



Plagiarism and Deception Information for students

Is it already plagiarism? Or still an independent piece of work? Not least following public debate in several prominent cases, the issue of plagiarism and deception has become the focus of public and scientific educational interest. The University of Kassel has responded to this by issuing the "**Principles of good scientific practice for writing scientific theses**" on 4 June 2014. These principles are intended to provide an orientation for students and examiners regarding appropriate examination conduct for the academic requirements.

Plagiarism is not a trivial offence and can lead to the exclusion from repeat examinations and thus to the removal from the register of students. However, the intention to deceive does not necessarily exist in every case. In many cases, plagiarism is the result of a lack of knowledge of proper scientific practice.

The following information is intended to raise awareness among students regarding this issue and in particular to call attention to the consequences of plagiarism and deception attempts. As such, however, we can only provide general statements, as every individual case is different and must be evaluated as such by the relevant examiner or examination board in accordance with the subject-specific criteria.

→ Contents

<u>Preventing plagiarism</u>	p. 2
<u>Further links and sources</u> <i>Regulations on dealing with deception attempts and plagiarism at the University of Kassel</i> <i>Useful links and sources used</i>	p. 2
<u>What is plagiarism?</u> <i>General definition</i> <i>"General knowledge"</i> <i>Severity rating</i>	p. 3
<u>What are the consequences of plagiarism or deception attempts?</u> <i>Sanctions in Bachelor and Master degree courses</i> <i>Sanctions in teaching and diploma degree courses</i> <i>Sanctions in doctoral dissertations</i> <i>Copyright</i>	p. 4

→ Preventing plagiarism

The cause of plagiarism is often to be found in a **lack of knowledge of proper scientific practice**. In order to prevent cases of unintentional plagiarism, students should become familiar with the scientific practice of their subject. For this, each department offers a range of different events (e.g. tutorials, exercises etc.) and materials. In case of doubt, quotation rules etc. should be discussed with the examiner early on.

→ Further links and sources

- **Regulations on dealing with deception attempts and plagiarism at the University of Kassel:**
 - > Hessian University Act (HHG), § 18 Abs. 4
 - > General Provisions for Examination Regulations for the degrees Bachelor and Master at the University of Kassel (AB Bachelor/Master), § 16 und § 31
 - > General Provisions for Doctoral Dissertations at the University of Kassel (AB-PromO), §§ 5, 17
 - > Principles on ensuring good scientific practice of the University of Kassel from 5 February 2002 and 3 February 2011
 - > Principles of Good Scientific Practice for the authorship of scientific qualification work at the University of Kassel of 4 June 2014

- **Useful links and sources used:**
 - > *HTW Berlin* (Information and links on the issue of plagiarism):
<http://plagiat.htw-berlin.de/>
 - > *ETH Zürich* (Leaflet for lecturers on dealing with plagiarism):
https://www1.ethz.ch/iac/intranet/docs/plagiat_doz
 - > *LMU Munich* (Dealing with plagiarism. Guidelines for lecturers and students):
http://www.slavistik.uni-muenchen.de/download/plagiate/umgang_plagiate.pdf
 - > *University of Kassel* (Committee for ensuring good scientific practice):
<http://www.uni-kassel.de/intranet/?id = 37524>

→ What is plagiarism?

In general, plagiarism is considered the **complete or partial appropriation of words, ideas or work results from another author's work without referencing the source**. Copying the organization/structure or idea can also be considered plagiarism. The exact definition of plagiarism, however, remains problematic and also depends on the respective academic discipline. The question of how to deal with "unknowing" plagiarism is also controversial.

- **In general, it is considered plagiarism when** (source: ETH Zürich):
 - > The author submits a piece of work created by another person on the author's behalf ("ghost-writer"), in the author's name.
 - > The author submits a piece of work created by another person in the author's name (**full plagiarism**).
 - > The author translates foreign texts or parts of foreign texts and passes it off as his/her own work without referencing the source (**translation plagiarism**).
 - > The author uses **text passages** from another person's work without providing a source citation. This includes the use of text passages from the Internet without source citation.
 - > The author appropriates text passages from another person's work and carries out minimal text adjustments and modifications (**paraphrasing**) without providing a source citation.
 - > The author appropriates text passages from another person's work and provides the relevant source, but not in the context of the appropriated text passage or passages (example: **concealing** the plagiarized source in a footnote at the end of the piece of work).
- **"General knowledge"**

The reproduction of so-called "general knowledge" ("basic knowledge that can be assumed for the subject" [ETH]) without source citation is not generally considered plagiarism, as long as the presentation of such general knowledge was appropriated from another source.
- **Severity rating**

The sanctioning of deception attempts and plagiarism also depends on the severity of the violation. The severity rating can only take place on a **case-by-case basis** and lies within the scope of discretion of the examiner or the examination board.

