

Academic Integrity and Prevention of Plagiarism Policy

Preamble

Honesty, integrity, originality, and mutual trust are fundamentals of an enriching environment for teaching, research and scholarship. The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda is committed to maintaining utmost standards of quality and ethics as it prepares its students and faculty members to contribute meaningfully to their fields of interest.

Today, there is a surge of information available to students and faculty members in the form of books, journals, essays and projects in libraries as well as the internet. Such easy access to information and the freedom to use it brings with it the temptations to cheat, plagiarize and use unfair means to improve performance. Poor time management, lack of sincerity, and the pressure to perform and publish are some common reasons that contribute to this temptation.

During the course of their study in this university, students will be required to refer to works by prominent theorists, researchers and scholars in their chosen field. Students will engage with academic publications and will refer to sources as they think, reflect, write, build arguments and analyze them. At the same time, they will be expected to express ideas, thoughts and make inventions that are original and creative. Similarly, academicians and researchers affiliated to the university will be expected to cultivate academic integrity and ensure authenticity of their research projects and publications. Considering this, it is absolutely essential to educate the students and faculty members of the university about the rules and regulations governing academic honesty, intellectual property as well as penalties for the violation of scholarly ethics.

Maintaining academic integrity involves:

- Creating and expressing one's own ideas in course work and research work.
- Acknowledging all sources of information including authors of print or electronic sources.
- Acknowledging collaboration with faculty members, classmates, and friends.
- Accurately reporting results when conducting one's own research or with respect to laboratory work or field work.
- Assigning appropriate authorship credit to colleagues, collaborators, research scholars, and students.
- Upholding honesty during examinations.

This document presents the University's policy on preserving academic integrity and preventing plagiarism. Students and faculty members are expected to understand and adhere to these principles and regulations to uphold the highest standards of excellence for themselves and the University. The document draws from the UGC Promotion of Academic Integrity and Prevention of Plagiarism in Higher Education Institutions Regulations 2017 (https://www.ugc.ac.in/pdfnews/8864815_UGC-Public-Notice-on-Draft-UGC-Regulations,-2017.pdf).

Objectives

- To create academic awareness about responsible conduct of research, study, project work, assignment, thesis, dissertation, promotion of academic integrity and prevention of misconduct including plagiarism in academic writing among students, researchers, faculty and other members of academic staff as well as any employee of the University.
- To establish institutional mechanisms through education and training to facilitate responsible conduct of research, study, project work, assignment, thesis, dissertation, promotion of academic integrity and deterrence from plagiarism.
- To develop systems to detect plagiarism and to set up mechanisms to prevent plagiarism and take appropriate punitive action in the event that an act of plagiarism is committed by a student, faculty, or staff of the University.

1. What is Plagiarism?

Plagiarism is a practice that is deemed as breach of academic integrity. Failure to acknowledge sources is considered as plagiarism. Specifically, it refers to an intentional or non-intentional decision not to acknowledge or give credit to the work of others (intellectual property) and instead incorporate or present others' work as one's own. Plagiarism covers a wide range including words, structure, ideas, authorship, and self-plagiarism. Others' work may be published or unpublished and include materials such as written text, data, Internet sources, spoken words, ideas, opinions, graphics, images, artwork, performances, music recordings. Presenting work done in collaboration with another person as one's own individual work also falls within the purview of plagiarism.

2. Types of Plagiarism

Intentional Plagiarism

Refers to the deliberate intentional act of passing off others' work as one's own; cutting and pasting from different sources to create own write-up without giving credit in the form of citation; copying an essay or article from any source (print, electronic) without quoting or giving credit; borrowing words or ideas from other sources without giving credit.

Unintentional Plagiarism

This occurs because of ignorance or carelessness in know-how of rules for citation and referencing. It comprises: poor paraphrasing for example, changing a few words without changing sentence structure or changing sentence structure without changing the words; carelessness in quoting, such as missing out on quotation marks in certain places or quoting partially; and poor citation in terms of omissions or inaccuracies.

