# UNIVERSITY OF ULSTER

# PLAGIARISM POLICY – Taught Courses and MRes (2012)

**Policy**

The University’s policy is that plagiarism, whether deliberate or unintentional, is a form of cheating and is unacceptable. It is expected that all students are educated in correct academic practice, including writing and referencing, early in their careers at the University and know what is expected of them and understand the meaning of plagiarism and its consequences.

**Definition of plagiarism**

The University’s definition of plagiarism makes explicit that copying from texts or web or other sources and copying work from other students constitutes plagiarism. It reads:

Plagiarism is the act of taking or copying someone else’s work, including another student’s, and presenting it as if it were one’s own. Plagiarism is said to occur when ideas, texts, theories, data, created artistic artefacts or other material are presented without acknowledgement so that the person considering this work is given the impression that what they have before them is the student’s own original work when it is not. Plagiarism also occurs where a student’s own work is re-presented without being properly referenced. Plagiarism is a form of cheating and is a disciplinary offence.

This definition is given in the University Student Handbook and Course/Subject Handbooks.

**Student declaration**

The standard coursework submission sheet for the receipting of coursework includes an explicit reference to the University’s definition of plagiarism as follows.

*I declare that this is my own work and that any material I have referred to has been accurately and consistently referenced****.*** *I have read the University’s policy on plagiarism and understand the definition of plagiarism as given in the [course/subject] handbook*.  *If it is shown that material has been plagiarised, or I have otherwise attempted to obtain an unfair advantage for myself or others, I understand that I may face sanctions in accordance with the policies and procedures of the University. A mark of zero may be awarded and the reason for that mark will be recorded on my file.*

The submission sheet is available at [www.ulster.ac.uk/academicoffice/Documents&Forms.htm](http://www.ulster.ac.uk/academicoffice/Documents&Forms.htm). The declaration of ownership is automatically generated in *Blackboard Learn [due 2012/13].* It should also be used when assignments are submitted by other electronic means.

**Penalties**

The University’s Policy provides simple, graduated Frameworks of Penalties for plagiarism relating the severity of penalties to the number of offences and gives individual, formative advice after the first offence. There are both academic and disciplinary consequences. Disciplinary penalties in taught courses and the MRes are not applied until the second offence. Offences are counted cumulatively, regardless of any change of course but do not carry over from undergraduate to postgraduate level.

The Framework of Penalties for taught programmes and the MRes follows. That for other research degrees is available from the Research Office’s website.

**Monitoring of Policy**

The efficacy of the Policy is monitored by the Learning and Teaching Committee which receives annual reports from the Faculties and the Research Degrees Committee.

**FRAMEWORK OF PENALTIES FOR PLAGIARISM OFFENCES IN TAUGHT PROGRAMMES AND MASTER OF RESEARCH**

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| **1ST OFFENCE** | **2ND OFFENCE** | **3RD OFFENCE** | **4TH OFFENCE** | **PLAGIARISM DETECTED AFTER GRADUATION** |
| Reduction in marks based on exclusion of plagiarised work.  Formative interview with module co-ordinator and/or lecturer. | Mark of zero for assignment containing plagiarism.  Interview with Head of School and/or Course/Subject Director and/or lecturer.  Formal letter of reprimand from Head of School. Copy placed on student file. | Mark of zero for assignment containing plagiarism and maximum mark of 40% (UG) or 50% (PG) for coursework element[[1]](#footnote-1).  Case referred to Dean with recommendation of reprimand and fine not exceeding the maximum amount permitted under the Ordinance on Student Discipline at the time of application of penalty.  Interview with Dean.  Formal letter of reprimand from Dean. Copy placed on student file. | Mark of zero for module.  Case referred to University Disciplinary Committee with recommendation of suspension (1 semester or 1 year as advised by Faculty) or discontinuation of studies at the University.  Outcome recorded on student file. | The award may be revoked. |

**FRAMEWORK OF PENALTIES FOR PLAGIARISM OFFENCES IN RESEARCH PROGRAMMES (EXCLUDING MRes)**

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| **INITIAL ASSESSMENT**  **(100 DAY VIVA)** | **CONFIRMATION ASSESSMENT** | **THESIS** | **PLAGIARISM DETECTED**  **AFTER GRADUATION** |
| Plagiarism will generally be dealt with by a verbal warning.  The student will be asked to resubmit the report.  A record may be placed on the student file.  The student may be referred to the University Disciplinary Committee. | The student will be required to resubmit the report for further assessment.  The student will be interviewed by a senior member of staff (normally the Research Institute Director or the Head of the Research Graduate School).  A record will be placed on the student file.  The student may be referred to the University Disciplinary Committee. | Examiners will be asked to examine the thesis and to make an academic judgement on it, taking into account the nature and extent of the plagiarism. If the thesis is deemed worthy of the degree, it must be resubmitted with all plagiarised material eliminated.  The student may be referred to the University Disciplinary Committee.  Depending on the extent and nature of plagiarised material in the thesis, the examiners may recommend discontinuation of studies at the University.  A record will be placed on the student file. | The award may be revoked. |

1. ‘Assignment containing plagiarism’ means the assignment which contains the plagiarised material, and not all the assessments for the module. ‘Maximum mark for coursework element’ refers to the total aggregate percentage mark for all the pieces of coursework in the module. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)