

# Guidelines for Scientific Work

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## § 1 Scientific Practice

(1) The St. Pölten University of Applied Sciences is committed to the Standards of Good Scientific Practice (GSP) in teaching and research pursuant to § 2a HS-QSG and therefore complies with the GSP guidelines of the Austrian Agency for Research Integrity (see paragraph 2). The following provisions apply in particular:

- a) All persons involved in research and teaching observe the Standards of Good Scientific Practice applicable to their respective field.
- b) The St. Pölten University of Applied Sciences and its individual organisational units, in which research and teaching are conducted, ensure that the standards of GSP are communicated and the necessary infrastructure is guaranteed.
- c) Persons who supervise research projects related to master theses ensure that the researchers are informed about the Standards of Good Scientific Practice.

(2) Scientific research refers to work which is committed to the Standards of Good Scientific Practice and aims to generate new knowledge. The following standards are to be observed:

- a) Transparent and sincere communication with other scientists and researchers as well as between scientists/researchers and those who commission their research projects
- b) Impartial judgement and internal independence
- c) A willingness to subject oneself to professional criticism and to respond to such criticism with reasoned argumentation
- d) The responsible and fair treatment of junior scientists/researchers in particular
- e) Working *lege artis*, i.e., according to the acknowledged rules of the respective discipline and with consideration for the state of the art
- f) Precise recordkeeping and documentation of the research process as well as the results
- g) The transparent and comprehensible handling of ideas, texts, data, and other sources that are either derived from others or have already been published by the same author before
- h) Strict honesty with regard to the research contributions of other persons, in particular by naming persons who made an independent scientific/scholarly contribution or another major contribution as co-authors in grant proposals or in the publication of research findings; in other words, observance of the joint responsibility of co-authors for publications and the exclusion of “honorary authorship”, and the disclosure of potential conflicts of interest
- i) Transparency with regard to the funding of research projects, in particular by naming the persons and/or institutions that support such projects with financial or material contributions

(3) Research misconduct refers to wilful, conscious or grossly negligent violations of the Standards of Good Scientific Practice (paragraph 2). The following actions in particular are to be considered research misconduct in accordance:

- a) The fabrication or falsification of data as well as the plagiarism of ideas, texts, and data
- b) The unjustified refusal to provide access to primary and original data; obstructing the research activities of other scientists/researchers as well as other unfair attempts to damage the scientific/scholarly reputation of another scientist/researcher
- c) Creating disadvantages to the career advancement of junior scientists and researchers
- d) Providing inaccurate information in grant proposals and publications

## § 2 Definition of Plagiarism

(1) The avoidance of plagiarism is considered a minimum Standard of Good Scientific Practice in all student works. The definition of plagiarism follows § 2a (3 (3-4)) HS-QSG<sup>1</sup>:

A case of scientific or artistic misconduct is definitely constituted if someone

- a) illicitly makes use of another person or uses a commissioned work by a third party (ghostwriting) when writing a scientific paper, taking an exam, or creating an artistic work;
- b) takes over other people's texts, ideas, or artistic works either fully or in part and claims them as their own, especially by using text passages, theories, hypotheses, insights, or data in the form of either direct, paraphrased, or translated takeover without due mention of the source and the author (plagiarism).

(2) On this basis, the following forms of plagiarism can be distinguished in terms of content:

- a) **Direct plagiarism:** The *deliberate takeover* of another person's scientific or artistic performance, i.e., the direct adoption of parts (text, images, illustrations, data, ideas, structure, etc.) of works by others without reference to the source in the form of appropriate citation.
- b) **Indirect plagiarism:** The *deliberate takeover* and modification of another person's scientific or artistic performance, i.e., the adoption of parts (text, images, illustrations, data, ideas, structure, etc.) of works by others with slight changes/modifications without reference to the source in the form of appropriate citation (for example, paraphrasing or translating another person's work without supporting documents).
- c) **Self-plagiarism:** The *deliberate takeover* of one's own previous scientific or artistic performance, i.e., **a)** the adoption of either unchanged or modified parts of one's own already published work without appropriate citation, or **b)** the unlawful repeated

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<sup>1</sup> Federal Law Gazette I no. 74/2011 as amended by Federal Law Gazette I no. 50/2024

submission of the same scientific or artistic work (pretence of new/original performance).