[*MLA handbook for writers of research papers*. (2009). (7th ed.). New York: The Modern Language Association of America].

Self-Plagiarism or Auto-Plagiarism

Self-plagiarism means presenting one's own previous work (partially or fully) as new scholarship, either to one's current university or any other institution in future. All of

your past work that has been published must be cited and referenced clearly. In general, the core of the new document must constitute an original contribution to knowledge.

[*Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*. (2010). (6th ed.). Washington D.C.: APA].

3. Ways to Avoid Plagiarism

Creating awareness and understanding related to the meaning of plagiarism and how to avoid it is very important. The University is committed to provide all support in this direction. The University will take the following necessary steps to spread awareness regarding how to avoid plagiarism:

- Provide tips to avoid plagiarism on the library website.
- Display posters and make available leaflets in the library, student common rooms and canteens for generating awareness.
- Conduct sessions on academic integrity and prevention of plagiarism during orientation programs for students and newly appointed faculty members.
- Include specific inputs on prevention of plagiarism in research methodology courses across all departments and at all levels (undergraduate and postgraduate).
- Organize periodic talks and awareness programs for students and teachers on the matter of plagiarism.

Tips for Students, Research Scholars, and Faculty

- Take utmost care that your writing represents original ideas and all sources which have been referred are cited.
- Paraphrase your writing. This refers to rewriting an author's material in one's own words, and at the same time giving credit by acknowledging the author.
- Cite any and all sources that you use, and ensure that the source is included in the reference list. Sources may include but are not limited to, print materials (e.g., books, journals, articles, and reports), graphs, tables, data or diagrams, web sources, TV and radio programs, as well as information or ideas through personal communication.
- Do not make use of 'ghost writers' or professional agencies to do your writing work.

Note. Students and faculty members are advised and expected to refer to Style Manuals or Style Guides (e.g., APA Manual, Chicago Manual of Style, Oxford Style Manual, MLA) for detailed information on correct ways of citing sources. Students and faculty members may also refer to the references provided in Appendix C.

4. Curbing Plagiarism

- Every student submitting a thesis, dissertation, term papers, reports or any other such documents to the University shall submit an undertaking indicating that the document has been prepared by him or her and that the document is his/her original work and free of any plagiarism.
- The undertaking form is appended with this document. It shall include the fact that the document has been duly checked through a **plagiarism detection tool** approved by the University. (Refer Appendix A for the undertaking form).

- Every faculty, researcher and M.Phil/Ph.D student should be provided an account in the plagiarism tool for checking the content of their scripts.
- Each supervisor shall submit a certificate indicating that the work done by the researcher under him/her is plagiarism free.

5. Similarity Checks for Exclusion from Plagiarism

The similarity checks for plagiarism shall exclude the following:

- i. A quoted work either falling under public domain or reproduced with all necessary permission and/or attribution.
- ii. All references, bibliography, table of content, preface and acknowledgements.
- iii. All small similarities of minor nature.
- iv. All generic terms, laws, standard symbols and standards equations.

6. Zero Tolerance Policy in Core Areas

The core work carried out by the student, faculty, staff and researcher shall be based on original ideas and shall be covered by Zero Tolerance Policy on Plagiarism. In case plagiarism is established in the core work claimed, then the Plagiarism Disciplinary Authority (PDA) (refer sub-section 8.2) of the University shall impose the appropriate penalty.

The core work shall include abstract, summary, hypothesis, observations, results, conclusions, and recommendations.

Identification of an incidence of plagiarism is likely to begin with the concerned teacher or supervisor or any other member of the academic community suspecting some misconduct, and then proceeding to determine if there is prima facie evidence for an allegation of plagiarism.

