

Policy for Promotion of Academic Integrity and Prevention of Plagiarism

Preamble:

Nirma University aspires to facilitate the highest standards of knowledge and skill development through its academic and research programmes. It offers conducive and inspiring environment where ethics and honesty are integral to the education system. Over a period of time, it has generated a significant impact, which makes it mandatory for the University to follow the high standards of ethics.

Since beginning, the University strives for the 'Zero Tolerance' against plagiarism. In fact, the University has prepared a comprehensive document describing the rules and guidelines to prevent plagiarism. The said document was approved by the Academic Council in its meeting held on 29-09-2015. Subsequently, it was also approved by the Board of Governors under Resolution No. 5 (B) in its meeting held on 30-09-2015. Since then, the rules are implemented at all levels.

Later on in July 2018, the UGC has issued Regulations(Notification No. F. 1-18/2010(CPP-II), dated July 23, 2018) for promotion of academic integrity and prevention of plagiarism in higher educational institutions. In light of these regulations, Nirma University has adopted this Policy for Promotion of Academic Integrity and Prevention of Plagiarism.

1. Application and Commencement:

This policy shall apply to the students, faculty, researchers and staff members of Nirma University.

This policy shall come into force from the date of its notification by Nirma University.

2. Definitions:

In this policy, unless the context otherwise requires—

- a. "Academic Integrity" is the intellectual honesty in proposing, performing and reporting any activity, which leads to the creation of intellectual property;
- b. "Author" includes a student or a faculty or a researcher or staff of Nirma University who claims to be the creator of the work under consideration;

- c. "Commission" means the University Grants Commission as defined in the University Grants Commission Act, 1956;
- d. "Common Knowledge" means a well-known fact, quote, figure or information that is known to most of the people;
- e. "Degree" means any such degree specified by the University Grants Commission, by notification in the Official Gazette, under Section 22 of the University Grants Commission Act, 1956;
- f. "Institute Academic Integrity Panel" shall mean the body constituted at the institute level to investigate allegations of plagiarism;
- g. "Faculty" refers to a person who is teaching and/or guiding students enrolled in Nirma University in any capacity whatsoever i.e. regular, ad-hoc, guest, temporary, visiting, etc;
- h. "Information" includes data, message, text, images, sound, voice, codes, computer programs, software and databases or microfilm or computer generated microfiche;
- i. "University Academic Integrity Panel" shall mean the body constituted at University level to consider recommendations of the institutional academic integrity panel and take appropriate decisions in respect of allegations of plagiarism and decide on penalties to be imposed.
- j. "Plagiarism" means the practice of taking someone else's work or idea and passing them as one's own.
- k. "Programme" means a programme of study leading to the award of a masters and research level degree;
- l. "Researcher" refers to a person conducting academic / scientific research in Nirma University;
- m. "Script" includes research paper, thesis, dissertation, chapters in books, full-fledged books and any other similar work, submitted for assessment / opinion leading to the award of master and research level degrees or publication in print or electronic media by students or faculty or researcher or staff members of Nirma University; however, this shall exclude assignments / term papers / project reports / course work / essays and answer scripts etc.;
- n. "Source" means the published primary and secondary material from any source whatsoever and includes written information and opinions gained directly from other people, including eminent scholars, public figures and practitioners in any form whatsoever as also data and information in the electronic form be it audio, video, image or text; Information being given the same meaning as defined under Section 2 (1) (v) of the Information Technology Act, 2000;



- o. "Staff" refers to all non-teaching staff working in Nirma University and its constituent Institutes in any capacity whatsoever i.e. regular, temporary, contractual, outsourced etc.;
- p. "Student" means a person duly admitted and pursuing a programme of study including a research programme in any mode of study (full time or part-time or distance mode);
- q. "Year" means the academic session in which a proven offence has been committed.
- r. "FDSR" means the Faculty of Doctoral Studies and Research

3. Objectives:

- 3.1 To create awareness about responsible conduct of research, thesis, dissertation, promotion of academic integrity and prevention of misconduct including plagiarism in academic writing among student, faculty, researcher and staff members.
- 3.2 To establish institutional mechanism through education and training to facilitate responsible conduct of research, thesis, dissertation, promotion of academic integrity and deterrence from plagiarism.
- 3.3 To develop systems to detect plagiarism and to set up mechanisms to prevent plagiarism and punish a student, faculty, researcher or staff of the University committing the act of plagiarism.

4. Duties of the Constituent Institutes, Departments and Centres:

Every constituent Institute /Department of Nirma University should establish the mechanism as prescribed in this Policy, to enhance awareness about responsible conduct of research and academic activities, to promote academic integrity and to prevent plagiarism.

