of the Rules on Handling Student Academic Dishonesty and the Regulations of the Student Discipline of the University of Macau.

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Student ID Number \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Programme/Course Code \_\_\_\_\_

**III. Procedures for Handling Student Academic Dishonesty**

1. If the instructor suspects a student of committing an act of academic dishonesty in any academic exercise submitted for assessment, he/she can meet with the student individually and impose sanction(s) as appropriate except those as prescribed by the relevant regulations, if he/she believes that the nature of such act is not serious.
2. If the instructor suspects that a student has committed an act of academic dishonesty in any academic exercise submitted for assessment and considers the case more serious or complicated to be handled by himself/herself:
  - a. The instructor should report the matter as soon as possible, together with any relevant evidence, to his/her Department Head concerned or Programme Coordinator concerned in the absence of a Department Head;
  - b. The Department Head/Programme Coordinator should attach his/her comments, if any, and forward the case to the Dean/Director for handling.
3. The Dean/Director or his/her delegate should meet with the student and any other relevant parties to investigate.
4. After the meeting with the student and any other relevant parties, if the Dean/Director or his/her delegate is satisfied that no act of academic dishonesty has been committed, no further action will be taken and the case will be closed. A written report of the case should be kept by the academic unit concerned for record purpose.
5. If the student is proven guilty of the alleged offence, the Dean/Director may impose the following sanction, according to Item 1 of Article 5 of the Regulations of the Student Discipline of the University of Macau, either singly or in combination as deemed appropriate, and the result will be reported in writing to the Student Disciplinary Committee for record:
  - a. Verbal or written warning;

- 
- b. Reprimand;
  - c. Restitution or compensation, where applicable;
  - d. Suspension of any academic or other student rights, benefits, privileges and/or rights of using facilities for a specified period of time;
  - e. Recording a demerit.
6. The Dean/Director should inform the student in writing of the judgment and the sanction(s) and send the notification to the student by registered mail. The Dean/Director should also inform the Department Head/Programme Coordinator concerned of the disciplinary decision in writing. The case will then be closed at the academic unit level.
  7. If more severe sanctions are deemed necessary, the case will be sent to the Student Disciplinary Committee via the Dean/Director in accordance with Item 2 of Article 5 of the Regulations of the Student Discipline of the University of Macau, for the Committee to decide on the appropriate sanction. The composition of such Committee shall be defined by Item 1 of Article 9 of the Regulations of the Student Discipline of the University of Macau.
  8. Under the following circumstances, the academic unit may consider bringing the case to the Student Disciplinary Committee for further investigation and decision:
    - a. The Dean/Director or his/her delegate believes that he/she is not able to make a decision based on the available evidence;
    - b. The case is too severe or complicated to be handled by the academic unit concerned;
    - c. The case involves persons who are not members of the university community.
  9. If the Student Disciplinary Committee finds the student not guilty after an investigation, the case will be closed. A written report of the case should be kept by the Student Disciplinary Committee and a copy shall be sent to academic unit concerned for information and record.
  10. If the Student Disciplinary Committee finds the student guilty of academic dishonesty after an investigation, it may impose, apart from the sanctions in 5 (b)-(e) above, the following sanction in accordance with Item 1 of Article 6 of the Regulations of the Student Discipline of the University of Macau, either singly or in combination as deemed appropriate:
    - a. Suspension from the University for a specified period of time;
    - b. Expulsion from the University.
  11. Under special circumstances and subject to approval by the relevant authority, the Rector may impose on students/graduates sanctions which are not stipulated in the internal regulations and rules of the University of Macau, including but not limited to:
    - a. An F grade for the course taken;
    - b. Removal of course credits;
    - c. Retraction of a qualification granted by the University.
  12. In deciding on the sanction, the nature and gravity of the offence should be taken into account (such as the amount of work plagiarized, whether the offence is premeditated, etc.). The number of previous offences also needs to be taken into account. More serious punishments should be imposed for repeated offences.
  13. The Student Disciplinary Committee should inform the student in writing of the judgment and the sanction(s) and send the notification to the student by registered mail. The Student Disciplinary Committee should also inform the Dean/Director concerned, the Registrar and the Dean of Students of the disciplinary decision in writing.
  14. Any sanction imposed on a student according to the Regulations of the Student Discipline of the University of Macau should be filed with the academic unit concerned and kept as part of the student's file.
  15. To denote that the student has committed an academic offence in the course, a notation of
-

academic dishonesty can be included on the student's transcript, at the discretion of the Student Disciplinary Committee. At the discretion of the academic unit concerned or the Student Disciplinary Committee, the student may be informed that the notation will be removed at graduation if he does not commit more than one offence. However, if he commits two or more offences, during the same term or in different terms, the notation will appear on the official transcript permanently.

16. An appeal against any fact finding or any sanction imposed by the Dean/Director may be made within 10 working days to the Student Disciplinary Committee according to Item 1 of Article 10 of the Regulations of the Student Discipline of the University of Macau. Appeals must be in writing and the proceeding and final decision with respect to the appeal should follow the stipulations in Items 5 to 8 of Article 4 of the Regulations of the Student Affairs of the University of Macau.
17. An appeal against any fact finding or any sanction imposed by the Student Disciplinary Committee may be made within 10 working days to the Rector according to Item 1 of Article 11 of the Regulations of the Student Discipline of the University of Macau. Appeals must be in writing and the composition of the appeal panel, the proceeding and final decision with respect to the appeal shall follow Items 3-5 of Article 11 of the Regulations of the Student Affairs of the University of Macau.