If a member of the academic community suspects with appropriate proof that a case of plagiarism has happened in any document, he or she shall report it to the competent/designated authority of the university. Upon receipt of such a complaint or allegation the university authority shall refer the case to the Academic Misconduct Panel (AMP) of the University who in turn shall submit a report to the Plagiarism Discipline Authority (PDA).

The authorities of University can also take *suo moto* notice of an act of plagiarism and initiate proceedings under these regulations. Similarly, proceedings can also be initiated by the University on the basis of findings of an examiner.

7. Levels of Plagiarism in Non-Core Areas

For all other (non-core) cases, plagiarism would be quantified into following levels in ascending order of severity for the purpose of its definition:

- i. Similarities upto 10% - excluded
- ii. Level 1: Similarities above 10% to 40%
- iii. Level 2: Similarities above 40% to 60%
- iv. Level 3: Similarities above 60%

8. Identification of Plagiarism and Guidelines for Action

The Academic Misconduct Panel (AMP) (refer sub-section 8.1) of the University will establish whether plagiarism has in fact occurred and the level of seriousness. The committee will submit its report to the Post-Graduate Council of the University for a Final Decision and further action.

8.1 Academic Misconduct Panel (AMP)

- i. AMP is constituted by the University to investigate about the allegation of plagiarism and submit the report to the Plagiarism Disciplinary Authority (PDA).
- ii. The AMP shall have the power to assess the level of plagiarism and thus recommend penalty (is) accordingly.
- iii. The AMP shall consist of four members who shall be senior academicians with good publication record with at least one member nominated by the Vice-Chancellor from outside the University. The Chairperson of the AMP shall be an academic functionary (Dean/Senior Academician of Professor Level) of the University. The third member shall be a reputed Academician from the Discipline in which the plagiarism is alleged. The fourth member shall be an expert well versed with anti- plagiarism tools.
- iv. The AMP shall follow the principles of natural justice while deciding about the allegation of plagiarism against the student, researcher, faculty member or any other employee of the University.
- v. The AMP shall send the report after investigation and the recommendation on penalties to be imposed to the PDA preferably within a period of 45 days from the date of complaint/initiation of the proceedings in case of *suo moto* notice.
- vi. The AMP shall provide a copy of the report to the person(s) against whom inquiry report is submitted.

8.2 Plagiarism Disciplinary Authority (PDA)

- i. The PDA is constituted by the University to consider the recommendations of the AMP and take appropriate decision after giving a hearing to the accused individual.
- ii. There shall be three members in the PDA chaired by the Vice-Chancellor/Registrar. The other members shall be Dean/Director (Academic/Research) and one senior academician not below the rank of Professor in the relevant discipline from outside the University.
- iii. The decision of the PDA shall be final and binding to all parties concerned.

9. Disciplinary Sanctions and Penalties

Once plagiarism is detected, the following disciplinary actions are to be taken depending on the severity of the misconduct:

Penalties in the cases of plagiarism shall be imposed on students pursuing studies at the level of UG, PG, Masters, M. Phil., Ph.D. and faculty and staff of the University only after academic misconduct on the part of the offender has been established without doubt, when all avenues of appeal have been exhausted and the individual in question has been provided enough opportunity to defend himself or herself in a fair or transparent manner. Since the act of plagiarism, witting or unwitting, is potentially detrimental to the academic credibility and social reputation of the individual concerned, all proceedings of investigations and imposition of penalties shall be conducted in camera so as to prevent stigma and slur upon the individual concerned

a) Penalties for Students

Plagiarism Disciplinary Authority (PDA) of the University, based on recommendations of the Academic Misconduct Panel (AMP), shall impose penalty considering the severity of the Plagiarism.

- i. Level 1: Similarities above 10% to 40%: Such student shall not be given any mark and/or credit for the plagiarized script and shall be asked to submit a revised script within a stipulated time period not exceeding 6 months.
- ii. Level 2: Similarities above 40% to 69%: Such student shall not be given any mark and/or credit for the plagiarized script and shall be asked to submit a revised script after a time period of one year but not exceeding eighteen months.
- iii. Level 3: Similarities above 60%: Such student shall not be given any mark and/or credit for the plagiarized script and his/her registration for that course is to be cancelled.

