Policy on Plagiarism

for

UCD School of Medicine and Medical Science

University College Dublin

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Contents

Summary of Procedures for Academic Staff

A] The School of Medicine and Medical Science (SMMS) defines plagiarism as follows;
1. Presenting work authored by another person: including other students, friends, family, or work purchased through Internet or other services;
2. Presenting work copied extensively with only minor textual changes from the Internet, books, journals or any other source;
3. Improper paraphrasing, where a passage or idea is summarised without due acknowledgement of the original source;
4. Failing to include citation of all original sources;
5. Representing collaborative work as one's own;
6. Self-plagiarism, i.e., submitting the same (or closely similar) body of work for two different assessments in this, or any other, institution.

B] The SMMS has a Plagiarism Committee. That Committee has a threefold remit.
1. To advise the SMMS on plagiarism.
2. To examine reported claims of plagiarism in submitted work.
3. To impose an academic sanction where appropriate.

C] All submitted assessments must include a Plagiarism Declaration. **EXAMINERS AND/OR MODULE COORDINATORS MUST NOT PENALISE FOR PLAGIARISM**. If plagiarism is confirmed it is the Plagiarism Committee who will impose an academic sanction on the student, **NOT** the examiner, module coordinator or any other member of academic staff. **If you suspect that a student has plagiarised an assignment, whether in whole or in part, then do one of the following three options**;

1. Do nothing. Use your discretion and take no further action at all, or;

2. Give a second chance. Discuss the issue with the student and ask the student to properly cite the passages in question. The student is then allowed to resubmit the material *without any penalty.* However, the School must be informed that a matter arose but that the student was given a second chance, or;

3. Refer the case. Tell the student that you are going to formally refer the matter to the Plagiarism Committee, who will then take over the case.

D] There are only four outcomes for material submitted to the Plagiarism Committee.
1. Direct that the student resubmit the work without further academic penalty.
2. Direct that the student modifies and resubmits the work and direct that the grade for the work will be capped at D-. A note will be placed on the student's file.
3. Reduce the grade for the work to an NG. A note will be placed on the student's file.
4. Refer the case to the Registrar.

Summary of Procedures for Students

A] The School of Medicine and Medical Science (SMMS) defines plagiarism as follows;
1. Presenting work authored by another person: including other students, friends, family, or work purchased through Internet or other services;
2. Presenting work copied extensively with only minor textual changes from the Internet, books, journals or any other source;
3. Improper paraphrasing, where a passage or idea is summarised without due acknowledgement of the original source;
4. Failing to include citation of all original sources;
5. Representing collaborative work as one's own;
6. Self-plagiarism, i.e., submitting the same (or closely similar) body of work for two different assessments in this, or any other, institution.

B] The SMMS has a Plagiarism Committee which can impose an academic sanction on proven plagiarised work. All work, that you submit for assessment in SMMS, must have a Plagiarism Declaration included. If an examiner / module coordinator believes that your work contains improperly cited material they have three options.

Firstly, they could do nothing and let the matter go. Secondly, they could request that you rectify the material and resubmit the work without any penalty (but they will still let the School know that you were given a second chance) or, thirdly, they could refer the work to the Plagiarism Committee. If the Committee makes a finding of plagiarism against you, a note to this effect will be placed on your file. Lastly, If you do not resubmit the work to the examiner / module coordinator with the requested amendments, they will also refer you to the Committee.

There are only four outcomes for material submitted to the Plagiarism Committee.

1. Direct that the student be allowed to submit the work without any academic penalty.
2. Direct that the student is to modify and resubmit the work and direct that the grade will be capped at D-. A note will be placed on the your file.
3. Reduce the grade for the work to an NG. A note will be placed on the your file.
4. Refer the case to the Registrar for action under the University's disciplinary procedures.

C] If a module co-ordinator refers you directly to the Plagiarism Committee then you will be invited, in writing, to attend for interview. You do not have to attend if you do not want to and you can submit a letter explaining your actions if you like.

