



MAURITIUS INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

ANTI-PLAGIARISM POLICY

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The aims of the Anti-Plagiarism Policy is to delineate various forms in which plagiarism may manifest itself; to present the Turnitin software as a plagiarism detection tool; to explain procedures in place for handling cases of plagiarism; and to outline punitive action proportional to the extent of the act of plagiarism.

1.2 The policy is applicable to any student, staff member, researcher and person involved in academic writing and/or publishing both in digital and printed form and orally presenting information through the agency of the Mauritius Institute of Education (MIE). The policy should be read in conjunction with MIE's General Rules and Regulations and Information for Students.

1.3 In this context,

- a student refers to any trainee who on the date of submission of his/her work through Turnitin is a registered student of Mauritius Institute of Education;
- a staff member is any employee of MIE who is involved in writing, publishing and/or presenting his/her work;
- a researcher/ person includes anyone who by research , collaboration or by any other arrangement is affiliated to MIE and is involved in writing, publishing and/or presenting a work.

2.0 PLAGIARISM

2.1 Plagiarism is defined as presenting (partly or entirely, intentionally or innocuously) one's own work as the work of others without due acknowledgement, or, presenting the work of others as one's own. The MIE's General Rules and Regulations and Information for Students handbook (Mauritius Institute of Education, 2015) refers to plagiarism as:

Plagiarism refers to the appropriation of another person's ideas, views, words or results without acknowledging the source.

2.2 Some acts constituting plagiarism include (Mauritius Institute of Education, 2015):

- (a) Submitting the work of another or part of it as one's own, whether published or unpublished;
- (b) Carelessly or inadequately citing ideas or words from source;
- (c) Paraphrasing, copying or summarizing another's work without acknowledging the source;
- (d) Using facts, figures, graphs, charts or information without acknowledging the source;
- (e) Downloading part(s) of any document, graphics, artwork or other material from the internet and presenting it as one's own without acknowledgement;
- (f) Any infringement of the Copyright Act in force in the country.

2.3 Plagiarism is not new to higher education institutions but the scope of the problem has magnified with the accessibility of electronic resources. It can occur by means of various types of sources and media:

- a. text, diagrams, illustrations, mathematical derivations, computer code ...;
- b. material downloaded from websites or drawn from manuscripts or other media;
- c. published and unpublished material, including lecture handouts and other students' work.

3.0 PLAGIARISM DETECTION

3.1 The changing faces of plagiarism has brought into light the need for higher education to use plagiarism detection software to tackle the problem. The MIE has subscribed to Turnitin's Feedback Studio Higher Education Package License and the service includes Turnitin's Originality Check. The use of Turnitin marks a significant advancement in MIE's detection of plagiarism.

3.2 MIE has user licenses for the use of the Turnitin software. Turnitin is a web-based plagiarism detection service which is used in many universities across many countries. Turnitin compares assignments/ dissertations and other works submitted by students against its database and the content of other websites. It identifies a similarity index and produces an originality Report.

3.3 The use of Turnitin is not intended to be punitive; instead, it is intended to provide students and MIE staff with the opportunity to identify and prevent instances of plagiarism in their work and take corrective measures. Thus, Turnitin is intended to uphold academic integrity and reputation of the institution and enhance originality and skills in academic writing.

3.4 Turnitin should be used in conjunction with other strategies to avoid cases of plagiarism. Some of the strategies include:

- (i) Citation and referencing are the basis of academic integrity. Students must be encouraged to use a referencing software for managing references and creating a bibliography.
- (ii) Discuss academic integrity with students from the beginning of the course.
- (iii) Use real cases of plagiarism from different disciplines for demonstration.
- (iv) Ask students to submit drafts: give feedback on referencing, citation, paraphrasing, etc.

3.5 Students' plagiarism is mainly associated with the assignments given as part of coursework or continuous assessment. Thus, the design of the assignment should encourage originality and minimize plagiarism. Some strategies to consider include:

- (i) Design assessment tasks that require higher-order thinking skills where the student needs to apply his/her knowledge to analyze, evaluate and synthesize

new ideas as compared to a task which requires regurgitation of ideas and facts.

