



**AKENTEN APPIAH-MENKA
UNIVERSITY OF SKILLS TRAINING AND
ENTREPRENEURIAL DEVELOPMENT**

Plagiarism Policy

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Foreword by the Vice Chancellor

Welcome to the Akenten Appiah-Menka University of Skills Training and Entrepreneurial Development (AAMUSTED). As we navigate through the realms of knowledge and innovation, it is imperative that we anchor our journey on the bedrock of academic integrity. Our institution stands firm in its resolve to uphold the highest standards of honesty and respect for intellectual property. The plagiarism policy articulated herein is a testament to our unwavering commitment. It serves not only as a guideline but as a beacon, guiding our scholarly pursuits while fostering an environment of trust and respect. I commend this policy to all members of our community, urging you to embody its principles in your academic and professional endeavours.

Signed

PROF. FREDERICK KWAKU SARFO

Vice Chancellor

Executive Summary

The AAMUSTED Plagiarism Policy delineates a comprehensive framework aimed at fostering academic integrity by preventing, identifying, and addressing plagiarism. The policy defines plagiarism as the unauthorized or unacknowledged appropriation of another's work or ideas. It categorizes plagiarism into intentional and unintentional, underlining the institution's commitment to educating its community on distinguishing between the two. Key components include detection methods, roles and responsibilities of faculty and students, and a tiered approach to consequences reflecting the severity of the infraction. This policy is integral to maintaining the sanctity of academic work and the credibility of the University's credentials.

DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

Academic Integrity	The ethical code and moral principles that govern the academic community, emphasizing honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility.
Citation	The act of crediting original authors for their ideas, words, or work, used in one's own work.
Originality	The aspect of creating work that is new and unique, not derived from existing materials.
Paraphrase	The process of restating someone else's ideas or text in one's own words, while retaining the original meaning.
Plagiarism	Plagiarism is the act of using someone else's words, ideas, works, concepts, procedures or techniques without acknowledgement of the sources.
Plagiarism Detection Software	Computer programs used to identify instances of plagiarism by comparing submitted texts against a database of existing works.
Self-Plagiarism	The practice of reusing one's own previously written work or data in a new work without proper citation.

1.0 Preamble

The mission of the Akenten Appiah-Menka University of Skills Training and Entrepreneurial Development is to:

- a) provide higher education in technical, vocational, and entrepreneurial training to develop skilled manpower for job creation and economic development,
- b) train and provide teachers with the relevant competence for teaching in technical and vocational education and training institutions,
- c) train and provide teachers with the relevant competence for teaching entrepreneurial development, and
- d) develop strong linkages between the University and (i) industry, or (ii) the community, to ensure the holistic training of teachers.

To enhance the University's ability to achieve its mission, the University shall be guided by, among others, its core values of integrity and academic excellence. As a result, members of the University shall be required to exercise the highest form of academic integrity and conduct during the academic writing process. In harmony with these values, the University is committed to preventing its employees and students from plagiarizing the work of others or their own.

2.0 Purpose of the Policy

This policy outlines the University's strategies to address plagiarism by staff and students; the acceptable scope and methods for citing the work of others; penalties for infractions; and redress. Furthermore, the policy seeks to empower employees and students of the University to uphold ethical standards and to give AAMUSTED the power to act in cases of plagiarism.

3.0 Definition of Plagiarism

Plagiarism is defined as the act of using someone else's words, ideas, works, concepts, procedures or techniques without acknowledgement of the sources. It is an inappropriate use of the intellectual property of others.

4.0 Types of Plagiarism

There are two major types of plagiarism:

- **Intentional**
- **Unintentional Plagiarism**

4.1 Intentional Plagiarism

Intentional Plagiarism occurs when a person deliberately uses another person's intellectual work or their own without acknowledgement(s). Examples of Intentional Plagiarism include the following:

- a) Allowing someone who is not part of a research to write/develop a portion or all of an intellectual work for you.
- b) Buying a pre-written/developed paper/intellectual work for academic credit.
- c) Creating inexistent citations.
- d) Presenting work done collaboratively as solely yours.
- e) Using someone else's unpublished intellectual work (including a computer program or algorithm) as your own, with or without permission.
- f) Presenting your previous complete or portions of intellectual work as new (self-plagiarism).

In this policy, intentional plagiarism is considered a major academic offense.

