

## Regulations for the Avoidance of Plagiarism

(Please note that this is a translation of the approved German version)

Academic writing is an important tool in the psychologist's toolbox and many of the courses at the Faculty of Psychology ask students to provide written deliverables which will often require acknowledging and describing the past work conducted by others or their own previous work. Providing proper credit is not always easy and can, on occasion, lead to some form of plagiarism in academic writing. This document aims to describe plagiarism in this context, why it is problematic, provide some insight into its possible consequences, and provide recommendations to both course instructors and students on how to avoid and deal with plagiarism.

### Defining plagiarism

Functionally, any phrase, group of words, results, and other ideas from someone else that one claims to be one's own (i.e., do not give accurate credit to the original authors by use of citations) is plagiarism. Formally, there are no agreed upon number of words or sentences that constitute plagiarism. Plagiarism can happen intentionally or unintentionally. Intentional plagiarism most often results from using written formulations from others without giving proper credit or resorting to ghostwriting services. Unintentional plagiarism occurs when one fails to follow the correct procedures of citing the original source, from which one gets an idea, a fact, or a figure. Plagiarism remains plagiarism, even when it occurs unintentionally. Therefore, it is crucial to give proper credit to the original source when citing paraphrased ideas or by directly quoting the original statement.

### Some reasons why plagiarism is problematic

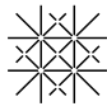
*Plagiarism prevents learning.* Plagiarism can rob one of opportunities to master material and practice written communication. Taking the thoughts and words of someone else prevents one from doing the hard work of learning how to communicate one's own thoughts to a reader.

*Plagiarism is unfair.* Plagiarism is unfair to fellow students. The overwhelming majority of students invest the necessary hard work needed to write down their own ideas in a clear and concise manner. Thus, when someone plagiarizes, one is claiming an unfair advantage compared to others.

*Plagiarism is unscientific.* Taking the words and ideas of someone else and claiming them to be one's own is antithetical to the scientific process, which depends on transparency and verifiability.

### Possible consequences of plagiarism

According to the Studierenden-Ordnung der Universität Basel a student that violates scientific integrity, for example, by mean of plagiarism, is guilty of a disciplinary error (cf. Art. 11). Disciplinary errors can have different consequences, including a) written warning; b) temporary or permanent restriction of the right to use university facilities or services; c) exmatriculation for one or more semesters; d) permanent exclusion from studies at the University of Basel. The study regulations of the Faculty of Psychology further specify (cf., Art. 24) that the unauthorized use of written content under presumption of authorship will lead to the assessment of the work in question



as a fail (or 1.0 grade) and that the Prüfungskommission may further decide on exclusion from studies. Detailed information on procedure and responsibilities can be found in Studierenden-Ordnung der Universität Basel

([https://www.unibas.ch/dam/jcr:0e9a0318-b926-40f4-a349-b12d1b4f5ec9/441\\_800\\_08.pdf](https://www.unibas.ch/dam/jcr:0e9a0318-b926-40f4-a349-b12d1b4f5ec9/441_800_08.pdf)) and the Ordnung für die Bachelor- und

Masterstudiengänge an der Fakultät für Psychologie der Universität Basel

([https://psychologie.unibas.ch/fileadmin/user\\_upload/psychologie/Studium/Bachelors\\_tudium/Dokumente/446\\_800\\_06\\_NEU.pdf](https://psychologie.unibas.ch/fileadmin/user_upload/psychologie/Studium/Bachelors_tudium/Dokumente/446_800_06_NEU.pdf)).

### **Recommendations to course instructors**

1. Teaching good writing skills and practices is the best way to avoid plagiarism. Make sure to include teaching of writing strategies and address the issue of plagiarism in your courses in which students need to provide written deliverables. A good strategy may be to include both a section on this topic in your syllabus as well as addressing it directly in your interaction with the students.
2. Make sure to consider a strategy for detecting plagiarism in any course involving written deliverables, for example, using appropriate software that is made freely available by the University of Basel (e.g., Turnitin). You can find information about available software here (<https://ub.unibas.ch/de/digitale-dienste/plagiatserkennung/>).
3. Please make sure to communicate to your students how and when you will conduct an assessment of plagiarism, its consequences, and how they can avoid plagiarism, including, for example, sharing this document with your students.
4. Contact the Office of the Dean of Studies if you have any general questions about plagiarism.
5. If you have detected possible cases of plagiarism and feel these should be investigated further, please contact the Prüfungskommission such that this case can be recorded, and, if needed, pursued further by additional investigation.

### **Recommendations to students**

1. Avoiding plagiarism will typically involve feeling confident with your own writing and learning how to use strategies for writing novel work while appropriately citing and giving credit to the work of others. Make sure to assess any course materials (e.g., syllabus) concerning information on writing skills and asking your instructor for advice concerning scientific writing, citing past work, and avoiding plagiarism.
2. Use the software made freely available to you by the University of Basel to check your written deliverables before submitting your work (<https://ub.unibas.ch/de/digitale-dienste/plagiatserkennung/>).
3. Contact the Office of the Dean of Studies if you have any general questions about plagiarism or its possible consequences.

Approved by the Examination Commission on 09. May 2022

Taken note of by the Faculty Assembly on 18. May 2022