Ethical Standards Compliance document for Students

Statement of Technology requirement in assignments and Data Source/Code/Ethics/Technology Statement requirement for theses of our programs
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Students are expected to do their own work and act with integrity

The Tilburg University Code of Conduct explains the critical importance of students doing their own work and assignments:

"You do assignments and write papers and theses yourself. You do not allow others to do assignments or write papers and theses (commercially or otherwise) and pretend that this is your own work. You can seek help to improve your texts or translation if you inform your supervisor about this." - Theme 6, Good Education Practice.

The Code of Conduct also stresses the principle of *integrity*: "Integrity implies that staff and students are prepared and equipped to carry out their duties or studies adequately, carefully, and reliably, keeping in mind at all times the values and interests that are at stake. Integrity is conducive to openness and implies considerate interaction between staff and students. It means that anyone who works at and for Tilburg University, studies, or obtains a PhD is reliable. You do not allow yourself to be guided by self-interest and self-gain."

The principle of Integrity guides our expectations regarding thesis projects, assignments, exams, and other project deliverables:

First, we expect students to take the time to inform themselves of the meaning and risks of *plagiarism* (See the Plagiarism FAQ below).
Second, we acknowledge that there are many technologies that students can use to improve their work and, instead of prohibiting these technologies, we believe it is more important that students (1) understand when it is appropriate to use these technologies, (2) rigorously document and acknowledge how they used these technologies, and (3) take full responsibility for their use of these technologies. The use of technologies to generate content (such as parts of programming code, text, charts, images, etc.) must be documented in a statement of technology. Students who submit assignments are responsible for the full content of the assignments and must be aware that eventual flaws in the technology can never be a reason for lenience in grading. For example, if a student submits work that has been checked by a spell checker yet still contains spelling errors, the spelling errors will still be attributed to the student.

Students must be aware that any assignment they submit must adhere to all the assignment's guidelines. In addition to being written well, the information contained in their submission should be correct. Text generated by external services / tools may easily fail on such criteria and is never guaranteed to be correct. Some of the many risks of reliance on generative technology are a lack of, or wholly incorrect, references to academic sources

where the information originates from and text being mostly descriptive/explanatory while lacking a clear analysis or critical perspective. Statements of fact in assignments must be checked and properly cited. Students should also be completely transparent about the work that inspired them, including any published or unpublished work, even their own. Students are expected to not only cite sources properly, but also to clearly indicate how their work is similar or different to these sources.

Third, in cases where data is used in a thesis that comes from another source, students must follow the best practices for handling data and acknowledge the source of the data. For theses, The Research Ethics and Data Management Committee (REDC) expects that both supervisor and student adhere to responsible research practices, and encourages ethical reflection, data management, and GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation) compliance to be part of the supervision. Please visit this page for more information (focus on the Research by MA/BA students). Additional information on data management and handling personal data in the context of student research can be found in this library guide. Tilburg University research data management regulations can be found here.

To ensure that these principles are upheld in every assignment, students are required to attach a *Statement of Technology* to their assignments and a more extensive Data Source/Code/Ethics Statement in their thesis to summarize how they comply with Tilburg University's Code of Conduct. For a thesis, all aspects of this checklist should be answered in this statement.

Checklist for Ethical Statement of Thesis and Statement of Technology

Please provide answers to all below questions for transparency purposes when writing your ethical statement. There is no one fits all solution to ethical statements, and they heavily depend on the nature of the study. After the questions below, some examples are provided.

- Data:
  - Who is the owner of the data?
  - Does the thesis project involve collecting data from human participants or animals?
  - Does the owner of the data give consent?
  - How and through what channel is the data acquired?
- Figures
  - Did you create all the images and figures?
  - Do you have consent for the images that you did not generate?
- Code
  - Did you use parts of the code from another study/someone else?
  - Did you list, including version number, all libraries and frameworks used?
- Writing:
  - Did you use any tools or services to paraphrase the given text (for example a thesaurus or the Academic Phrasebank)? Please name them.

- Did you use any tools or services to check spelling or grammar? Please name them.
- Did you use any tools or service to typeset the given text? Please name them.
- Did you use any reference management software other than the latex template? If so, please name it.

Checklist for statement of technology can be generated by the questions listed above excluding the data source relevant questions when not applicable

Data Source/Code/Ethics/Technology Statement Example

The (DATA) has been acquired from the (DATA SOURCE) through an online request. The obtained data is anonymised. Work on this thesis did not involve collecting data from human participants or animals. The original owner of the data and code used in this thesis retains ownership of the data and code during and after the completion of this thesis. However, the institution was informed about the use of this data for this thesis and potential research publications.
All the figures but Figure A and B belong to the author. To use Figure A and Figure B, the author received written permission via an email from FIGURE OWNER (AFFILIATION). The thesis code can be accessed through the GitHub repository following the link [CODE LINK]. Part of the CODE has been adapted by the author from (SOURCE, licensed under a CC0 BY 4.0). The reused/adapted code fragments are clearly indicated in the notebook. In terms of writing, the author used assistance with the language of the paper. A generative language model (MODEL NAME + SOURCE) was used to improve the author's original content, for paraphrasing, spell checking and grammar. No other typesetting tools or services were used.