- (ii) Create individualized and focused tasks which would be specific to a student and encourage oral presentation/discussion sessions to discourage plagiarism.
- (iii) Avoid re-using past assessment tasks that could tempt students to copy other's works.
- (iv) Communicate the assignment's purpose in details to students and make assessment criteria/ rubrics explicit and align them with the purpose.
- (v) Give students enough time to complete the assignment.

4.0 TURNITIN ADOPTION

4.1 Turnitin license is available to all MIE academic staff and it is expected that, where appropriate, all courses make use of Turnitin by allowing their students to submit their assignments to the system.

4.2 All submissions to Turnitin must be allowed at least one draft submission before the final submission. Each student will be required to submit their own submissions on Turnitin and will have access to the Originality Reports arising from each submission.

4.3 Turnitin identifies 10 types of plagiarism, called the Plagiarism Spectrum (Turnitin, 2016), based on findings from a worldwide survey of nearly 900 secondary and higher education instructors:

1. Clone: submitting another's work, word for word, as one's work;
2. Copy (Ctrl + C): Contains significant portions of text from a single source without alterations;
3. Find-Replace: Changing key words and phrases but retaining the essential content of the source;
4. Remix: Paraphrases from multiple sources to make it fit together.
5. Recycle: Borrows generously from the writer's previous work without citation;
6. Hybrid: Combines perfectly cited sources with copied passages without citation;
7. Mashup: Mixes copied material from multiple sources;
8. 404 Error: Includes citations to non-existent or inaccurate information about sources;
9. Aggregator: Includes proper citation to sources but the paper contains almost no original work;
10. Re-Tweet: Includes proper citation, but relies too closely on the text's original wording and/or structure.

4.4 We acknowledge that some Asian languages and Kreol Morisien are not supported by Turnitin and, also, there are some specific features in a student's assignment that Turnitin may not check, for example, graphics. In these cases, academic staff should be the final judges in detecting and determining instances of plagiarism.

4.5 Turnitin is not available to part time lecturers nor to lecturers from collaborating tertiary institutions. Such lecturers must inform course coordinators and students that Turnitin software shall be used and provide instructions about setting up the assignment. It is the responsibility of the course coordinators to enroll the students and set the assignment parameters as per specification. Students, in turn, provide the part time lecturer or the lecturer from a collaborating tertiary institution with a digital copy of the assignment submitted to Turnitin.

4.6 Responsibility of MIE

(a) Abide by the Acceptable Use Policy set forth in the Usage Policy for the Turnitin.com site;

(b) Use the Service only in connection with classes offered in its own curriculum, to its own students ("Students") for the purpose of submitting Student work for evaluation and shall not rent, lease or provide access to or benefits from the Service to any other institution or individual;

(c) Use reasonable efforts to retain the confidentiality of any Service passwords;

(d) Consider Turnitin's strong recommendation that the course syllabus of each course making use of the Turnitin Service carry a substantial notice substantially to the effect;

(e) Exercise its independent professional judgment in, and to assume sole and exclusive responsibility for, determining the actual existence of plagiarism in a submitted paper under the acknowledgement and understanding that the Originality Reports are only tools for detecting textual similarities between compared works and do not determine conclusively the existence of plagiarism;

(f) All papers submitted by Institution and/or its Instructors and Students shall be retained in the Source Database solely for the purposes of using such papers as source material to detect potential plagiarism of such papers in the future, for access by the instructor as an archive of submitted work, and for peer review if the instructor enables such option, except as expressly authorized by Students and/or Instructors.

4.7 Responsibility of Programme Coordinator

(a) Ensure that a clear notice about the use of Turnitin is indicated in the Programme Handbook or Student Course Handbook:

"Students agree that by taking this course all required papers will be subject to submission for textual similarity review to Turnitin.com for the detection of plagiarism.

All submitted papers will be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers. Use of the Turnitin.com service is subject to the Usage Policy posted on the Turnitin.com site.”

(b) Provide a clear notice in the Programme Handbook or Student Course Handbook about the procedures for handling plagiarism as laid down in the General Rules and Regulations and Information for Students and the Anti-Plagiarism Policy.

