

CSSA POLICY ON PLAGIARISM

Name of document:	Policy on Plagiarism	
Originator/Author: (name and position)	Accreditation and Assessments Manager	
Custodian: (position/office)	Student and Examinations Manager	
Policy approved by:	EDEX	
Policy effective date:	June 2018	
Policy review date:	January 2024	
Implementation responsibility:	Student and Examinations Department Accreditation and Assessments Department	

1. Preamble

As the pre-eminent professional body for governance practice in Southern Africa, with a unique institutional culture based upon the values we espouse, Chartered Secretaries Southern Africa (CSSA) has adopted this Policy on Plagiarism.

2. Policy statement

Students should assume sole responsibility for the content of their work. To present as one's own work the ideas, wording or formulation of someone without due acknowledgement is regarded as dishonest academic conduct. In terms of the CSSA Code of Conduct, this constitutes serious misconduct, whether it occurs orally, by conduct or in writing, during examinations or in the context of other forms of assessment such as assignments.

Therefore, it is the policy of CSSA that no form of academic dishonesty will be tolerated, and if any such conduct is reported or detected, the perpetrator upon being found guilty will be punishable in terms of the CSSA's disciplinary policies, rules and procedures.

3. Definitions

Various acts related to academic misconduct or academic dishonesty can be identified within the contexts of examination processes and other forms of academic assessment. These are outlined in more detail below.

3.1 Academic dishonesty

Dishonest conduct does not only occur during examinations but also with other forms of assessment such as assignments. This includes matters such as

- Copying from another person, and the disguising of somebody else's work in order to create the impression that it is the work of the perpetrator himself.
- Presenting individual work material which is the result of undue and unacceptable amount of assistance from another person;
- Assisting another student with presentation of individual work in contravention with instructions or guidelines for that work.
- Breaching copyright by means of plagiarism.

CSSA POLICY ON PLAGIARISM

3.2 Plagiarism and copyright infringement

Plagiarism means the presentation, without consent or reference to the source, of another person's text or other published intellectual property. The Oxford Dictionary describes plagiarism as "The practice of taking someone else's work or ideas and passing them off as one's own."¹

In more detailed terms, one can identify instances of plagiarism as:

"A pre-meditated act of presenting another person's work or property without reference or acknowledgement to the rightful owner, such as:

- *using another person's ideas, work or research information without acknowledgement*
- *copying verbatim sentences or paragraphs from one or more sources with no proper acknowledgement*
- *paraphrasing closely sentences or paragraphs without acknowledgement*"².

Plagiarism constitutes using more than **FIVE CONSECUTIVE WORDS** from someone else's work without due acknowledgement. For example:

- CSSA Textbooks or other textbooks
- Past examination memoranda
- Extracts from legislation
- Extracts from case law
- Internet resources

Plagiarism and copyright infringement compromises the integrity of academic work and is contrary to ethical practice and society's perception of moral values, as well as compliance with the CSSA Code of Conduct. It is therefore forbidden and, where it does occur, will be punished by the CSSA as an unlawful practice.

Legal action can be taken against anyone committing copyright infringement.

4.1 Rules

The CSSA has the responsibility of ensuring the integrity and academic honesty of all students and staff. This responsibility can be complied with:

- through the formulation and publication of a clear policy about academic dishonesty and plagiarism,
- through the instruction of students from an early stage about referencing practices, as well as general academic honesty,
- through the prominent placement of warnings against academic dishonesty and plagiarism (inter alia in study material or assignments)
- through expecting of students to declare, upon the submission of independent academic work for assessment, that such work is their own original work,
- and through punishing cases of academic dishonesty and plagiarism suitably.

The CSSA therefore has both an educational, moral and a disciplinary responsibility. Each academic and student associated with the CSSA has the personal responsibility of presenting all material

¹ <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/plagiarism>

² Northwest University. 2013. *Policy on plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty and misconduct*.

CSSA POLICY ON PLAGIARISM

intended for academic assessment in a manner that is ethically accountable. The responsibilities of CSSA in this regard can be spelled out as follows:

- Students must be given information about acceptable standards of integrity and academic honesty in conducting e.g. with respect to assessment, referencing and reference lists.
- All assignments must include an instruction on plagiarism, cheating, academic dishonesty or misconduct and copyright protection.
- Students must be provided with standards of referencing at the beginning of each assignment. For the CSSA, the Harvard Referencing system is applicable.

4.2 Disciplinary processes

There are two levels of disciplinary action possible in cases of academic dishonesty:

- educational reprimand and penalisation and
- the formal disciplinary process.

Students are referred to the Disciplinary Policy of the CSSA for details.

4.3 Record keeping

CSSA keeps records of all disciplinary decisions on a student's record until such time as they expire.

When a student is found guilty of plagiarism, academic dishonesty or misconduct by a disciplinary committee the verdict and sanction imposed are recorded on the student's academic record in accordance with the disciplinary policy of the Institute, especially for purposes of providing accurate information to persons and institutions who have the right to such testimony of a student's conduct during his/her study career.

Associated documents

CSSA Student Code of Conduct

CSSA Disciplinary policy