



**guide to academic misconduct and
plagiarism.**

MCI Management Center Innsbruck – Internationale Hochschule GmbH

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1 introduction.

This guide on the subject of academic misconduct on the part of authors of papers and theses at the MCI is a supplement to item 3.5 of the MCI's Examination Regulations. It includes a definition of what is meant by plagiarism at the MCI and describes the MCI's responses. Clear rules have been drawn up in order to prevent plagiarism (see Preventive Measures). The rules apply to all academic papers written at the MCI (seminar papers, project papers, laboratory reports, final theses) and also to digital formats such as blogs, wikis, etc).

2 definition.

Academic papers must be written with a high degree of clarity in terms of both identification and presentation of the literature used and the distinction between the author's own arguments and the opinions or information of third parties. It is the author's duty to ensure that the status of all content of the paper is transparent and verifiable. Plagiarism in academic work is considered to have occurred if the author presents third-party intellectual property or a third-party work as his/her own work or part of a work or employs text taken from a work written by the author and already used for a different purpose, without acknowledging the third-party literature used. This applies to all media, i.e. books, scientific journals, magazines, newspapers and other print media as well as digital sources. Plagiarism is defined as such regardless of whether the incorrect impression of authorship is the result of a deliberate act or mere negligence. Under copyright law (Austrian Federal Law Gazette no. 111/1936 as amended), authors are forbidden to present third-party intellectual property as if it were their own, i.e. without identifying it as third-party intellectual property and clearly distinguishing it from their own work.

A distinction can be made between the following forms of plagiarism in academic papers (cf. Schwarzenegger & Wohlers, 2006, p. 3):

- 1) Word-for-word reproduction of one or more passages of text without acknowledging the source (direct plagiarism). That also includes the use of diagrams, figures, tables, images, etc.
- 2) Reproduction or paraphrase – with changes made to the original words and sentence structure – of a third party's line of argument without acknowledging the source (idea plagiarism).
- 3) Translation of ideas and passages of text taken from a work written in another language, again without acknowledging the source (translation plagiarism).
- 4) Recycling passages of text taken from a work written by the author but already used for another purpose such as a seminar paper without indicating the fact (self-plagiarism).

3 preventive measures.

The following preventive measures to be taken at the MCI are designed to safeguard good scientific practice:

- 1) Embedding in the Learning Agreement: The MCI is entitled to exclude students for infringements of students' duties pursuant to the Learning Agreement. Among other reasons, exclusion can be justified on the grounds of the "use of third-party intellectual property (especially plagiarism and serious cases of self-plagiarism) for coursework, project or seminar papers or the final thesis, etc, without acknowledging the source in keeping with accepted academic principles"; see the section on Termination of the Agreement.
- 2) Embedding in the study program: In their classes, faculty members communicate to students the importance of good scientific practice and correct citation.
- 3) Embedding in the MCI's guides to academic writing: The MCI's guides to academic writing include the following requirement: "Papers must be written with due regard for the relevant provisions of copyright law. Plagiarism can lead to exclusion from the study program."
- 4) Electronic submission of academic papers: All academic papers (project and seminar papers and Bachelor's and Master's theses) must be submitted in both hard copy and electronic form. The latter will be scrutinized by the department concerned using plagiarism detection software.
- 5) Declaration of academic honesty for Bachelor's and Master's theses: In this statutory declaration, which must be included with all final theses, the author confirms with his or her signature that the principles of academic honesty have been observed. The author is directly accountable for any infringement of the declaration. The text of the statutory declaration is as follows:

*"I hereby declare that I have authored this thesis independently. All material taken directly or indirectly from the sources used has been explicitly acknowledged.
The work has not been submitted in this or similar form to any other examination authority and has not been published."*

4 procedure in cases of plagiarism.

All written work submitted to the MCI is subjected to a preliminary check by the department concerned using a standardized plagiarism detection tool. Where the similarity index indicates a possible case of plagiarism, the work is forwarded to the supervising member of faculty for detailed examination.

Where plagiarism is detected in a written work (including self-plagiarism), the following steps are taken:

- The student's supervisor or the lecturer for the class concerned is informed of the results of the plagiarism check and asked to express an opinion.
- The student is requested by the program director to make a written statement within fourteen days and offered an appointment to discuss the matter.

- A fraudulent examination paper is graded as a fail and the grade for the course as a whole is also negative. In accordance with the Examination Regulations, the number of resits available to the student is reduced by one.
- The student is given a written reprimand for an infringement of the Learning Agreement. The Chair of the Council and the Director of the MCI are notified.
- In the case of plagiarism in final theses, the student's supervisor may decline to continue in that capacity or the program director may decide to withdraw the supervisor. In either case the student must then find a new supervisor and subject for the thesis.

In cases of serious misconduct (e.g. repeated plagiarism, particularly extensive plagiarism), the MCI (Director) may exclude the student concerned from the study program and terminate the contractual relationship in accordance with the provisions of the Learning Agreement.

Where a case of serious plagiarism is not discovered until the degree for the study program has been awarded, the student can be subsequently deprived of the degree.

bibliography.

Bundesgesetz über das Urheberrecht an Werken der Literatur und der Kunst und über verwandte Schutzrechte, BGBl. Nr. 111/1936 i.d.g. F.

Schwarzenegger, Ch. & Wohlers, W. (2006): Plagiatsformen und disziplinarrechtliche Konsequenzen. Unijournal der Universität Zürich, Nr. 4, S. 3.