Introduction

This document discusses the issue of examining plagiarised material that is, or forms part of, an assessment provided by the School of Medicine & Medical Science (SMMS). There is a need for a consistent approach for dealing with plagiarised material and the fairest way to do this will be explained and discussed in the following pages.

The University places a responsibility on Schools to promote academic integrity and to provide guidance on plagiarism. Schools must have arrangements for dealing with plagiarism and must determine the penalties or consequences for producing plagiarised material. The University's policy on plagiarism states[1];

> Each **Head of School will ensure that appropriate advisory arrangements are in place to promote academic integrity in the subject area and to provide guidance on instances of plagiarism**. This responsibility may be vested in a nominated individual;

> Each **School will periodically evaluate its arrangements for dealing with plagiarism** to ensure that where any recurrent patterns of plagiarism emerge, either in the case of individual students, or groups of students, its overall approach is appropriate and capable of ensuring that any further recurrences are addressed;

> Suspected instances of plagiarism should be **assessed within the School and a determination made as to whether the matter may be resolved at a local level or whether a referral to the Registrar** under the University's disciplinary procedures is required;

Additionally, the policy also states;

> **Where an examiner detects a suspected instance of plagiarism** in a student's assignment or examination, taking account of the specific context and nature of the case, **any of the following courses of action may be followed**:
>
> a. **Discussion directly with the student** to provide advice about correct citation and how to avoid plagiarism in the future. The student may be required to resubmit the work **without any further penalty**;
> b. **Referral of the alleged instance for review** according to the School's plagiarism advisory arrangements. The student may receive a verbal or written warning, will receive advice about correct citation and may be required to resubmit the work **with or without an academic penalty**;
> c. **Referral of the alleged instance to the University Registrar** for resolution via the University's disciplinary procedures. In some contexts, a first instance may require referral directly to the Registrar.

Therefore, it is clear that the module coordinator / examiner **does not have the option of penalising a student for plagiarism**. Only the School or the Registrar can impose a penalty.

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[1] *UCD Plagiarism Policy* (2005), sec 2.4 – 3.8.

Reasons for a Plagiarism Committee

In order to ensure that fair procedures are in place (for both staff and students), the SMMS has a Plagiarism Committee. This is the forum within the School for module coordinators / examiners to refer suspected instances of plagiarism. Even where there is an instance of gross plagiarism which merits the Registrar's involvement, the module coordinator / examiner is to refer the case to the Committee in the first instance rather than go to the Registrar directly. This ensures continuity of procedure from the SMMS and also provides a clear and consistent approach to all cases.

The University's policy also states that prior to the submission of assessments, students **must** be briefed about plagiarism. The correct method of citation must be explained. For example, this could also include a brief talk with students about plagiarism and explaining how every source must be cited properly. Students can be confused about copyright issues where material (like a diagram) can "be reproduced without permission from the author". This still needs a citation but that may not be obvious to some students. All submitted assessments must have a Plagiarism Declaration included.

It is of crucial importance that the educators in the SMMS are not seen as the academic police. Rather, plagiarism should be approached from a teaching and learning perspective and students are to be encouraged with good educational practice and academic research.

The value and integrity of the degrees we offer depends on the quality of the work produced. This University is not a "Degree Mill" and as such we must define what we will, and will not, accept as academic work. Educators will only engage in the process if they know that the School will support their findings and deal seriously with any cases of detected plagiarism. Additionally, and somewhat contradictorily, educators do not want to see their students facing formal disciplinary action.

Therefore, we have put in place a mechanism that is fair to all those involved. Academics have the support of the School and know that their hard work in examining and reading student's projects / essays / dissertations is not in vain. When a problem is detected they know that it will be dealt with in a speedy and fair manner. Students know that plagiarism is not permitted and if it is detected, that they will be dealt with in a just manner on a case-by-case basis.

The module coordinator has the option for allowing students to check their own work for plagiarism via SafeAssign. Educationally, this possibly best practice. The academic does not have to spend time checking for plagiarism and students will spend some time learning how to cite correctly in order for their work to be satisfactory. However, it is recognised that the module coordinator does not have to make this self-checking for plagiarism option available to students.

