



BOARD OF POSTGRADUATE STUDIES

STATEMENT ON PLAGIARISM

Rationale

This document has been prepared by the Board of Postgraduate Studies to enlighten KCA University community on the essence of upholding academic honesty as well as the consequences of breaching it. The overarching goal of joining any program at the University is to hone one's intellectual skills, acquire expertise and knowledge in their chosen field; knowledge and skills which will be beneficial to their posterity, and that of the society at large. In order to ensure inculcation of the desired knowledge and acquisition of pertinent skills, the University is keen to ensure that all its members work with utmost integrity. A common problem in almost all academic communities is plagiarism. Plagiarism is intellectual theft and deception; it masks the true level of a one's aptitude and ability by implying a false level of intellect. Provisions of the contemporary world have made access to information incredibly easy.

This apparent ease of access to information relevant to one's academic work coupled with the fact that honest work will doubtlessly require a sizeable commitment of time and effort makes one vulnerable to cheat.

Plagiarism Defined

Plagiarism is the act of using other people's intellectual property, with or without their permission, and presenting it as your own. Intellectual property might entail ideas, concepts, content, etc. In a nutshell, plagiarism is fraud. Synonyms like "copying", "copy and paste", "borrowing" etc. tend to underrate the true magnitude of plagiarism. According to Hong Kong Baptist University (n.d), plagiarism is worse than theft because not only does it involve stealing other people's ideas, concepts and content, but it also culminates in parading, quite proudly, of the stolen intellectual property as one's own. Many people wrongfully believe that only written work can be plagiarized but usage of non-text information without due accreditation squarely qualifies as plagiarism.

Reproducing others' music or audio recordings, copying others' work of art, design, concepts, patents etc. and cheating that it's one's own also constitutes plagiarism.

Plagiarism is a serious crime against scholarly community and KCA University has zero tolerance for it.

It is possible to plagiarize others' work unintentionally. There exists a grey area on what needs to be accredited to an author and what information is common knowledge. If, for instance, an idea or theorem is the predominant one in an area, it's likely that anyone using the same idea might not be keen on citing the source or may simply be unaware of the theory. For example, in the social sciences, regression analysis is one of the most popular forms of data analysis. In fact, it is so popular that it has become a *defacto* of sorts. What is not so apparent is that the ordinary least squares method on which regression analysis is based was invented independently by Adrien-Marie Legendre in 1805 and by Carl Friedrich Gauss in 1809. As such, any credit for the regression analysis method should be ordinarily credited to these two gentlemen but this is usually not the case. Due to the popularity of this method, the regression procedure is considered commonplace.

This illustration highlights the fact that there is literature out there in the public domain whose authorship doesn't need to be credited either because information on its authorship is considered commonplace or it's so popular that no contemporary author can wrongfully attribute it to himself and get believed. There exist two forms of literature: common knowledge and literature that needs to be credited otherwise one risks being accused of plagiarism.

Common Knowledge - This refers to easily accessible facts which are in the public domain and cannot be easily attributed to a single source. It also includes all literature which dates from antiquity and even though it could be having original author(s), its popularity has now become so widespread that it cannot be possible to attribute its ownership to a modern day author.

In concluding this part, we state that students should be free to use common knowledge in their work without attribution of the source. However, only knowledge which is common to the extent that there is no probability of wrongful attribution should be used as such.

What needs to be accredited? Basically, any source or information which is not commonplace information must be accredited to its rightful author. It doesn't matter whether a source is used partially or fully, but as long as work submitted for credit at KCA University contains text derived either directly or indirectly from other sources, the authors of this text must be acknowledged.

A common misconception is that in paraphrasing other's work, one can do away with the responsibility of citation. Paraphrasing in fact is not recommended in academic work. One should read and understand sources and then write them in his/her own words. A simple rearrangement of text without any hint of how the user understands the text is not enough.

Ways to Avoid Plagiarism

Usage of other people's work in one's document is vital in the development of one's academic work. In some academic projects such as research dissertations, it is actually required, i.e. the literature review section of a dissertation outlines the views of previous authors on the subject matter of the research. We articulate several principles which can help one get the best out of existing literature without violating other people's copyright and intellectual property:

Avoid Direct Replication. Unless direct replication is absolutely necessary, you should first read the source while taking short notes and comprehend the insinuation of the author fully. Next, outline this work adroitly and in the right context so as to ensure a seamless integration between your work and that of the author.

Author Diversification. The literature quoted in one's work should be derived from the previous work of many authors. Overreliance on a single or a clique of authors is not appropriate as it makes one's work susceptible to inclining to the individual biases of the other authors(s). Author diversity helps ensure that work is well balanced and all possible themes/spheres of influence are captured.