5. Awareness Programs and Trainings:

- a) The constituent Institutes /Departments shall instruct students, faculty, researcher and staff members about proper attribution, seeking permission of the author wherever necessary, acknowledgement of source compatible with the needs and specificities of disciplines and in accordance with rules, international conventions and regulations governing the source.
- b) The constituent Institutes /Departments shall conduct sensitization seminars/ awareness programs every semester on responsible conduct of research, thesis, dissertation, promotion of academic integrity and ethics in education for students, faculty, researcher and staff members.

- c) The constituent Institutes /Departments shall :
- i) Include the cardinal principles of academic integrity in the curricula of Undergraduate (UG)/Postgraduate (PG)/Master's degree, etc. as a compulsory course work/module.
 - ii) Include elements of responsible conduct of research and publication ethics as a compulsory course work/module for Masters and Research Scholars.
 - iii) Include elements of responsible conduct of research and publication ethics in Orientation and Refresher Courses organized for faculty and staff members.
 - iv) Train student, faculty, researcher and staff members for using plagiarism detection tools and reference management tools.
 - v) Encourage student, faculty, researcher and staff to register on international researcher's registry systems.

6. Curbing Plagiarism:

- a. The constituent Institutes /Departments shall declare and implement the technology based mechanism using appropriate software so as to ensure that documents such as thesis, dissertation, publications or any other such documents are free of plagiarism at the time of their submission.
- b. The mechanism as defined at (a) above shall be made accessible to all engaged in research work including student, faculty, researcher, staff members, etc.
- c. Every student submitting a thesis, dissertation, or any other such documents shall submit an undertaking indicating that the document has been prepared by him or her and that the document is his/her original work and free of any plagiarism.
- d. The undertaking shall include the fact that the document has been duly checked through a Plagiarism detection tool approved by Nirma University.
- e. Each research supervisor/guide shall submit a certificate indicating that the work done by the researcher under him / her is plagiarism free.

7. Similarity Checks for Exclusion from Plagiarism:

The similarity checks for plagiarism shall exclude the following:

- i) All quoted work reproduced with all necessary permission and/or attribution.
- ii) All references, bibliography, table of content, preface and acknowledgements.
- iii) All generic terms, laws, standard symbols and standards equations.

Note:

The research work carried out by the student, faculty, researcher and staff shall be based on original ideas, which shall include abstract, summary, hypothesis, observations, results, conclusions and recommendations only and shall not have any similarities. It shall exclude a common knowledge or coincidental terms, up to fourteen (14) consecutive words.

8. Levels of Plagiarism:

Plagiarism would be quantified into following levels in ascending order of severity for the purpose of its definition:

- i) Level 0: Similarities upto 10% - Minor similarities, no penalty
- ii) Level 1: Similarities above 10% to 40%
- iii) Level 2: Similarities above 40% to 60%
- iv) Level 3: Similarities above 60%

9. Detection/Reporting/Handling of Plagiarism:

If any member of the academic community suspects with appropriate proof that a case of plagiarism has happened in any document, he or she shall report it to the Institutional Academic Integrity Panel (IAIP). Upon receipt of such a complaint or allegation the IAIP shall investigate the matter and submit its recommendations to the University Academic Integrity Panel (UAIP) of the University.

The authorities of the University can also take *suomotu* notice of an act of plagiarism and initiate proceedings under this Policy. Similarly, proceedings can also be initiated by the University on the basis of findings of an examiner. All such cases will be investigated by the UAIP.

10. Institutional Academic Integrity Panel (IAIP):

- i) All Institutes of the University shall notify a IAIP whose composition shall be as given below:
 - a. Chairman - Head of the Institute
 - b. Member - Senior academician from outside the Institute, to be nominated by the Director General.
 - c. Member - A person well versed with anti-plagiarism tools, to be nominated by the Head of the Institute.

The tenure of the members in respect of points 'b' and 'c' shall be two years. The quorum for the meetings shall be 2 out of 3 members (including Chairman).

- ii) The IAIP shall follow the principles of natural justice while deciding about the allegation of plagiarism against the student, faculty, researcher and staff.
- iii) The IAIP shall have the power to assess the level of plagiarism and recommend penalty(ies) accordingly.
- iv) The IAIP after investigation shall submit its report with the recommendation on penalties to be imposed to the UAIP within a period of 45 days from the date of receipt of complaint / initiation of the proceedings.

11. University Academic Integrity Panel (UAIP):

- i) The University shall notify a UAIP whose composition shall be as given below:
 - a. Chairman – Dean, FDSR
 - b. Member - Senior Academician other than Chairman, to be nominated by the Director General.
 - c. Member - One member nominated by the Director General from outside the University
 - d. Member - A person well versed with anti-plagiarism tools, to be nominated by the Director General.

