

Guidelines for reviewing plagiarism

Faculty 10

passed by the faculty board on November 9th, 2016

1) Plagiarism in ungraded module assignments

If the examiner of a written assignment suspects that the submitted work has been plagiarised or can prove that the text has been plagiarised, they should discuss the issue with the respective student. Relevance and nature of the misconduct as well as the (possible) consequences have to be explained in detail.

If the suspicion of misconduct can be refuted because the student used secondary sources inappropriately without the intent to deceive but because of poorly developed academics skills, the examiner has to explain the norms and requirements for quotations, citations and referencing to the student.

In cases where the suspicion of plagiarism cannot be refuted, the examiner notifies the Dean and the Dean of Studies. The notification has to include the name of the plagiarist, their course of studies, the respective module, the assignment concerned and relevant details on the circumstances of plagiarism. The faculty administration is responsible for the documentation of the case and keeps records on behalf of the Dean's Office.

The assignment is considered failed if proof of plagiarism has been found. The assignment can be repeated during the regular study period, and it can be repeated with the same examiner should they be willing to examine the student again.

2) Plagiarism in graded module exams

If the examiner of a written assignment suspects that the work has been plagiarised or can prove that the text has been plagiarised, they should discuss the issue with the respective student. Relevance and nature of the misconduct as well as the (possible) consequences have to be explained in detail.

If the suspicion of misconduct can be refuted because the student used secondary sources inappropriately without the intent to deceive but because of poorly developed academics skills, the examiner has to explain the norms and requirements for quotations, citations and referencing to the student.

In cases where the suspicion of plagiarism cannot be refuted, the examiner has to notify the responsible examination board. The board decides in accordance with §18 of the respective BA/MA exam regulations of the University whether the assignment is indeed plagiarised. The student will be provided with the opportunity to give a statement on the accusation. If the board decides that the assignment has been plagiarised, the exam is evaluated with “fail” / “attempt at deception.”

In this particular case, the examiner may decline to examine the student again if other available examiners are teaching in the respective module.

Furthermore, if plagiarism has been detected, the examination board notifies the Dean and the Dean of Studies. The notification has to include the name of the plagiarist, their course of studies, the respective module, the assignment concerned and relevant details on the circumstances of plagiarism. The faculty administration is the primary contact.

If the examination board has detected plagiarism, the Dean of Studies invites the plagiarist to a mandatory interview, in which the misconduct, its relevance and (possible) consequences are explained. Such an interview should also include general counselling regarding the further course of studies. The interview can be followed by extensive and more specific counselling provided by the expert counsellors of the Academic Advisory Office.

3) Plagiarism in BA/MA dissertations

If the supervisor of the final BA or MA dissertation suspects or can prove academic misconduct, i.e. plagiarism, they discuss the issue with the student and, if appropriate, with the second supervisor of the dissertation. Relevance and nature of the misconduct as well as the (possible) consequences have to be explained in detail.

If the suspicion of misconduct can be refuted because the student used secondary sources inappropriately without the intent to deceive but because of poorly developed academic skills, the examiner has to explain the norms and requirements for quotations, citations and referencing to the student.

In cases where the suspicion of plagiarism cannot be refuted, the examiner has to notify the responsible examination board. The board decides in accordance with §18 of the BA/MA exam regulations of the university whether the dissertation is indeed plagiarised. The student will be

provided with the opportunity to give a statement on the accusation. If the board decides that the dissertation has been plagiarised, the dissertation is evaluated with “fail” / “attempt at deception.”

In this case, both examiners may decline a request for a repeated examination of the dissertation.

Furthermore, if plagiarism has been detected, the examination board notifies the Dean and the Dean of Studies. The notification has to include the name of the plagiarist, their course of studies, the respective module, the assignment concerned and relevant details on the circumstances of plagiarism. The faculty administration is the primary contact.

If the examination board detects plagiarism, the Dean invites the plagiarist to a mandatory interview attended by at least one more person. Minutes are taken of the meeting. The issues discussed during the interview relate to the violations of the requirements of academic research and the (possible) consequences of academic misconduct.

4) Consequences

In accordance with §42 (4) of Bremen’s Higher Education Act and §11 (3) of the Regulation for Matriculation of the University of Bremen, the examination board, potentially together with the Dean’s Office, initiates the expulsion of the plagiarist via the legal department based on the evidence provided by the Examinations Office.

This procedure is to be carried out if

- the misconduct is considered a severe deception because the entire dissertation or major parts of the dissertation are plagiarised.
- the misconduct is a repeated offence because the student concerned has submitted a verifiably plagiarised assignment twice – or more often – before.

The Examinations Office collects data regarding academic misconduct and reviews the files of the plagiarist so that repeated offences can be detected.