

Information Notice for Lecturers: Dealing with Plagiarism

(adapted from "Information notice on dealing with plagiarism" issued on 30 April 2007 by the Teaching Committee, University of Zurich)

Decreed in November 2008 by the Rector, ETH Zurich

A. What is plagiarism?

Plagiarism is the use or close imitation of the work of another author without citing that author. It is a copyright infringement. Short passages of another author's work can be cited, but must be identified as quotations and correctly cited. The following characteristics as outlined by Prof. C. Schwarzenegger (see unijournal 4/2006) further define plagiarism:

- a) The author submits a paper in his/her name that in actual fact s/he commissioned another person to write ("ghostwriter").
- b) The author submits the work of another author in his/her name (full plagiarism).
- c) The author submits the same paper (or extracts of the paper) for different seminars or exams (self-plagiarism).
- d) The author translates texts, or text extracts, from another language and submits them as his/her own work without citations (translation plagiarism).
- e) The author uses extracts of another author's work without citing that author. This also includes passages from the internet.
- f) The author paraphrases texts (i.e., changes them as deemed fit) from another author and does not quote them.
- g) The author uses extracts of another author's work, perhaps paraphrasing them, and cites the work, but not in the context of the passages used (e.g., the plagiarized source is only listed in a footnote at the end of the paper).

Good scientific conduct demands an appropriate citation when using other persons' ideas and theories, even if they are paraphrased in the paper concerned. Certain subjects have particular citation principles that must be followed when writing up a scientific paper. This requirement is usually not imposed in the case of basic knowledge (e.g., taken from reference books) that presupposes a general knowledge of the subject in question. If, however, structural elements from a reference book are used, this must be cited.

B. Recognizing and preventing plagiarism

Plagiarism can often be recognized when different parts of a paper are written in another style (change in style) or the level of discussion does not correspond to the student's ability. If the paper has been submitted electronically, a special software application (AntiPlagiarism) can be used to detect plagiarism. For further details, see www.plagiate.ethz.ch.

The following measures hinder plagiarism in student papers:

- Students must submit their work electronically to allow use of suitable software that detects plagiarism.
- The author must sign a statement affirming that s/he has independently produced the paper. Lecturers are requested to take this measure regarding all written papers by using the affirmation sheet in the addendum designed for this purpose.
- Students are informed by lecturers, institutes or departments about the disciplinary measures taken in the event of plagiarism.

C. Procedure in the event of plagiarism

In accordance with Art. 2, Lit. b of the ETH Zurich Disciplinary Code (RSETHZ 361.1), plagiarism violates the disciplinary code and must be immediately reported to the Rector, the responsible prorector, and any other responsible persons. The Rector instigates the necessary disciplinary procedures.

As in the case of other disciplinary violations, plagiarism must be reported to the Rector *within three months* after it has been discovered, since any disciplinary proceedings come under a three-month statute of limitations. This means that the incident involving plagiarism must have been reported within three months and not that the disciplinary proceedings must be complete within this time limit. Further details on this issue are outlined below.

Course of disciplinary proceedings

In the case of an ETH lecturer notifying the Rector and the responsible prorector, disciplinary proceedings are initiated. The director of studies of the study programme in question and the examiner, if s/he has not noted down the case, are also informed about any violations relating to performance assessments. In the case of violations relating to doctoral studies, the dissertation supervisor is also informed. The persons involved must treat the matter confidentially.

In the case of minor misconduct, the Rector decrees the disciplinary measure(s), following a hearing with the concerned person, or can decide against taking any measures. In the case of serious misconduct, the Rector asks the Disciplinary Committee to convene. This committee decides whether or not to investigate the case, whether other persons should be consulted, or whether to refer the case back to the Rector. If the Disciplinary Committee decides to take disciplinary measures, the Rector decrees such measures and informs the person concerned in writing.

Detailed information on disciplinary proceedings is specified in the ETH Zurich Disciplinary Code (RSETHZ 361.1 / www.rechtssammlung.ethz.ch).

Disciplinary measures

According to Art. 3 of the ETH Zurich Disciplinary Code, the following disciplinary measures can be imposed:

- issuing a reprimand
- declaring performance assessments as failed
- suspending the person from courses or from using ETH facilities for a maximum of three years
- threatening to suspend the person from ETH Zurich
- suspending the person from ETH Zurich for a maximum of three years
- divesting the person of an academic title if acquired illicitly.

The type and severity of the measures imposed depend on the respondent's fault, his/her motives and previous conduct, as well as the extent and importance of the interests of ETH Zurich harmed or jeopardized by the offence.

Statute of limitations

The statute of limitations on violations of the disciplinary code is specified in Art. 4 of the ETH Zurich Disciplinary Code.

As previously mentioned, any violations committed must be reported to the Rector *within three months after they have been discovered*, since any disciplinary proceedings come under a three-month statute of limitations.

Disciplinary proceedings for violations in connection with performance assessments, which include plagiarism, come under the statute of limitations of six months, and must be initiated *within six months after the violation has been committed*.

Exception: Violations committed in connection with final theses (diploma thesis, Bachelor's, Master's and doctoral thesis) are exempted from this time limit, since it may take months or years to discover plagiarism or any other violation in such a thesis. If discovered in retrospect that an academic title has been illicitly acquired, it must be possible to divest the person concerned of his/her academic title. It is important to note that also in this case disciplinary proceedings must be initiated within three months after discovering the violation.

Statement regarding plagiarism when submitting written work at ETH Zurich

By signing this statement, I affirm that I have read the information notice on plagiarism, independently produced this paper, and adhered to the general practice of source citation in this subject-area.

Information notice on plagiarism:

http://www.ethz.ch/students/semester/plagiarism_s_en.pdf

Zurich, 21.07.2025

place and date

Carl von Holly-Ponientzietz

name in block letters

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Carl von Holly-Ponientzietz', written over a horizontal line.

signature