4.2 Unintentional Plagiarism

Unintentional Plagiarism occurs when a person unknowingly uses another person's intellectual work or their own without acknowledgement(s). Instances of Unintentional Plagiarism include:

- a) Failure to cite a source.
- b) Failure to quote the words of an author, even if cited.
- c) Failure to paraphrase, even if cited.

In this policy, Unintentional Plagiarism is considered a minor academic offense.

5.0 Detecting Plagiarism in an Intellectual Work

Plagiarism can be detected through:

- Manual Method
- Plagiarism Detection Software

5.1 Manual Method

The manual method may be employed to detect plagiarism in an intellectual work through the following:

- Reading and comparing content
- Highlighting similarities
- Conducting online searches with portions of the content
- Cross-referencing with known sources
- Checking references and citations
- Asking the author for clarification
- Familiarizing yourself with the writing style
- Investigating inconsistencies
- Consulting with experts

5.2 Plagiarism Detection Software

Plagiarism detection software can be used to check the originality of the texts in an intellectual work. It also provides feedback in respect of the sources and overall similarity of the texts from a large database of published sources on the Internet.

It must be noted that, similarity indexes from such software do not necessarily indicate plagiarism. It is the responsibility of Supervisors/Lecturers/Heads of Department/Deans to trigger the necessary investigative procedure when plagiarism is suspected in a piece of intellectual work.

5.2.1 Permissible Level of Similarity generated by Plagiarism Detection Software

The following similarity indexes are considered permissible:

- a) Overall similarity index: 20%
- b) Single source similarity index: 1%
- c) Acceptable number of words in an unbroken string (phrase or sentence): 10 words

Text matches or similarity identified by any software does not necessarily imply plagiarism but may constitute grounds for further investigation. Therefore, Supervisors/Lecturers/Heads of Department/Deans must diligently examine the originality report to determine:

- a) Whether or not something is plagiarized;
- b) The extent of plagiarism/matching, and whether it is:
 - i. intentional plagiarism;
 - ii. unintentional plagiarism

In any intellectual work, some amount of similarity may be unavoidable. For example, matched texts may simply be common terminologies in a discipline. Consequently, these contexts must be taken into consideration when determining if plagiarism has occurred.

6.0 Institutional Responsibility

As part of the strategies to address plagiarism, the University will:

- a) Acquire a software to manage plagiarism in the University.
- b) Emphasize plagiarism issues across teaching and learning, and research.
- c) Establish and implement, in the University Library, a Plagiarism Management Service to:
 - Train staff and students to use the plagiarism software.
 - Provide originality reports for papers submitted for appointments and promotions.
 - Provide training for staff and students to demonstrate source literacy.
 - Provide support to the Graduate School in detecting plagiarism in theses and dissertations submitted to the School.
 - Provide support to AAMUSTED Staff in detecting plagiarism in their manuscripts prior to publication.
 - Support AAMUSTED Journals to detect potential plagiarism in manuscripts submitted for publication.

7.0 Responsibility of Students and Staff

Students and staff have the responsibility to:

- a) Understand how to properly cite sources, make attributions, and incorporate citations into their writing;
- b) Recognize plagiarism and how to avoid it.

8.0 Investigation and Sanctions for Students

8.1 Assignments

Where plagiarism is alleged to have occurred in a course assignment, the student shall be made to re-submit the assignment.

8.2 Thesis/Dissertation/Project Work Submitted for Examination

Allegations of plagiarism in a Thesis/Dissertation/Project Work that has been submitted for examination must be reported to the Dean, School of Graduate Studies or Head of Department by an Internal or External Assessor. In the case of Undergraduate Project Works, the Head of Department shall formally report to the Dean of Faculty. In each case, the Dean of School of Graduate Studies or Dean of Faculty shall conduct a preliminary investigation and submit a report to the Vice-Chancellor for necessary action to be taken.

8.3 General Guidelines and Sanctions

8.3.1 Generally, where a student has been alleged to have committed the offense of plagiarism, an investigation shall be lodged into the allegation to establish whether or not the offense of plagiarism was actually committed by the student.

8.3.2 The student shall be informed in writing to appear before the Committee not as a witness, but as a subject of the investigation and the letter inviting him/her shall indicate his/her right to be accompanied to the enquiry by a legal counsel or a friend or a relative. The student can call witnesses on his/her behalf and question witnesses who testify against him/her.