- d) **Ghostwriting:** *Feigning* a scientific or artistic performance by relying on third parties for the creation of the performance or work.

(3) In addition, the Copyright Act<sup>2</sup> is to be observed, which remains unaffected by the plagiarism provisions outlined here.

### § 3 Naming of Authors and Citation

(1) The **naming and citation** are deemed appropriate and fulfilled if it follows the international standards (e.g., APA, CMOS, MLA, IEEE, etc.) of the respective discipline applicable at the time that the scientific work is written.

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<sup>2</sup> Copyright Act (UrhG), Federal Law Gazette no. 111/1936 as amended

## § 4 Degree of Plagiarism

(1) Plagiarism is measured by its degree of severity, which is composed of two aspects:

- a) The quantity of the appropriated content *in relation to the entire work and the quality criteria*
- b) The quality of the appropriated content *in relation to the entire work*

**Table 1 - Evaluation Framework**

	Quantity	Quality
	examined by software	examined by the supervisor
<b>Minimal plagiarism</b>	<b>&lt;15%</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individual cases of careless citation</li> </ul>
<b>Moderate plagiarism</b>	<b>15-25%</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Careless citation</li> <li>• Cases of adoption without reference of wordings (such as core messages) that are important for the work</li> </ul>
<b>Substantial plagiarism</b>	<b>&gt;25%</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many cases of careless citation</li> <li>• Adoption without reference of wordings (such as core messages) that are important for the work</li> <li>• Attempts to conceal the takeover of longer passages without reference (for example through translation)</li> <li>• Intentional takeover of entire trains of thought without reference</li> </ul>

(2) The quantity and quality of plagiarism must always be considered together, which means that the percentages in Table 1 are to be understood as reference values:

- a) *Overestimation*: e.g., if the quantitative review results in a score of 17% but this result is predominantly made up of general standard wordings, common knowledge and source references, this does not appear to be a case of moderate plagiarism based on the quantitative score only.
- b) *Underestimation*: e.g., if the quantitative review results in a score of 12%, and substantial parts of another person's work have been adopted without reference to the source, this is surely a case of moderate to substantial plagiarism.

(3) When it comes to final (bachelor or master) theses, the submitting student is then notified of the result of the evaluation.

## **§ 5 Process Flow**

(1) The internal process flow is based on Sec. 20 FHG<sup>3</sup> (Annulment of Assessments and Thesis Submissions), which states that the result of an examination or academic thesis shall be annulled if such result was obtained by fraudulent means, in particular using unauthorised aids. Such annulled examinations shall be counted towards the permissible number of resits.

(2) Two different process flows are to be distinguished for suspected plagiarism a) in the course of a study programme, and b) after graduation. Paragraphs 3 and 4 apply to process flow b).

(3) The Chairperson of the UAS Board may commission an additional evaluation by an external body in case the internal statements are ambiguous or the UAS Board deems it necessary.

