



# **COVENANT UNIVERSITY POLICY ON PLAGIARISM AND OTHER FORMS OF ACADEMIC DISHONESTY**

**119<sup>th</sup> Senate (S.119/1556) – Thursday, February 18, 2016**

## **PREAMBLE**

Covenant University places very high premium on intellectual honesty and reputation. Faculty, Staff and students are to be committed and guided by a deep conviction of the worth and dignity of the advancement of knowledge. Faculty, Staff and students are to devote their energies in developing and improving their scholarly competence as well as fostering conditions of free inquiry in the pursuit of truth. In addition, the University condemns strongly any act of academic dishonesty, and it is in this light that the policy has dealt with the following issues: Plagiarism, Collusion, Embellishment and Fabrication of data.

## **1. PLAGIARISM AND OTHER FORMS OF ACADEMIC DISHONESTY**

### **1.1. Plagiarism**

Plagiarism occurs when a Faculty, Staff or student misrepresents his/her own work, the work, written or otherwise, by any other person or group of persons or any institution. It is the use of another's ideas or words without appropriate acknowledgement. Forms of plagiarism shall include:

- a. The verbatim (word for word) copying of another's work without appropriate and correctly presented acknowledgement.
- b. The close paraphrasing of another's work by simply changing a few words or altering the order of presentation, without appropriate and correctly presented acknowledgment.
- c. Unacknowledged quotation of phrases from another's work.
- d. The deliberate and detailed presentation of another's concept as one's own.
- e. Self-plagiarism such as a replication by an author on his existing work or a substantial duplication of data from an earlier published work without adequate acknowledgement.

## **1.2. Collusion**

This occurs when unless with official approval (e.g. in the case of group projects), two or more students consciously collaborate in the presentation and production of work which is ultimately submitted by each in an identical, or substantially similar form and/or is represented by each to be the product of his/her individual efforts. Collusion also occurs where there is unauthorised cooperation between a person and another in the preparation and production of work which is presented as the student's own.

## **1.3. Embellishment of Data**

This occurs when a small amount of data is enhanced or exaggerated in order to emphasise data which has been obtained by legitimate means.

## **1.4. Fabrication of Data**

This occurs when a student or Faculty/Staff creates and presents an extensive amount or significant piece of data in order to conceal a paucity of legitimate data; or wholly fabricates a set of data in the absence of legitimate data.

## **2. TURNITIN AND ACCEPTABLE THRESHOLD**

- 2.1.** In furtherance of its avowed commitment to academic integrity, Covenant University subscribes to Turnitin software; all students, Faculty and Staff shall subject all term papers, projects, dissertations and theses for similarity check and/or plagiarism before submission.
- 2.2.** The similarity index threshold acceptable to Covenant University shall not exceed 20% excluding references and bibliographies.
- 2.3.** Without prejudice to section 2.2 above, meeting the minimum threshold of similarity index of not more than 20% shall not preclude a case of plagiarism where such work is found deficient in part or wholly to section 1 of the Covenant University Policy on Plagiarism and Other Forms of Academic Dishonesty.

## **3. PROCEDURES**

Where there is a suspected case of plagiarism, collusion, embellishment and /or fabrication of data, the following procedures shall apply:

- 3.1.** An investigative panel duly constituted by the Vice-Chancellor shall sit to determine whether there is a *prima facie* case.

- 3.2.** The panel shall be chaired by the Director of Covenant University Centre for Research, Innovation and Discovery. Other members shall include:
- 3.2.1.** The Dean of the College of the student or Faculty/Staff.
  - 3.2.2.** Two experts in the area of specialisation of the alleged article or paper under consideration not below the rank of a Senior Lecturer.
  - 3.2.3.** Director of Academic Planning Unit.
  - 3.2.4.** Director, Centre for Learning Resources.
  - 3.2.5.** A lawyer from the Legal Unit.
  - 3.2.6.** The Head of Department where it is different from (3.2.1) above.
- 3.3.** The allegation must be communicated to the student/Faculty/Staff in writing 14 days prior to the sitting of the panel.
- 3.4.** The student/Faculty/Staff must give notice of his/her intention to respond to the allegation within 2 days of the receipt of the allegation.
- 3.5.** All relevant materials for consideration must be made available to the panel. This includes reports of similarity check of Turnitin software.
- 3.6.** All the proceedings must be tape recorded or digitally recorded. In the absence of this, the handwritten minutes of the proceedings must be read to the candidate involved and endorsed.
- 3.7.** The panel must either dismiss or uphold the allegation in issue. It must dismiss an allegation unless a majority of its members is satisfied that the allegation has been proved. In probing an allegation, the panel may adopt any procedure it considers appropriate to inform itself in relation to the matter, and is not bound by the rules of evidence or other legal doctrines. It is nonetheless obliged to act fairly in all circumstances, having regard to the requirements of natural justice.
- 3.8.** Where the panel upholds an allegation, it may recommend one of the following penalties depending on the gravity of offence.
- 3.8.1. For a Student**
    - a. Reprimand and/or mandatory counselling.
    - b. Deprive the student of credit for a course or for a component of assessment of the subject to which the plagiarism policy relates.

- c. Suspension for a semester or session.
- d. Expulsion.

### **3.8.2. For Faculty/Staff**

- a. Suspension without pay as well as monitoring of behaviour for a period not exceeding six months. The accepted papers shall not be considered for subsequent promotions.
- b. Reprimand
- c. Demotion in rank for a period of one year
- d. Long-term salary increase denial
- e. Pegging of promotion (suspension of promotion eligibility) for between 3 and 5 years
- f. Termination
- g. Dismissal

## **4. APPEAL**

It is the responsibility of the Vice-Chancellor to establish an Academic Appeal Committee (AAC) within fourteen days of receiving a notice of appeal (which the Faculty/Staff or student should also lodge within seven days of receiving penalty notice). The AAC consists of four persons: the Deputy Vice-Chancellor as the chair, one of the Senior Professors of Covenant University, the Dean of a College or of the School of Postgraduate Studies and a representative of the Legal team (not the one that sat on the investigative panel).

The Academic Appeal Committee shall be the final avenue for appeal; students, Faculty and Staff are entitled to exercise their right to external review of any decision.

**DECLARATION AND COMMITMENT BY  
STUDENTS/FACULTY/STAFF**

**Introduction**

The place of Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty in the academic setting cannot be underestimated. It is for this reason that Covenant University placed a high emphasis. Students, Faculty and Staff are expected to read and understand the content of the Policy put in place and work with it religiously. You are therefore required to fill in the form below and append your signature accordingly.

I.....of.....

..... (Department/Unit)

Confirm that I have read, and understood the content of the University Policy on Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty.

I subscribe to it and pledge to abide by the content thereof.

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**Signature**

**Date**