Draft Policy on Plagiarism

As approved by

Academic Council on 13 June 2016

And by the Governing Body on 16th June 2016
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1 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to foster and maintain a culture of honesty and academic integrity in Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology. All staff and students have an obligation to act in an ethical manner, consistent with the principle of academic integrity.

The aims of this document are to provide a definition of plagiarism and to outline the Institute’s policy and procedures for dealing with alleged plagiarism. This policy applies to all registered students of GMIT and to all academic work (i.e. assignments, theses, projects, presentations, products, assessments, examinations, etc.) undertaken in all disciplines in the Institute. It is the requirement of staff and students to inform themselves of the content of this policy.

This Policy on Plagiarism shall be reviewed within the lifetime of each Academic Council (every three years) and updated when required.

2 Definition

Plagiarism is the act of copying, including or directly quoting from the work of another without adequate acknowledgement, in order to obtain benefit, credit or gain. Whether plagiarism is intentional (deliberate lack of acknowledgement of someone else’s work) or unintentional (genuine lack of understanding of paraphrasing and referencing requirements) it is a breach of policy and is regarded as an academic offence. Plagiarism may be committed unintentionally, it is defined by the act not the intention. Plagiarism can apply to many materials, such as words, ideas, images, information, data, approaches or methods. Sources of plagiarism can include books, journals, reports, websites, essay mills, another student, or another person.
3 Description
All work submitted by students for assessment, for publication or for presentation, is accepted on the understanding that it is their own work and contains their own original contribution, except where explicitly referenced using the accepted norms and formats of the appropriate academic discipline.

Plagiarism can arise through poor academic practice or ignorance of accepted norms of the academic discipline. Schools should ensure that resources and education around good academic practice is available to students at all levels.

Cases in which students facilitate others to copy their work shall also be subject to the procedures outlined here.

Plagiarism includes (among other things):

- Unacknowledged paraphrasing or use of other people’s words or ideas as if they were one’s own.
- Non-acknowledgement of sources.
- Unauthorized copying of another person’s work.
- Unauthorised collaboration in an assignment or piece of work.
- Presenting work which has been produced collaboratively as one’s own individual work.
- Procurement or sourcing, the recruitment of others to produce or source, and/or the passing off as one’s own of any material from electronic or other sources.
- Unacknowledged copying of art or design work.
- Submitting one’s own work without declaration of sources and references, or the falsification of references.
- Use of restricted or confidential information in an assignment or piece of work.
- Unacknowledged reuse of software or hardware
- Any of the above, in publication, prototype, or public presentation.
4 Prevention

The Institute commits to a proactive approach to the prevention of plagiarism through the development of good academic practice.

The advancement of knowledge and the development of concepts, ideas, artefacts and products are core aspects of what we do at GMIT. This also includes research in all its facets: thesis writing, laboratory work, report writing, the development of software, and the creation and design of artistic objects. It is the Institute’s aim to inspire and encourage students on their path to becoming professionals by providing a positive learning environment and by cultivating academic trust between staff and students.

Preventative measures include (among other things):

- Referral to this Policy in the assessment instructions to be provided to students.
- Provision, by the Institute, of training in the practices of referencing and citation and in the use of source material(s), and the use of plagiarism detection software.
- Provision and maintenance, by the Institute, of a webpage containing a referencing guide, guidelines for writing essays and reports and links to plagiarism detection software and online tutorials.
- The Plagiarism Penalty Grid (included in this document) will be made available to all students.
- Requirement on all students, in respect of all work submitted, to include a plagiarism disclaimer declaring that the work has been completed in accordance with GMIT’s Policy on Plagiarism. The form, containing the recommended wording, is included in the appendix, and is available to download from the GMIT website. This disclaimer form is also available from Moodle for electronic submission.
- Provision, on an annual basis, of staff training (Continuous Professional Development) in assessment design and formulation. There is a requirement for new staff to avail of training in this area during their first year of employment.
- This policy, along with all QA policies, is available on the GMIT website.
5 Procedures

Informal
A member of teaching staff who suspects plagiarism should speak with their HOD about the case. An example of an informal response would be for the lecturer to provide the student with written formative feedback.

Formal
If a staff member decides to formally report a alleged case of plagiarism, a short report shall be prepared including a (marked-up) copy of the student work, along with any evidence for suspecting plagiarism. This report should be forwarded to the HOD.

The HOD shall conduct an initial investigation of the alleged plagiarism, to determine if there is a case to be made. If the HOD concludes that there is no case of plagiarism, the reporting member of staff will be notified, with a clear statement of the reasons for the decision.

If the HOD decides that the case is one of plagiarism, he/she will make an initial assessment of the case using the penalty grid (step 1).

If the points, according to the penalty grid, are in the lower two bands (up to 379) the HOD may conduct an informal interview with the student to discuss the alleged case. If the HOD is satisfied that the case exists, an appropriate penalty will be selected from the grid (step 2). The student and staff member will be notified of the outcome.

If the points according to the penalty grid, are 525+, the HOD should refer the case to the Registrar to bring to the disciplinary committee, in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct.

In all other cases (points in the bands 380-524), the student will be invited to attend an interview with the HOD and an additional member of staff. The invitation may be by email or letter, and will include an explanation of the purpose of the meeting, including a copy of the marked-up piece of work. The student may be accompanied at the interview by either a family member, a fellow student or a member of the Student Union. The additional member of staff will be a nominee of the HOD.

Where a student does not engage with the process, by not responding or by refusing to attend an interview, the case will be referred to the Registrar.