Include Observations of Your Own. You should add text of your own as a corollary to the chosen literature. This could, for instance, enhance the understandability of your work and ensure a smooth flow of their document(s) to the reader.

Do not suppress dissenting voices. Some people tend to have selective amnesia of literature that challenges their chosen position, i.e. their alternative hypothesis. As such, they include only sources which support their school of thought and ignore the contrasting voices. This defeats the spirit of curiosity and inquisitiveness which is so central to academia. Dissenting voices should be included to keep debate on the subject matter of the academic work vibrant.

Do not cite a source just for the sake of it. In some cases, especially in areas where there is a dearth of relevant literature on a subject matter, one might be tempted to include irrelevant text that adds little or no value to their work. Such text usually tends to have a big divergence from the ideas on which current work is based. If a source is irrelevant, it actually negates the quality of a student's output.

Geographic diversity. To avoid regional bias, your work should contain sources derived from different parts of the World. Such sources should be well balanced to capture the insights of authors uniformly and to bring out the differences evident in the phenomena under study as one moves from one part of the world to another. This can also help in identifying the factors responsible for the apparent differences and controlling for them in future studies.

Contextual diversity. Research findings tend to be context-specific. A study on capital market efficiency in developing Sub Saharan countries could yield fundamentally different findings if it is replicated on an as-is basis in developed Western Europe or North American countries. As such, students should diversify their sources so as to highlight the ability of the research backdrop in influencing results.

Avoid contiguity of sources from the same author. You should endeavor to ensure that you do not overly serialize the work of a single author. Such work is likely to suffer from monotony, predictability, and biasness. Different authors should follow each other, with the context and location of each study adroitly outlined.

PENALTIES FOR PLAGIARIZING

KCA University is keen on maintaining high standards of quality and plagiarism is not tolerated at all. In line with this stiff penalties are meted on those who engage in plagiarism and related forms of academic dishonesty. Below is a list, which is not exhaustive, of penalties imposed on various violations linked to plagiarism.

Offence		Penalty
Use, without proper acknowledgement, of published or unpublished work, of work done partly or wholly by another person, or of work obtained from an essay bank or a website. This includes not just the actual copying of text verbatim (which may also be a breach of copyright) or close paraphrasing of text, but also the unacknowledged presentation of ideas garnered from other sources as if they were original to the author.	1. 2. 3.	Cancellation of the candidate examination (project/ thesis) results in the unit concerned and, Repeat the examination (project/ thesis) in which the offence was committed during the following trimester with full fee payment, and A written warning.
Falsification Falsification is the fabrication or alteration of data – for example, by changing data in order to confirm a hypothesis not supported by the actual data, or the invention or fabrication of the results of an experiment, which are then reported as genuine measurements.	1. 2. 3.	Cancellation of their examination results in the unit. Suspension from the University for One Trimester Repeat the examination (Project/ thesis) in which the offence was committed during the following trimester with full fee payment.

False Citation	1.	Cancellation of the candidate examination (project/ thesis) results in the unit concerned.
False citation is the deceitful citing of a source when the source does not contain actually the information attributed to it.	2.	Repeat the examination (project/ thesis) in which the offence was committed during the following trimester with full fee payment.
	3.	A written warning.
Multiple Submission	1.	Cancellation of their examination results in the units concerned.
Multiple submission is the act of submitting for assessment a piece of coursework already (or simultaneously) submitted in another course, whether for academic credit or formative assessment. This practice is also known as auto plagiarism.	2.	A written warning.
Aiding/ Abetting Misconduct	1.	Cancellation of their examination results in the unit.
Aiding and abetting any form of involvement in another person's academic misconduct is in itself considered to be academic misconduct. This may involve, for example, collusion with another person during an examination; assisting other student(s) in practicing academic misconduct relating to an examination or class test, writing an essay for a student, etc.		Suspension from the University for One Academic Year (three trimesters).
Giving material to another student that could be submitted for assessment counts as aiding and abetting misconduct, as will the offer to provide material whether or not it is accepted by another student (for example, advertising an essaywriting service).	2.	Repeat of the unit upon resumption, with full payment.
	3. (<i>Students proven to have aided or abetted form of academic misconduct are subject to the same procedures and penalties as the student who would benefit from the offence.) the</i>
Theft	1.	Cancellation of their examination work results in the unit.
The theft and presentation of another student's work results in the unit.	2.	Suspension from the University for One Academic Year (three trimesters).
	3.	Repeat of the unit upon resumption, with full payment.