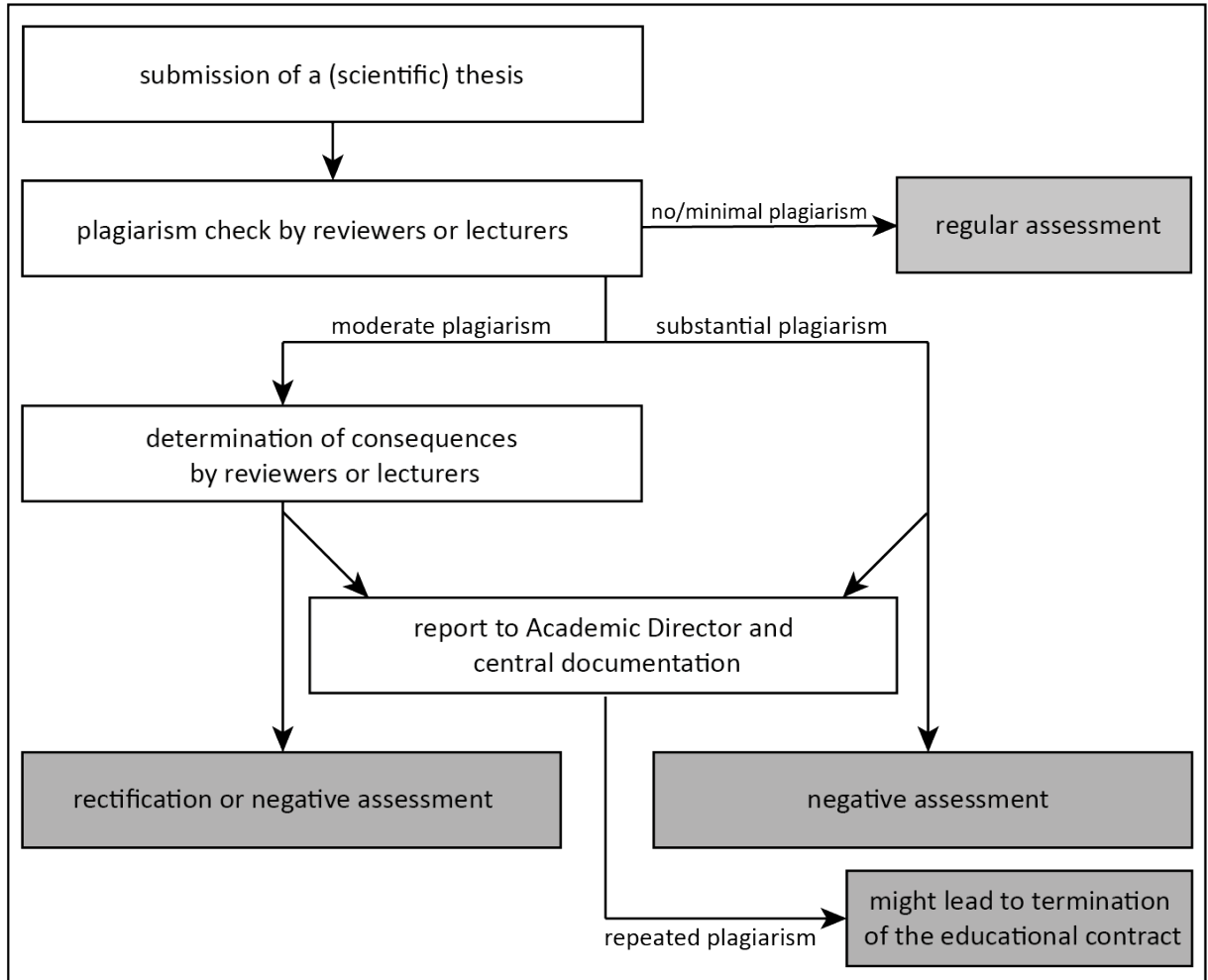
(4) The internal and independent expert commission is to meet the following minimum standards:

- a) It has to be composed of members of several departments with no direct connection to the suspicion of plagiarism (e.g., former supervisor).
- b) Irrespective of the discipline-related review, a sentence-by-sentence plagiarism evaluation is to be carried out by a library and the results handed over to the expert commission – this step cannot be compensated purely by a plagiarism software. If necessary, the St. Pölten UAS is to acquire potentially plagiarised literature or sources for review.
- c) The expert commission writes its statements on the basis of the discipline-related review and the sentence-by-sentence plagiarism evaluation.
- d) All members of the evaluation commission are requested to refrain from doing research on the parties involved (the accuser and the candidate) or including their knowledge of the persons in the evaluation.