8.3.3 The student may appear before the investigative committee to defend himself/herself on the allegations of plagiarism levelled against him.

8.3.4 The Investigative Committee may recommend, as stipulated in Statute 73(5) of the University Statutes, any one or more of the penalties listed below to the Vice Chancellor for his necessary action:

- i. Dismissal;
- ii. Rustication;
- iii. Withholding of Certificate;
- iv. Refund/Surcharge;

- v. Suspension from the use of specified University services or facilities;
- vi. An order for the re-submission of the piece of academic work in respect of which the offence was committed;
- vii. Award of a grade of zero (0) or a failure for the piece of academic work;
- viii. A reduction of the final grade of the course in respect of which offence was committed;
- ix. Disqualification for contesting election or removal from any office in the University;
- x. Reprimand; and
- xi. Warning

For the purpose of this Policy, penalties in *clauses* in 8.3.4 (i-iii) shall be treated as major penalties for a major instance of plagiarism (major academic offence) in conformity with Statute 73(5) of the University Statutes.

9.0 Investigation and Sanctions for Staff

- 9.1 Generally, disciplinary procedures for addressing instances of plagiarism in the University shall conform to Statutes 74 and 75 of the University Statutes.
- 9.2 Where a staff is alleged to have committed the offense of plagiarism, the Head of Department of the said staff shall report the matter to the Dean/Director, along with written documents detailing the alleged offense of plagiarism.
- 9.3 In a case where the staff is a non-teaching staff, the Head of Directorate/Department/Section/Unit shall report the alleged incident to the Registrar along with a written document detailing the alleged offense of plagiarism.
- 9.4 In a situation where a Head of Department is alleged to have committed plagiarism, the Dean or Director shall report the incident to the Vice Chancellor along with written documents detailing the alleged offense of plagiarism.
- 9.5 In a case where a Dean/Director is involved in an alleged plagiarism, the Pro Vice Chancellor shall report the incident to the Vice-Chancellor along with a written document detailing the alleged offense of plagiarism.

9.6 The Vice Chancellor shall refer it to an Investigative Committee.

9.7 The staff shall be informed in writing to appear before the Committee not as a witness, but as a subject of the investigation and the letter inviting him/her shall indicate his/her right to be accompanied to the enquiry by a legal counsel. The staff may call witnesses on his/her behalf and question witnesses who testify against him/her.

9.8 The Investigative Committee's findings and recommendations shall be presented to the Vice Chancellor, who shall adopt or vary them as he deems appropriate, and if the plagiarism may have contributed to the offending staff's promotion or appointment, the Vice Chancellor shall take the necessary disciplinary action as stipulated in applicable regulations of the University.

9.8 Sanctions to be imposed on a staff who have been found to have committed the offense of plagiarism shall be consistent with Statute 73(4) of the University's Statutes and any other rules and regulations of the University. For the avoidance of doubt, the following sanctions shall constitute the penalties for a member of staff who commits the offense of plagiarism:

- i. Dismissal;
- ii. Termination of Appointment;
- iii. Reduction in rank, status, or grade;
- iv. Suspension for a stated period;
- v. Forfeiture of pay for a stated period;
- vi. Interdiction;
- vii. Deferment of increment, that is, postponement of the date on which the next increment is due, with corresponding postponement in subsequent years;
- viii. Stoppage of increment, that is, non-payment for a specific period of an increment otherwise due;
- ix. Refund/Surcharge;
- x. Suspension from the use of specified University services or facilities;
- xi. Reprimand

For the purpose of this Policy, penalties in *clauses* in 9.8 (i-viii) shall be treated as major penalties for a major instance of plagiarism (major academic offence) in conformity with Statute 73(4) of the University Statutes.

10. Right of Appeal

Any person affected by any decision of the Vice-Chancellor or the person or body to whom he has delegated authority in respect of a sanction for plagiarism shall have the right of appeal to the Appeals Board of the University in accordance with the Statutes of the University.

11. Monitoring and Review

The Plagiarism Policy is intended to serve as a statement of the Guidelines for the Management of Plagiarism and related matters at the Akenten Appiah-Menka University of Skills Training and Entrepreneurial Development. Compliance with the various provisions will be strictly monitored to ensure the achievement of its aims. The Policy may be reviewed every five (5) years by the Academic Board to reflect best practices.

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