Use of Generative AI tools

We do not encourage our students to use any specific tool to generate text. Below, we list some of the risks and under what circumstances the use of generative AI tools may conflict with the learning outcomes. The following is inspired by the Association for Computational Linguistics (ACL policy:

Using Generative AI tools for paraphrasing or improving the author's original content, rather than for suggesting new content is acceptable. How the technology has been used should be specified in the technology statement.

Using the output of Generative AI tools without referring to them in the Statement of Technology or Data Source/Code/Ethics/Technology Statement will typically be deemed plagiarism. If there is any doubt about plagiarism, the case will be referred to the exam committee.

In case generative text models are used as search engines, for example to find relevant literature; students must be aware using them to find original sources for ideas is not actually a guarantee that retrieved output is appropriate. Such use also should be specified in the technology statement. Students must be aware that there might be biases in the suggested literature. Students are responsible for the final submitted work and must check the validity of the content and provide citations for factual statements accordance with the requirements of the assignment.

When the output of a Generative AI tool includes new research ideas, it is likely that this is coming from other people's work. Using these would constitute plagiarism as other people's ideas must be always cited.

Therefore, students can use Generative AI tools to improve their own text or use it as a means to search for relevant literature. Students should always be aware of such tools' limitations, and that their use is at the students' own risk. Teachers are not expected to teach students how to use these tools. Students are obliged to inform the teacher if and for what purpose they used the tool. Any uses other than the ones listed above might constitute plagiarism and be forwarded to the Examination Committee. Output text from Generative AI cannot be interpreted as fact, cannot be weighted as such or cannot be counted towards the required number of cited works as the output is not peer-reviewed.

Plagiarism FAQ

Frequently asked questions about plagiarism

1. What is plagiarism?

Tilburg University defines plagiarism as *"using parts of a text written by someone else, or the reasoning or ideas of others, for a thesis or other assignment, without due acknowledgement*". There are different ways to acknowledge someone else's work and ideas without committing plagiarism, such as citations and paraphrasing

2. Where can I find information on how the university and my program deal with plagiarism?

- On the university page on Fraud, cheating and plagiarism.
- In the rules and regulations of the school, in particular articles 15 and 16.

3. Should I only worry about plagiarism in written assignments?

No, the rules regarding plagiarism apply to any assignment (written or oral). Keep in mind that plagiarism applies when you use someone else's words, but also when you present someone else's ideas or reasoning as your own. Therefore, whenever you are presenting ideas or reasoning that are not originally yours in an academic setting, you should refer to the original source.

4. Is plagiarism limited to textual material?

No, plagiarism applies to any intellectual work created by others than yourself. For example, if you include (part of) a figure, table, or code produced by someone else in your work, then the original source must be added as reference. In some cases, such as figures, you may also need permission from the copyright holder to reproduce the material.

5. If I use synonyms when writing or presenting an idea or concept, is this enough to not be considered plagiarism of someone else's work?

No, in order to avoid plagiarism, students must explain ideas and concepts using their own words and in such a way that their own understanding of the topic is made clear. The use of synonyms does not achieve this. Rephrasing another author's idea using one's own words and structuring is called paraphrasing. When paraphrasing, one should also refer to and cite the original source of the concept or idea.

6. Do I always have to use a reference for any idea or concept that I did not create on my own?

No, there are ideas and concepts that are "common knowledge" and they do not need referencing when presented. For examples of *common knowledge*, please click here. However, this does not mean you can use someone else's presentation of that common knowledge.

7. Does it matter how much of my assignment/thesis is plagiarized?

No, once a lecturer suspect plagiarism, it is their duty to inform the Examination Board of this suspicion, and an investigation procedure will be initiated.

8. Can I take ideas and concepts from non-scientific publications or from unpublished work without attribution?

No, plagiarism also applies to unpublished and non-scientific sources, including the work of other students. This is especially true of theses written by other students.

9. Can I be sanctioned if I allow my work to be plagiarized?

Yes, students who make their exam or assignment available for other students to plagiarize can receive a sanction.

10. Am I obliged to inform the Examination Board if I know or suspect that another student has committed plagiarism?

Yes, students who possess evidence that other students committed fraud have the duty to report this to the Examination Board.

11. What if I committed plagiarism unintentionally? Does that make a difference?

No, plagiarism is never acceptable. When a lecturer suspects plagiarism, they must inform the Examination Board, which will investigate the case and rule on the matter.

12. I have been referred to the Examination Board for plagiarism. What is the investigation procedure?

If the Examination Board has been informed of the possibility of plagiarism, they will start an administrative investigation into the matter. The lecturer will have provided the Examination Board with material leading to the suspicion. After examining the material, the Examination Board will ask the student and lecturer to gather more information. The students will have the opportunity to give their version of the facts. After the hearing the Examination Board will decide on the case.

13. What are the sanctions for plagiarism?

If plagiarism is established by the Examination Board, the submitted work is invalidated and thus not graded. The Board will then rule on the case, which may vary from a warning to the exclusion of one or more exams or assignment attempts for a given period (from three months to one year). The Examination Board can also propose to the Executive Board the definite termination of the enrollment in the program of the person concerned (see, article 16).