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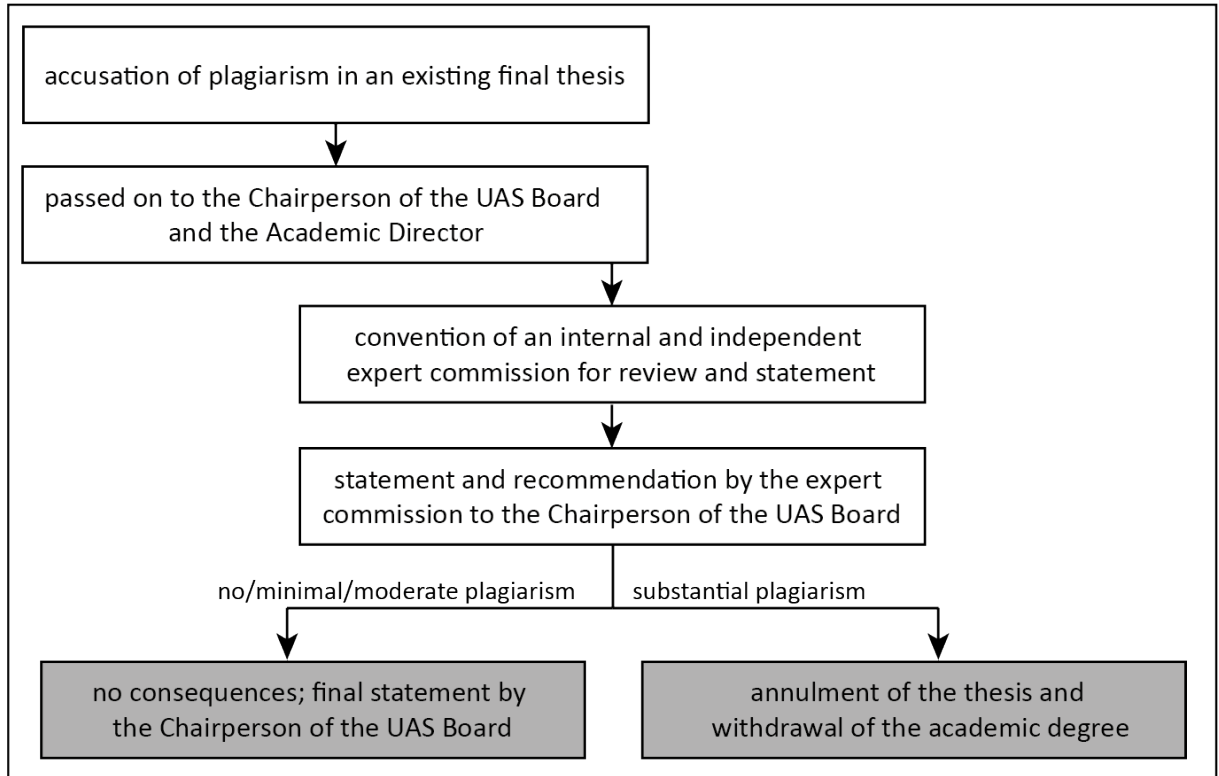
<sup>3</sup> University of Applied Sciences Act, Federal Law Gazette 340/1993 as amended

### a) Suspicion of plagiarism during studying





## b) Suspicion of plagiarism after graduation



## § 6 Consequences by Degree

(1) After the degree of plagiarism has been determined in the process flow (§ 5), the author faces the following consequences:

- a) A case of minimal plagiarism does not result in any sanctions; however, thesis supervisors and lecturers are advised to point out even minor flaws to their students and discuss why these are problematic.
- b) If the student has already graduated (suspicion of plagiarism after graduation), moderate plagiarism has no consequences.
- c) In case of moderate plagiarism while studying or during assessment processes (suspicion of plagiarism during studying), the imposition of sanctions is up to the lecturers or reviewers. Sanctions may range from the demand for a rectification to the negative assessment of the thesis. In any case, the Academic Director is to be notified for the purpose of central documentation.
- d) If the student has already graduated (suspicion of plagiarism after graduation), substantial plagiarism leads to the annulment of the thesis and, as a consequence, to the withdrawal of the academic degree.
- e) If substantial plagiarism occurs while studying or during assessment processes, the thesis receives a negative assessment, and the Academic Director is notified thereof for the purpose of central documentation.
- f) A repeated attempt at plagiarism during studying may lead to the termination of the educational contract, regardless of whether it is moderate or substantial plagiarism.