

# Recommendations for Dealing with Academic Plagiarism in Student Texts

## For Lecturers/Teachers at the Faculty of Social Sciences at the Georg-August University of Goettingen

Shortened version of *Handreichung zum Umgang mit Plagiaten Für Lehrende an der Sozialwissenschaftlichen Fakultät der Georg-August-Universität Göttingen* by the Academic Writing Advisory Service of the Faculty of Social Sciences (Uta Scheer & Valerie Bleisteiner).

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# 1 Types of Academic Plagiarism

The following types of academic plagiarism<sup>1</sup> are based on research literature on plagiarism, university guidelines and websites dedicated to identifying academic plagiarism.

*Table: Types of Academic Plagiarism* (Dougherty 2020: 2, Weber-Wulff 2014: 6-13, Awasthi 2019: 95, Weber-Wulff/Wohnsdorf 2006: 90-98, Schwarzenegger/Wohlers 2006: 3, Leibniz Universität Hannover n. d., Projekt Refairenz 2016a; University of Indiana n. d., University of Melbourne n. d., GuttenPlag n. d., SchavanPlag n. d.).

Type of Plagiarism	Description
<b>Full Copy &amp; Paste Complete Plagiarism</b>	Submission of another author's text without any citation.
<b>Partial Copy &amp; Paste</b>	Direct, verbatim quotation of parts or passages from the source text without citation and without identifying this transfer as a quote by using citation marks or indentation.
<b>Shake &amp; Paste Mosaic or Patchwork Plagiarism</b>	Integration of parts from different source texts, either as a direct quote or as paraphrase, without citation and without identifying this transfer as a quote by using citation marks or indentation.
<b>Paraphrasing Plagiarism Disguised Plagiarism</b>	The argument or conclusion of the source text is paraphrased or summarized without citing the source. The original text is disguised by using synonyms or changing the syntax. This kind of plagiarism is not necessarily intentional and can occur as an accidental effect of inaccurate scientific work (insufficient distinction between excerpts of source texts and personal contribution).
<b>Pawn Sacrifice Plagiarism</b>	A minor aspect of the quoted/paraphrased source text is referred to with a citation. Major parts of the source text, though, are quoted/paraphrased without citation. The citation does not disclose the true extent of the quote/paraphrase.
<b>Apparent Paraphrase</b>	Citing a direct quote without disclosing it as a direct, verbatim transfer by using citation marks or indentation. This conveys the misleading appearance of authorial contribution by disguising a verbatim quote as a paraphrase.
<b>Plagiarism by Translation (Subform of Disguised Plagiarism)</b>	Using the translation of a foreign text without citation. In the case of a direct translation, the source should be cited with an addendum such as 'translated by the author'. In the case of a paraphrased translation, the citation has to refer to the original.
<b>Secondary Citation Source-Based Plagiarism</b>	Secondary citations are quoted without clarifying their origin from another text in the citation ("as cited in"). This conveys the misleading appearance of research and selection by the author. Such secondary citation is commonly used in combination with paraphrasing plagiarism.

<sup>1</sup> The forms of plagiarism presented here are all referred to in compilations of court decisions on plagiarism cases and were assessed as plagiarism by the courts (Esposito/Schäfer 2017, Verwaltungsgericht Düsseldorf 2014).

Type of Plagiarism	Description
<b>Self-Plagiarism</b>	<p>1) In scientific publications: Re-use of the authors own published texts without citation. The use and the extent of self-citations have to be transparent.</p> <p>2) Student's texts can refer to and incorporate earlier works of the respective student without citation (e.g., a final thesis can draw on seminar theses). Direct, verbatim quotes should be avoided. Re-used passages should be adjusted to the new problem and updated. Text re-use should be disclosed to and discussed with the examinant. The <a href="#">Examination Office</a> of the Faculty of Social Sciences can elucidate details.</p>

## 2 Assessment of Individual Cases

### 2.1 Inaccuracies or Plagiarism?

The assessment of individual cases of possible plagiarism must necessarily be transparent and reproducible.