The severity rating is dependent on the **quantitative** and **qualitative** importance of the violation. In formal terms, plagiarism is considered to have occurred when, for example, the source citation is missing for an appropriated sentence. The degree to which such a violation is rated as severe also depends on the framework conditions, however: if this single sentence has been emphasized as an independent achievement and forms the basis for the entire piece of work, or if the author declares in a written statement that the piece of work was created independently, then the case is considered more severe than if in an otherwise sound piece of work the source citation was omitted due to carelessness and there was no deception intention.

→ What are the consequences of plagiarism or deception attempts?

- **Sanctions in Bachelor and Master degree courses**

Plagiarism or plagiarism attempts / **deception** or **deception attempts** generally have the consequence that, in accordance with § 16 para. 1 of the AB Bachelor/Master (General Provisions for Examination Regulations), the pertinent examination achievement is graded as “**insufficient**” (5.0) and thus as failed.

In accordance with § 16 para. 6, this also applies to the major non-observance of citation regulations valid for the respective department. In cases considered as minor, it remains at the discretion of the examiner whether to include the ascertained violation in the grading. The ascertained violation should be discussed with the candidate in any case.

In the case of a particularly **severe deception** or a **repeated deception attempt** in a module examination, a sub-module examination, in the Bachelor or Master thesis, or in a piece of work that includes a written declaration confirming that the work was created independently, the examination board may moreover, in accordance with § 16 para. 3 of the AB Bachelor/Master, decide to **exclude the candidate from repeat examination**. The examination is thus considered as not passed. As a rule, this means that the degree course cannot be continued and that the student is removed from the register of students.

If a deception becomes known only after completion of the degree course, the examination grade can be corrected **in retrospect**, in accordance with § 16 para. 1 of the AB Bachelor/Master; this means that the pertinent examination is graded with “insufficient” (5.0) in retrospect. This may also result in the **acquired degree** being revoked (§ 31 para. 1 and 3 of the AB Bachelor/Master).

- **Sanctions in teaching and diploma degree courses**

The sanction options for teaching and diploma degree courses are generally similar to the regulations of the AB Bachelor/Master. They **are derived from the relevant paragraphs on deception attempts and violations** of the individual examination regulations. Attempted or committed deception actions are thus to be graded as “insufficient” (teaching courses) or “not satisfactory” (diploma). Moreover, for students on teaching degree courses, § 26 (deception attempts, violations) of the Hessian Teacher Training Act in the version dated 27 June 2013, and § 12 (deception attempts, violations) of the Regulation for implementing the Hessian Teacher Training Act in the version dated 7 February 2013, apply.

- **Sanctions in doctoral dissertations**

The General Regulations for doctoral dissertations at the University of Kassel in the version dated 16 July 2014 (AB-PromO) regulate in § 17 the sanction procedure for cases in which a doctoral degree has been acquired by means of **deception**. Accordingly, the **doctoral degree shall be revoked** if it has been acquired by means of deception or if facts come to light that would have precluded its being awarded.

If a violation is already discovered **during the assessment** of the dissertation, in particular a violation of the regulations listed in § 5 of the AB-PromO (e.g. violation of the subject-specific citation rules or the declaration on the independent authorship of the dissertation), **sanctioning within the framework of the assessment and evaluation** of the dissertation shall be carried out.

- **Copyright**

Plagiarism does not only violate the rules of good scientific practice, but can also be considered as a violation of copyright. According to this, it is a criminal offence to copy, disseminate or publically reproduce a piece of work or the treatment or reorganization of a piece of work other than in legally permitted cases **without consent of the author**. In addition, the treatment of parts of a piece of work is considered a criminal offence according to § 105 of the Copyright Act, which may be punishable by a **term of imprisonment of up to three years** or a **fine**.