Note 1: Penalty on repeated Plagiarism: Such student shall be punished for the plagiarism of one level higher than the previous level committed by him/her. In case where plagiarism of highest level is committed then the punishment for the same shall be operative.

Note 2: Penalty in case where the degree/credit has already been obtained: If plagiarism is proved on a date later than the date of award of degree or credit as the case may be then his/her degree or credit shall be put in abeyance for a period decided by the AMP or PDA.

b) Penalties for faculty, staff, researcher(s) of the University

- i. Level 1: Similarities above 10% to 40%: Shall be asked to withdraw manuscript submitted for publication and shall not be allowed to publish any work for a minimum period of one year.
- ii. Level 2: Similarities above 40% to 60%: Shall be asked to withdraw manuscript submitted for publication and shall not be allowed to publish any work for a minimum period of two years and shall be denied a right to one annual increment and shall not be allowed to be a supervisor to any UG, PG, Master's, M.Phil., Ph.D. student/research scholar for a period of two years.
- iii. Level 3: Similarities above 60%: Shall be asked to withdraw manuscript submitted for publication and shall not be allowed to publish any work for a minimum period of three years and shall be denied a right to two successive annual increments and shall not be allowed to be a supervisor to any UG, PG, Master's, M.Phil., Ph.D. student/research scholar for a period of three years.

Note 1: Enhanced penalty on repeated plagiarism: Shall be punished for the plagiarism of one level higher than the lower level committed by him/her. In case where plagiarism of highest level is committed then the punishment for the same shall be operative. In case level 3 offence is repeated then the concerned person shall be dismissed.

Note 2: Penalty in case where the benefit or credit has already been obtained-If plagiarism is proved on a date later than the date of benefit or credit obtained as the case may be then his/her benefit or credit shall be put in abeyance for a period decided by the AMP and PDA on recommendation of the AMP.

Note 3: If there is any complaint of plagiarism against the Head of the Institute, a suitable action, in line with these regulations, will be taken by the Competent Authority/ Governing Council as the title may be.

10. Dissemination and Publication of Results

The university encourages publication and dissemination of results of high quality research and believes that researchers must do this responsibly and with an awareness of the consequences of any such dissemination in the academic community or wider society.

Researchers should take into account the following guidelines when publishing or disseminating their research including any plans they may have to publish or disseminate research at conferences or on websites.

- Researchers should make every effort to ensure that the research is published in high quality refereed peer reviewed journals that are included in the UGC-CARE list and also indexed in Scopus, Web of Science or any such standard database that is accepted in the University.
- All funding sources must be acknowledged in any publication or publicity of the research.
- The contributions of formal collaborators and all others who directly assist or indirectly support the research should be both specified and properly acknowledged.
- Work should normally be published as a coherent entity rather than a series of small parts, unless there is a legitimate need to demonstrate first discovery by publishing preliminary data.
- Quality rather than quantity is paramount; the proliferation of multi-author papers to increase quantity should be discouraged.
- Authors must not publish the same data in different journals.
- If an error is found that degrades the worth of published findings, the principal author must take efforts to publish a correction as soon as possible.
- Where the findings are found to be in serious doubt, a retraction should be published speedily.

Authorship

In general, authorship credit must be taken only for work one has performed or to which one has substantially contributed.

Any publication(s) based on the MPhil dissertation/PhD thesis should have the student as the principal first author and research guide as the second author.

- For research projects
 - The order of authorship credit should be according to the relative contribution of each individual. In general, the name of the principal contributor is stated first, and the other names will follow in the order of decreasing contribution.
 - All collaborators should decide as early as possible the tasks involved and the responsibility that each individual will take as well as the level of authorship credit (first author, second author).