The Chairman of IAIP and UAIP shall not be the same. The tenure of the Committee members including Chairman shall be three years. The quorum for the meetings shall be 3 out of 4 members (including Chairman).

- ii) The UAIP shall consider the recommendations of IAIP.
- iii) The UAIP shall also investigate cases of plagiarism as per the provisions mentioned in this Policy.
- iv) The UAIP shall follow the principles of natural justice while deciding about the allegation of plagiarism against the student, faculty, researcher and staff members.
- v) The UAIP shall have the power to review the recommendations of IAIP including penalties with due justification.
- vi) The UAIP shall send the report after investigation and the recommendation on penalties to be imposed to the Director General within a period of 45 days from the date of receipt of recommendation of IAIP/ complaint / initiation of the proceedings.
- vii) The UAIP shall provide a copy of the report to the person(s) against whom inquiry report is submitted.

12. Penalties:

Penalties in the cases of plagiarism shall be imposed on students pursuing studies at the level of Masters and Research programs and on researcher, faculty and staff members of the University only after academic misconduct on the part of the individual has been established without doubt, when all avenues of appeal have been exhausted and individual in question has been provided enough opportunity to defend himself or herself in a fair or transparent manner.

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12.1 Penalties in case of Plagiarism in Submission of Thesis and Dissertations (Masters/Ph.D. Programme)

The University Academic Integrity Panel (UAIP) shall impose penalty considering the severity of the Plagiarism.

- i) **Level 0: Similarities up to 10%** - Minor Similarities, no penalty.
- ii) **Level 1: Similarities above 10% to 40%** - Such student shall be asked to submit a revised script within a stipulated time period not exceeding 6 months.
- iii) **Level 2: Similarities above 40% to 60%** - Such student shall be debarred from submitting a revised script for a period of one year.
- iv) **Level 3: Similarities above 60%** - Such student registration for that programme shall be cancelled.

Note 1: Penalty on repeated plagiarism

Such student shall be punished for the plagiarism of one level higher than the previous level committed by him/her. In case where plagiarism of highest level is committed then the punishment for the same shall be operative.

Note 2: Penalty in case where the degree/credit has already been obtained

If plagiarism is proved on a date later than the date of award of degree or credit as the case may be then his/her degree or credit shall be put in abeyance for a period recommended by the UAIP and approved by the Director General.

12.2 Penalties in Case of Plagiarism in Academic and Research Publications

- i) **Level 0: Similarities up to 10%** - Minor similarities, no penalty.
- ii) **Level 1: Similarities above 10% to 40%**
 - Shall be asked to withdraw manuscript.
- iii) **Level 2: Similarities above 40% to 60%**
 - Shall be asked to withdraw manuscript.
 - Shall be denied a right to one annual increment.
 - Shall not be allowed to be a supervisor to any new Master's, M.Phil., Ph.D. Student/scholar for a period of two years.
- iv) **Level 3: Similarities above 60%**
 - Shall be asked to withdraw manuscript.
 - Shall be denied a right to two successive annual increments.
 - Shall not be allowed to be a supervisor to any new Master's, M.Phil., Ph.D. Student/scholar for a period of three years.



Note 1: Penalty on repeated plagiarism - Shall be asked to withdraw manuscript and shall be punished for the plagiarism of one level higher than the lower level committed by him/her. In case where plagiarism of highest level is committed then the punishment for the same shall be operative. In case level 3 offence is repeated then the disciplinary action including suspension/termination as per service rules shall be taken by the University.

Note 2: Penalty in case where the benefit or credit has already been obtained - If plagiarism is proved on a date later than the date of benefit or credit obtained as the case may be then his/her benefit or credit shall be put in abeyance for a period recommended by UAIP and approved by the Director General.

Note 3: The constituent Institutes /Departments shall create a mechanism so as to ensure that each of the paper publication/thesis/dissertation by the student, faculty, researcher or staff is checked for plagiarism at the time of forwarding/submission.

Note 4: If there is any complaint of plagiarism against the Head of Institute, a suitable action, in line with these regulations, shall be taken by the Director General of the University.

Note 5: If there is any complaint of plagiarism against the Head of Department at the institutional level, a suitable action, in line with these regulations, shall be recommended by the UAIP and approved by the Competent Authority of the University.

Note 6: If there is any complaint of plagiarism against any member of IAIP or UAIP, then such member shall excuse himself / herself from the meeting(s) where his/her case is being discussed/investigated.