In SMMS, when the module coordinator / examiner wants to act on a case of plagiarism then there are two options. **a)** Discuss the issue with the student and have the matter corrected **but still let the School know that an incident has occurred** or; **b)** formally refer the case to the School Committee who may or may not impose a further penalty.

The School will keep a record of all "second chances" that have been given in order to ensure that students will not repeat instances of plagiarism. Where a second chance has been given,

there will be no sanction or official note made on the student's file, unless, of course, the student continued to plagiarise material. In cases where a student's work goes before the Committee and a finding of plagiarism is made, then the Programme Office will place a note to this effect on the student's file on SISWeb.

Fitness to Practice Issues

Academics and students should be aware that in some cases, there might be a Fitness to Practice issue where plagiarism is detected. It would be impossible here to predict every sort of case that would have to be referred to Fitness to Practice Committee. Examples of such cases might be where a paper or thesis contains results or methods that were copied or falsified. Or perhaps a logbook that contains copied cases or falsified signatures. These examples are only an illustration of the type of case that could occur. It is worth noting at this point that in *Medical students: Professional Values and Fitness to Practise* the UK's General Medical Council states that student plagiarism falls under the remit of Fitness to Practice[2].

> Has a student behaved dishonestly, fraudulently, or in a way designed to mislead or harm others?
> The medical school should take action if a student's behaviour is such that trust in the medical profession might be undermined. This might include plagiarism, cheating, dishonesty in reports and logbooks, forging the signature of a supervisor, or failing to comply with the regulations of the medical school, university, hospital or other organisation.

The Irish Medical Council has also issued guidelines for medical students which address the issue of plagiarism. In *Guidelines for Medical Schools on Ethical Standards and Behaviour appropriate for Medical Students* it is stated that[3];

> As a medical student you should:
> ... Adhere to the rules and regulations, policies and procedures governing plagiarism and falsification of data in any academic and clinical activities.

It is recognised that SMMS runs programmes other than the undergraduate medical degree but in those cases, where students are enrolled in a programme that is covered by the School's Fitness to Practice policy, the above rationale applies.

The Committee will decide if an instance of plagiarised material also has Fitness to Practice implications and will, depending on the nature of the case, refer the student to the Fitness to Practice Committee. Students, undergraduate and graduate alike, must be aware of the potential consequences to their careers if they engage in dishonest academic practice. Such actions bring health care professions into disrepute and undermine the trust placed in those same professions.

At all times, the School has the discretion to deal with the case "in house" or refer the student for disciplinary action to the Registrar. A full definition of plagiarism, suggestions for educating students about plagiarism and an explanation about the rationale for the Plagiarism Committee are discussed in the next sections.

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[2] General Medical Council, *Medical students: Professional Values and Fitness to Practise*, GMC, 2009, p28.
[3] *Guidelines for Medical Schools on Ethical Standards and Behaviour appropriate for Medical Students*, Medical Council, p2.

Definition of Plagiarism

The SMMS defines plagiarism as follows;

a. Presenting work authored by another person: including other students, friends, family, or work purchased through Internet or other services;

b. Presenting work copied extensively with only minor textual changes from the Internet, books, journals or any other source;

c. Improper paraphrasing, where a passage or idea is summarised without due acknowledgement of the original source;

d. Failing to include citation of all original sources;

e. Representing collaborative work as one's own;

f. Self-plagiarism, i.e., submitting the same (or closely similar) body of work for two different assessments in this, or any other, institution.

Educating Students about Plagiarism in the SMMS

All material submitted to modules provided by the SMMS for assessment is subject to the Plagiarism Policy as set out in this document. *N.B.* This Policy also applies to students in other Programmes who take SMMS modules and who submit work for assessment.

In order to ensure that all students are well informed, those involved in educating must ensure that part of a module is dedicated to informing students about academic integrity and honesty. Blackboard could be used for this purpose. Furthermore, our colleagues in the Library have developed excellent educational tools about plagiarism and it might be useful to refer students to that online resource.