4.8 Responsibility of Instructor

(a) Provide a clear written notice in the assignment/ coursework/ research synopsis/ lab reports/portfolio/ dissertation/MPhil, EdD, PhD theses regarding the use of Turnitin service for plagiarism detection and prevention.

(b) Use the Service only in connection with classes offered in its own curriculum, to its own students for the purpose of submitting Student work for evaluation and shall not rent, lease or provide access to or benefits from the Service to any other institution or individual.

(c) Notify students via the Module Information Sheet (MIS) if you plan to use Turnitin for some or all assignments. Below is a sample statement:

“Students are informed that it is mandatory that all writing assignments are submitted to Turnitin which is a plagiarism-detection software intended to address plagiarism and improper citation. All submissions must be accompanied by Turnitin’ Digital receipt and a statement of originality (Honour Code).”

(d) Provide class identification numbers and passwords only to Students properly enrolled in the relevant registered class.

(e) For purposes of fairness and equal application, ensure that all students submit their works rather than singling out students to submit their works.

(f) Inform students in advance about the Anti-Plagiarism Policy its provision about handling cases of plagiarism.

(g) Determine an appropriate start and end date for the use of the Turnitin Service and determine how many submissions will be allowed.

(h) Communicate to the students how many times they are allowed to resubmit an assignment or draft assignments/ courseworks/ research synopses/ lab reports/portfolios/dissertations/thesis through the Turnitin Service.

(i) Advise students on formatting citations, references and quotations within the assigned students’ work.

(j) Assist the students to interpret the Turnitin reports in order to help them rewrite and review their works to address plagiarism.

(k) Provide students opportunities for formative submissions by selection the "No Repository" option so that student's formative submission is not matched with later summative submission. The option of "Standard Repository" is suitable for final (summative) submission.

4.9 Responsibility of Students

(a) Maintain academic integrity as a trainee of MIE by representing one's work and others' work honestly and in appropriate ways.

(b) Understand that as students registered at the MIE, they are subject to the regulations of MIE's General Rules and Regulations and Information for Students and the Anti-Plagiarism Policy.

(c) Be acquainted with the Turnitin Service and the process for detecting plagiarism.

(d) Ensure that they submit their the assignment/ coursework/ research synopsis/ lab reports/portfolio/ dissertation/ thesis as required through the Turnitin Service to generate an originality report with a similarity index as notified by the Programme handbook/ Student Course Handbook/ Module Information Sheet or any other acceptable means.

(e) Sign a Statement of Originality (Honour Code) undertaking that the submitted work is their own. A sample statement is:

"I have completed all steps of the attached assignment on my own, I have not used any unauthorized materials while completing this work, and I have not given anyone else access to copy my assignment."

This form should be attached to their assignment/dissertation/project/ report/ portfolio/thesis.

(f) Attach the Turnitin digital receipt as part of their submission. The digital receipt is a proof that the Turnitin Service was used as specified. This also undertakes that have read and understood the information of plagiarism and the penalties which may be imposed if an offence is committed.

(g) For a group work, one member of the group should be designated for a formal (summative) submission through Turnitin.

5.0 PLAGIARISM PROCEDURE

5.1 For the Mauritius Institute of Education, the following acceptance threshold will be used.

- (a) Overall Similarity Index (Certificate level or below): should be less than 20%.
- (b) Overall Similarity Index (Diploma level): Should be less than 20%
- (c) Overall Similarity Index (Degree/Postgraduate level): Should be less than 10%
- (d) Overall Similarity Index (Masters/PhD/Doctoral level): Should be less than 5%

5.2 The following single source similarity index will be used:

- (a) Single Source Similarity Index (Certificate level or below): Should not exceed 5%
- (b) Single Source Similarity Index (Diploma level): Should not exceed 4%
- (c) Single Source Similarity Index (Degree/ Postgraduate level): Should not exceed 3%
- (d) Single Source Similarity Index (Masters/PhD/Doctoral level): Should not exceed 2%

5.3 The following will be used in relation with the number of acceptable words in an unbroken string (phrase or sentence):

- (a) Certificate level or below: Should not exceed 25 words
- (b) Diploma level: Should not exceed 20 words
- (c) Degree/ Postgraduate level: Should not exceed 15 words
- (d) Masters/PhD/Doctoral level: Should not exceed 10 words

5.4 Where direct quotations have been properly acknowledged they must be ignored.

5.5 In the event where there is limited information about the topic of the submitted work or the work is closely connected with a particular study, the similarity index from a single source exceeding 2% - 5% (as applicable) should be further investigated before taking action.

