



THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES

PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO LEVEL 1 PLAGIARISM

The Board for Graduate Studies and Research is asked to consider and **approve** the attached Paper ***Proposed Amendment to Level 1 Plagiarism Procedures - Consideration for Introduction of a Maximum Penalty.***

**LEVEL 1 PLAGIARISM
GRADUATE PROGRAMMES**

**PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO LEVEL 1 PLAGIARISM PROCEDURES -
CONSIDERATION FOR INTRODUCTION OF A MAXIMUM PENALTY**

INTRODUCTION

This paper is being presented pursuant to Minute 161, of the Minutes of a Meeting of the Board for Graduate Studies and Research held on Thursday May 20, 2021 at which the meeting discussed the request from the Board for Undergraduate Studies, to consider an amendment to the Plagiarism Regulations to set as the maximum penalty for a Level 1 plagiarism offence, a 10% reduction in marks and to permit students to appeal against a Level 1 plagiarism finding.¹ Further to the discussion at the meeting of May 20, 2021 the Chair suggested that the Directors should discuss the points that had been raised at the meeting to determine whether there was need to adjust the Graduate Plagiarism Regulations.

The Directors having considered the Graduate Plagiarism Regulations at their meetings of October 12, 2021 and February 8, 2022 propose the introduction of a maximum penalty reduction of marks with reference to the Board for Graduate Studies and Research Regulations for Graduate Certificates, Diplomas and Degrees - Appendix 1, University Regulations on Plagiarism, Graduate Certificates, Diplomas and Degrees, specifically:

Appendix 1, Regulation 12 which states in part:

“In work submitted for examination which does not constitute a thesis or major project report under the University Regulations for Graduate Certificates, Diplomas and Degree, and where the Examiners are satisfied that Level 1 plagiarism has been committed, they shall levy a penalty for the Level 1 plagiarism charged in the form of a reduction in the marks which would have otherwise been awarded...”.

PROPOSAL

To address the regulation which provides for a penalty to be applied, in the absence of a guideline for such application, the following is proposed for consideration:

- A maximum penalty reduction of marks on a finding of Level 1 plagiarism so that the reduction in marks should be no more than 25%

To ensure fairness during implementation, it is further proposed that faculty be provided with clear guidelines for:

- Interpretation of the Turnitin Report used to substantiate an allegation of Level 1 plagiarism

¹ Following consultations with the Academic Boards and the Committee of Deans, the Board for Undergraduate Studies agreed to amend the penalty provision for Level 1 plagiarism to ensure that there is proportionality between the penalty and a Level 1 breach. By notice of June 2, 2021, Faculty Deans were advised that “...the penalty for a Level 1 finding shall be a reduction in marks up to a maximum of 10%.” This change was effective August 1, 2021.

- Strategies for development of authentic application-oriented assessments in their courses and frequent review and change of the assessment items from one teaching period to another.

These proposals take account of the need for faculty to better understand their role in reducing the incidence of plagiarism in their courses, and the introduction of the maximum penalty reduction of marks adds a direct cost to the graduate student that is more significant than the maximum penalty of 10% of the marks that is applied to undergraduate students, if there is a Level 1 finding.

The Board for Graduate Studies and Research is asked to consider the above proposals.

REFERENCES

Perkins, M., Gezgin, U.B. & Roe, J. (2020) Reducing plagiarism through academic misconduct education. *International Journal for Educational Integrity*, vol. 16, no. 3. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40979-020-00052-8>

Stauffer, W. (2017). *Coping With Plagiarism, Inside Higher Ed*. Retrieved from: <https://www.insidehighered.com/views/2017/11/30/strategies-minimizing-plagiarism-essay>

The University of the West Indies (2021a). Minutes of a Meeting of the Board for Graduate Studies and Research, October 14, 2021

The University of the West Indies (2021b). Minutes of a Meeting of the Board for Graduate Studies and Research, May 20, 2021