It should be noted that a large proportion of our undergraduate students come from an educational system that is largely based upon systematic rote learning where notes from teachers and the opinions of textbooks must be replicated in an exam. Now, as they enter third level, we must encourage students to think for themselves, to conduct research and present their thoughts and ideas in an academic and responsible manner. At graduate level, module coordinators should include this policy and the university's documents on plagiarism in the student's information packs.

Finally, all documents in relations to plagiarism must be made available on Blackboard for the students.

Use of Electronic Plagiarism Detection Systems

UCD routinely uses plagiarism detection systems (PDS) for material submitted for assessment. This may involve the use of external companies, who may store material prepared as UCD assignments, theses, etc., in their databases for plagiarism detection in UCD and other institutions. If a module coordinator chooses to use a PDS such as SafeAssign, then students are required to submit their work as directed.

Plagiarism Declaration

The Declaration can be made available electronically but students must agree to their terms every time they submit work. It can also be presented in hard copy and attached to the work. Module coordinators can decide whether they wish work to be submitted electronically or in hard copy. **THE FOLLOWING SIX POINTS ARE TO BE INCLUDED IN ALL SUBMITTED ASSESSMENTS;**

I certify that ALL of the following are true:

1. I have read and fully understand the consequences of plagiarism as discussed in the *School of Medicine & Medical Sciences Policy on Plagiarism* and the *UCD Plagiarism Policy*.
2. I fully understand the definition of plagiarism.
3. I recognise that a plagiarised project (in whole or in part) may be subject to the penalties as outlined in the *School of Medicine & Medical Sciences Policy on Plagiarism* and the *UCD Plagiarism Policy*.
4. I have not previously submitted this work, or any version of it, for assessment in any other subject in this, or any other, institution.
5. I have given my correct information on this Declaration and all details are the same as those on my student card.
6. I have not plagiarised any part of this project and it is my original work.

An example of a Plagiarism Declaration is included at the end of this document.

SMMS Plagiarism Committee

To ensure a consistent and fair approach, the SMMS has established a Committee. This is the SMMS's forum for module coordinators / examiners to refer suspected cases of plagiarism.

The remit of the Committee is threefold;
1. **To advise the SMMS on plagiarism.**
2. **To examine reported claims of plagiarism in submitted work.**
3. **To impose an academic sanction where appropriate.**

The Committee may[4] consist of the following members;

Executive Role
- o Chair
- o Two other members of academic staff
- o The Head of Research (or nominee) for cases involving examination by theses only
- o The Head of Teaching and Learning (or nominee) for all other cases
- o The module coordinator who referred the case or his/her representative who is familiar with the case in question.
- o The Chair can co-opt any other member of staff where appropriate.

Non-Executive Role
- o Administrator

In Attendance (where necessary)
Students will be invited to attend the Committee. This is to ensure that any student whose work is under investigation will have had an opportunity to explain and/or refute the claim. Even if the student has met with the module coordinator / examiner they will be invited to meet with the Committee also. It is not mandatory for a student to attend and they are free to turn down the invitation if they so wish. Students can also submit a letter to the Committee if they believe it would help.

It is important for students to note that this is not a formal disciplinary hearing. However, if attending the Committee, it may be helpful if the student were to pick one of the following as a representative, rather than a family member or friend.
- o An elected official from the Student Union or;
- o A member of staff from the SMMS

The Chair must attend every meeting to ensure continuity of procedure.

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[4] The word "may" is used because not every meeting of the Committee will require that all members are present.

Academic Penalties from the Committee

If a case is referred to the Committee, then the module coordinator / examiner will provide a report. The Committee has only four options.

1. Resubmit the work without further academic penalty.
2. Modify and resubmit the work and the grade will be capped for that component of the module[5] at D-. A note will be placed on the student's file.
3. Reduce the grade for that component of the module to an NG[6]. A note will be placed on the student's file.
4. Refer the case to the Registrar[7].