At the interview, the student will be given a clear explanation of what has been alleged, shown a copy of his/her work, given the opportunity to justify the work and be invited to admit or deny responsibility.

Following the interview, and in the event that the student denies responsibility, if the HOD is satisfied that a case exists, an appropriate penalty will be selected from the grid (step 2). After a penalty has been decided, the HOD will perform a fairness check to consider the impact of the penalty on the student’s overall performance. If the impact is incommensurate with the offence, the HOD may choose to adjust the penalty. In all cases, the student will be notified by the HOD, in writing, of the decision and any penalty imposed.

The HOD will write a report, recording the decision and any penalty, which should be forwarded to the Registrar’s Office. This report is confidential and will not be formally attached to the student’s record. It
will be used to determine if a second or subsequent offence has occurred, and for reporting purposes only.

The student will have the option to appeal the decision of the HOD to his/her Head of School.

The Registrar will conduct occasional audits of reports submitted to ensure consistency of application of this policy.

5.1 **Procedures of the Disciplinary Committee**

Alleged cases of plagiarism referred to the Registrar will be heard by the Disciplinary Committee.

The composition and procedures of the Disciplinary Committee as outlined in the Code of Student Conduct will apply.

5.2 **The Registrar will brief the President on cases of plagiarism heard by the Disciplinary Committee**
APPENDIX 01

Plagiarism Penalty Grid

Step 1: Assign Cumulative Points based on the following Criteria (see example at the end).

History
1st Time 100 points
2nd Time 150 points
3rd/+ Time 200 points

Amount/Extent
Below 5% OR less than two sentences 80 points
As above but with critical aspects* plagiarised 105 points
Between 5% and 20% more than two sentences but not more than two paragraphs 105 points
As above but with critical aspects* plagiarised 130 points
Between 20% and 50% OR more than two paragraphs but not more than five paragraphs 130 points
As above but with critical aspects* plagiarised 160 points
Above 50% OR more than 5 paragraphs 160 points
Submission purchased from essay mill or ghost-writing service 225 points

* Critical aspects are key ideas central to the assignment
Please note the % does not relate to Turnitin originality report.

Level/Stage
1st year 70 points
Undergraduate (not 1st or final year) 115 points
Final year / Postgraduate 140 points

Value of Assignment
Standard assignment 30 points
Large project (e.g. final year dissertation, thesis) 115 points

Additional Characteristics (to be used only in extreme cases)
Evidence of deliberate attempt to disguise plagiarism by changing words, sentences or references to avoid detection: 40 points.

Example of calculating a penalty:
History (1st time) + Amount/Extent (between 5% and 20%) + Level/Stage (1st year) + Value of Assignment (Standard)
= 100 + 105 + 70 + 30 = 305 points

2 Source: http://www.nuigalway.ie/plagiarism/
**Step 2:** Award penalties based on the point bands below:

In all cases a formal warning is given and a record made contributing to the students’ previous history.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Available Penalties (select one)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 280 – 329 | • No further action beyond formal warning  
| | • Assignment awarded 0% - resubmission required, with no penalty on mark |
| 330 – 379 | • No further action beyond formal warning  
| | • Assignment warded 0% - resubmission required, with no penalty on mark  
| | • Assignment awarded 0% - resubmission required but mark capped or reduced¹ |
| 380 – 524 | • Assignment awarded 0% - resubmission but mark capped or reduced  
| | • Assignment awarded 0% - no opportunity to resubmit. |
| 525 + | • Case referred to Disciplinary Committee |

1. Normally, marks will be capped at the pass mark for the assignment.
Disclaimer Form

For Individual Work □
For Group Work □

Please note: Students MUST retain a hard/soft copy of all assignments

Plagiarism Disclaimer

Student Name(s):

Student Number(s):

Programme:

Year:

Module:

Lecturer:

Assignment Title:

Due Date:

Date Submitted:

Additional Information:

I/We understand that plagiarism is a serious academic offence, and that GMIT deals with it according to the GMIT Policy on Plagiarism.

I/We have read and understand the GMIT Policy on Plagiarism and I/we agree to the requirements set out therein in relation to plagiarism and referencing. I/We confirm that I/we have referenced, paraphrased and acknowledged properly all sources used in preparation of this assignment. I/we understand that if I/we plagiarise, or if I/we assist others in doing so, that I/we will be subject to the procedures outlined in the GMIT Policy on Plagiarism.

I/We understand and agree that plagiarism detection software may be used on my assignment.

I/We declare that, except where appropriately referenced, this assignment is entirely my own work based on my personal study and/or research. I/we further declare that I/we have not engaged the services of another to either assist in, or complete this assignment. Where such services are legally allowed and encouraged I/we have acknowledged same in this assignment.

Signed: ___________________ Date: ______________
LECTURER’S REPORT ON
ALLEGED PLAGIARISM

STUDENT NAME: ……………………………………………………………….. STUDENT ID NO: …………………………………………..
PROGRAMME TITLE: …………………………………………………….. YEAR/STAGE: …………………………………………….
CREDIT WEIGHTING OF THE ASSIGNMENT: ___________ MODULE CREDITS: ________________
MODULE TITLE: ……………………………………………………………………………………………………………………..
ASSIGNMENT TITLE: …………………………………………………………………………….. OR,
EXAMINATION SESSION: ...............................................................EXAMINATION DATE: ………………….

I present the following evidence of alleged plagiarism (additional pages may be appended if required):

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Signed: ……………………………………………………………………..………. Date: ……………………………………
Lecturer

Signed: ……………………………………………………………………..………. Date: ……………………………………
Head of Department