- **Inaccuracies and poor academic practice** are considered to be part of the academic learning process and lead to devaluation of theses (0.3 to 0.7 points).
- Cases assessed as **plagiarism** lead to 'failed' theses.

This table aims to help with judging the degree of intertextual mistakes and/or actual plagiarism. You can also discuss individual cases anonymously with superiors or with employees of the [Academic Writing Advisory Service](#) of the Faculty of Social Sciences.

Table: Criteria for the assessment of the severity of possible plagiarism (based on Projekt Refairenz 2017: 2)

Assessing the Severity of Possible Plagiarism	
First year students	Advanced students
First written thesis of a student	The student has already written theses
Isolated cases of missing citations etc.	Many cases of missing citations etc., longer unattributed quotes
Partial citations	No citations
Wrong paraphrase (e.g. too close to the source text)	Direct quote without citation
No attempt of disguise recognizable	Unmarked paraphrases and summaries
Small relevance for authorial contribution	High relevance for authorial contribution
Common knowledge	Expert knowledge

## 2.2 Inaccuracies

1. **Inaccuracies and poor academic practice** are considered to be part of the academic learning process and lead to devaluation of theses (0.3 to 0.7 points).
2. In this case, lecturers e-mail the student and inform him\*her about the devaluation due to inaccuracies. Additionally, the lecturer is available for feedback and refers the student to the [Academic Writing Advisory Service](#) of the Faculty of Social Sciences for further counselling.
3. This e-mail is also forwarded to the [Examination Office](#) of the Faculty of Social Sciences. The Examination Office archives the e-mail.
4. In case of repetition, the Examination Office actively advises the student about possible consequences of such inaccuracies in later semesters. The student is advised to participate in a course for academic writing.

## 2.3 Plagiarism

1. Theses and examinations which the teacher assesses as plagiarized lead to the failure of the theses or examination (Regulation 18 (5), General Examination Regulations).
2. The teacher documents the plagiarism including an evaluation of the severity of the instances of plagiarism (cp. [Template for the documentation of plagiarism](#)).
3. The teacher informs the [Examination Office](#) by sending the documentation as well as the theses or examination (Head of the Examination Office, [kirsten.brockelmann-grabo@zvw.uni-goettingen.de](mailto:kirsten.brockelmann-grabo@zvw.uni-goettingen.de)).
4. The teacher informs the student about the failed examination or thesis due to the assessment of plagiarism.
5. The Examination Committee decides about the severity of the individual case (Regulation 18 (5), General Examination Regulations) and informs the student by written notice. The case is documented solely by the Examination Office.

## 2.4 Possible Consequences and Sanctions

Each decision of the Examination Committee concerning possible consequences and sanctions is based on the assessment of the individual case. The decision is not documented publicly.

Excerpt of the *General Examination Regulations for Bachelor's and Master's Degree Programmes as well as other Academic Programmes at the Georg-August-Universität Göttingen*:

### **“Regulation 18 Withdrawal, Default, Cheating, Violation of Rules**

(5) <sup>1</sup> If an examination candidate should attempt to influence the awarding of course-related achievements or examination-related achievements by cheating or using unauthorized resources or by subsequently influencing an examiner to their advantage or the advantage of a third party, the corresponding course-related achievements or examination-related achievements shall be deemed as receiving the grade ‘non-sufficient’ (5.0) or ‘failed’ [...]

<sup>4</sup> In the event of a serious violation, the Examination Committee may exclude the examinee from earning any further course-related achievements or examination-related achievements; in particular, a repeat infringement shall be considered a serious violation as defined in sentence 1.

<sup>5</sup> In less serious cases, imposition of sanctions may be refrained from [...]

<sup>7</sup> Before a decision is taken thereon, the person concerned shall be heard.” (Georg-August-Universität Göttingen 2021)

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