Report from Module Coordinator / Examiner

When submitting work to the Committee for investigation, the module coordinator must include a copy of the work in question with the passages highlighted and original sources identified such as a web page or the title of an article / book. For the report, a print out from an electronic plagiarism detection system will be acceptable as will handwritten notes on the work. Examiners do not have to use electronic systems. Also, a cover sheet must be completed, an example of which is presented at the end of this document. Without the report the Committee cannot investigate the case because it needs to be guided by the details provided by the academic in the subject area.

Appeals Procedure

If a student wishes to appeal the decision of the Plagiarism Committee they can do so through the Assessment Appeals procedure. Details can be obtained from:
http://www.ucd.ie/appeals/exam_appeal.htm

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[5] If plagiarism is confirmed, the Plagiarism Committee **will only reduce the mark for that particular component of the module**. It is not the remit of the Committee to reduce the mark for the entire module.

[6] NG has a grade point of zero. All other grades attract a grade point, even G (0.4). This small amount might be enough to give a student an overall higher GPA. There is no reward for plagiarizing.

[7] It is worth noting at this point that the penalties the Registrar can impose have serious consequences. The Registrar can direct that any of the following penalties be applied, whether in whole or in part;

1. Re-submission, where the maximum grade awardable is D- or equivalent;
2. Exclusion from the module;
3. Exclusion from the programme.

Sample Forms

1. Plagiarism Declaration
2. Cover sheet for Undergraduates (Module Coordinators Report)
3. Cover sheet for Graduates (Module Coordinators Report)

Plagiarism Declaration

School of Medicine and Medical Science

Module Name: _____

Module Code: _____

The School of Medicine and Medical Science defines plagiarism as follows;

a) Presenting work authored by another person: including other students, friends, family, or work purchased through Internet or other services;
b) Presenting work copied extensively with only minor textual changes from the Internet, books, journals or any other source;
c) Improper paraphrasing, where a passage or idea is summarised without due acknowledgement of the original source;
d) Failing to include citation of all original sources;
e) Representing collaborative work as one's own;
f) Self-plagiarism, i.e., submitting the same (or closely similar) body of work for two different assessments in this, or any other, institution.

I certify that **ALL** of the following are true:

1. I have read the above list and fully understand the consequences of plagiarism as discussed in the *School of Medicine & Medical Sciences Policy on Plagiarism* and the *UCD Plagiarism Policy*.
2. I fully understand the definition of plagiarism.
3. I recognise that a plagiarised project (in whole or in part) may be subject to the penalties as outlined in the *School of Medicine & Medical Sciences Policy on Plagiarism* and the *UCD Plagiarism Policy*.
4. I have not previously submitted this work, or any version of it, for assessment in any other subject in this, or any other, institution.
5. I have given my correct information on this Declaration and all details are the same as those on my student card.
6. I have not plagiarised any part of this project and it is my original work.

Signature: _____

Name (PRINT CLEARLY): _____

Student Number: _

Date: D D - M M - Y Y

Module Coordinator's Report to the
UCD School of Medicine & Medical Science
Plagiarism Committee

Undergraduate

Name of programme: _____

Name of module: _____

Module coordinator: _____

Student's name and
number: _____

Coordinator's contact details: _____

Additional Information:
1. Were students provided with information about plagiarism in this module? Yes / No
2. Did the student complete a plagiarism declaration? Yes / No
3. Have you had a discussion with the student about suspected plagiarism in the attached work? Yes / No

Module coordinator's signature: _____

Date: _____

Module Coordinator's Report to the
UCD School of Medicine & Medical Science
Plagiarism Committee

Graduate

Complete the following details where appropriate.

Name of course: _____

Name of module: _____

Student's name and number: _____

Title of thesis / dissertation: _____

_____

_____

Module coordinator: _____

Coordinator's contact details: _____

Additional Information (please answer all three questions):
1. Were students provided with information about plagiarism? Yes / No
2. Did the student complete a plagiarism declaration? Yes / No
3. Have you had a discussion with the student about suspected plagiarism in the attached work? Yes / No

Module coordinator's signature: _____

Date: _____