5.6 In the event where a portion of a submitted work has been published by the same student it can be overlooked after careful inspection has confirmed this.

5.7 References, bibliography, mathematical equations and extensive direct quotations, although duly cited, could present a high percentage match. The Turnitin software could be set to ignore these.

5.8 Cover page and declaration information will be similar for all students submitting their works and this can increase the similarity index. This should be ignored during inspection.

5.9 Notwithstanding the above, in case of appeal, the MIE agrees to exercise its independent professional judgment in determining the actual existence of plagiarism in a submitted work under the acknowledgement and understanding that the Originality Reports are only tools for detecting textual similarities between compared works and do not determine conclusively the existence of plagiarism.

5.10 The Originality Report should serve as an indicative basis of the extent a piece of work is plagiarized. The judgement as to whether work is plagiarized must always be an academic judgement.

6.0 DEALING WITH SUSPECTED CASES OF PLAGIARISM

6.1 The MIE's General Rules and Regulations and Information for Students lays out in Section 3.12 the level of plagiarism and a list of related penalties appropriate to each level.

6.2 Three levels of similarity as detailed in the MIE's General Rules and Regulations and Information for Students are applicable:

(a) Level 1 of similarity constitutes less than 20% of the submitted work as from the acceptance threshold point index;

(b) Level 2 of similarity constitutes from 20% to 50% of the submitted work as from the accepted threshold point index;

(c) Level 3 of similarity constitutes more than 50 % of the submitted work as from the accepted threshold point index.

6.3 With reference to Section 5.1, the levels of similarity will be determined as described:

(a) Certificate programme or below (acceptable threshold: less than 20%)

(i) Level 1: 20% - 24%

(ii) Level 2: 24% - 30%

(iii) Level 3: greater than or equal to 30%

(b) Diploma programme (acceptable threshold: less than 20%)

(i) Level 1: 20% - 24%

(ii) Level 2: 24% - 30%

(iii) Level 3: greater than or equal to 30%

(c) Degree/ Postgraduate programme (acceptable threshold: 10%)

(i) Level 1: 10% - 12%

(ii) Level 2: 12% - 15%

(iii) Level 3: greater than or equal to 15%

(d) Masters/PhD/Doctoral programme (acceptable threshold: 5%)

(i) Level 1: 5% - 6%

(ii) Level 2: 6% - 7.5%

(iii) Level 3: greater than or equal to 7.5%

6.4 Upon infringement of the rules related to plagiarism, action will be taken by the Disciplinary Committee as stipulated by the General Rules and Regulations and Information for Students (Section 3.13.1). Sanctions will be commensurate with the degree of the plagiarism and the number of offences.

6.5 Where Turnitin submission is mandatory but a student fails to submit a digital receipt as proof of use of Turnitin, s/he will be awarded zero mark for the work in question unless there were accepted extenuating circumstances

6.6 The penalties (Section 3.12 of General Rules and Regulations and Information for Students) include, but is not restricted to,

(a) Level 1: reduction of marks by 10%;

(b) Level 2: the student will be deemed to have failed and will be entitled to normal resits;

(c) Level 3: the student will be deemed to have failed and will be entitled to one resit only.

6.7 For all cases of plagiarism, the Examination section will hold a disciplinary committee prior to the holding of the Award Committee. The Student will be called for a hearing.

6.8 The disciplinary committee will be chaired by a representative of the Deputy Director (not below the grade of Associate Professor) and will consist of the Head of the Examination Section or a representative of the latter; Programme Coordinator or a representative of the latter; the Examiner; the Module/Subject/Course Coordinator.

6.9 Any appeal will be dealt by the Appeals Committee as described by the General Rules and Regulations and Information for Students (including Section 2.4, Section 3.16.2 and Section 3.27.1).

REFERENCES

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