

Approved by the McCormick faculty December 7, 2017

FACULTY PROCEDURE DEALING WITH MISUSE OF SOURCES and PLAGIARISM

Introduction:

McCormick Seminary expects all writers to exhibit the highest ethical standards in research, composition, and documentation. Ethical writers acknowledge their sources and document the influence of others in their work. We seek best practices for a learning community in which readers, researchers, and writers are all accountable to one another in the proper use of sources, and in the disciplines needed to identify and eliminate misuse and plagiarism. Our policy seeks to encourage best practices in research and writing, and to deal effectively with all forms of misuse and any instance of plagiarism. McCormick's policy reflects the values of the Council of Writing Program Administrators (<http://www.wpacouncil.org>).

DEFINITIONS:

Misuse of sources: any work that fails to adequately and accurately attribute someone else's language, ideas, or other original material.

Plagiarism: the deliberate use of someone else's language, ideas, or other original material without acknowledging its source. Examples include, but are not limited to the following:

1. Copying the words of others (whether published or unpublished) without proper indication (quotation marks, for example) or proper citation (accurate sources, footnotes, etc.).
2. Submitting the work of others in one's own name (buying a paper, downloading or copying from the internet, having another person write for you).
3. Failure to acknowledge the source of ideas you are using in your own work (omissions in footnotes or endnotes and/or in bibliography).
4. Paraphrasing the words or ideas of others with inadequate alteration and without appropriate and specific attribution.
5. Re-purposing your own work without acknowledgement (sometimes called "self-plagiarism").

All students are urged to resolve all questions of fair use *before* submitting work for any assignment.

McCormick Seminary recognizes there are differences between plagiarism and the unintended misuse of sources. This policy seeks to assist and govern faculty response to misuse and to plagiarism. McCormick writers must meet the highest ethical standards of making every effort to acknowledge sources fully and appropriately. If a writer fails to cite sources adequately or correctly, the work must be corrected and resubmitted.

Preemptive Procedures:

(1) The Seminary shall provide an introduction to proper academic writing form during

Orientation. All students are urged to complete online tutorials listed annually by the Director of the LRWC, the degree-Deans, and the Library, for example:

<https://www.indiana.edu/~istd/test.html>

(2) In their course syllabi, instructors should include the Seminary's *Policy on the Proper Use of Sources* and this Seminary policy on misuse and plagiarism.

(3) Instructors will provide, during regular class time, written statements of their policies and expectations for proper use of sources and the avoidance of plagiarism and will include explanation and examples, before the first written assignment of the class.

(4) Instructors and students are encouraged to make use of the LRWC, the JKM library, online writing guides, and to use www.turnitin.com as a resource for class instruction in proper use of sources. If need be, www.turnitin.com can also be used (with care) as a plagiarism detection tool.

Response to Misuse:

If the instructor detects a misuse of sources, whether inadequate citation, incorrect citation, or other forms of failed attempts to identify and credit sources, the instructor will meet with the student, return the work with instructions for correct citation, revision, and resubmission of the assignment before assigning a grade.

Response to Plagiarism:

If the instructor detects plagiarism – i.e. the deliberate use of someone else's language, ideas, or other original material without acknowledging its source, the instructor will follow these steps:

- (1) The instructor shall ascertain, by consulting the office of the degree level Dean, whether this is the first, second, third, etc. instance of suspected plagiarism in the student's written work. Even in a first instance of plagiarism, the Student Standing Committee may decide among the following actions:
 - (a) Failure in the course
 - (b) Academic probation
 - (c) Suspension
 - (d) Dismissal
- (2) **First Instance of Plagiarism.** In a first instance of suspected plagiarism, the instructor shall:
 - (a) Meet with the student to explain what is wrong with the paper and how it can be remedied (i.e., the Seminary's *Policy on the Proper Use of Sources* shall be reviewed with the student, and the plagiarized passages in the paper will be discussed).
 - (b) Require the student to rewrite the paper before grading it. Review the rewritten paper with the student, and if need be, in consultation with the degree level Dean or the Director of the LRWC.
 - (c) Require that the student complete McCormick's remedial plagiarism course & submit written notification of this to the degree level Dean within two weeks.
 - (d) Refer the student to the LRWC for help with writing papers.
 - (e) Send a copy of the paper and its evaluation to the office of the degree level Dean, to the student's advisor, and to the Director of the LRWC.

(3) **Second Instance of Plagiarism.** For a second instance of suspected plagiarism (either for the same or a different course), the steps above under “First Instance” shall be repeated with the following changes:

- (a) The meeting between the instructor and the student will now also include the degree level Dean. A representative of the LRWC and the advisor may also be present.
- (b) The instructor will decide whether the paper should receive a “0” or whether it can be re-written for credit.
- (c) In a second instance of plagiarism, the Student Standing Committee may decide among the following actions:
 - 1. Failure in the course
 - 2. Academic probation
 - 3. Suspension
 - 4. Dismissal

(4) **Third Instance of Plagiarism.** If the instructor determines that there have been two or more previous instances of suspected plagiarism (either for the same or a different course), she/he shall refer the student to the Student Standing Committee (“SSC” or “the Committee”) by informing the Chair of the Student Standing Committee and the degree level Dean, and submitting relevant materials to the chair of the Student Standing Committee.

(4.1) The degree level Dean shall advise, in writing, any student of his or her referral to the Student Standing Committee, giving reasons for the referral.

(4.2) The Student Standing Committee may invite the referred student to appear, but is not obligated to do so.

(4.3) Upon review of the materials, the Student Standing Committee will review the pattern of plagiarism, and will determine whether the student’s actions constitute a breach of academic and personal integrity. The Student Standing Committee shall decide among the following actions:

- (a) Failure in the course
- (b) Academic probation
- (c) Suspension
- (d) Dismissal

(4.4) If the action involves failure in the course (4.3a) or academic probation (4.3b), the Student Standing Committee shall notify the faculty member, the student, and the advisor of its judgment and decision. A copy of the paper, the instructor’s evaluation, and the notification letter will be filed in the office of the degree level Dean.

(4.5) If the action involves suspension (4.3c) or dismissal (4.3d), the Student Standing Committee shall communicate such proposed action to the faculty in a confidential memorandum. This memorandum shall specify a time and place at which the Student Standing Committee will next meet (at least seven days’ notice shall be given). Faculty members may communicate with the Student Standing Committee about the student and the proposed action either in writing or in person at the announced Student Standing Committee meeting.

(4.6) The Student Standing Committee shall, after reviewing pertinent information, confirm or alter its proposed action; making thereby a definitive action.

(4.7) The Student Standing Committee shall communicate, in writing, its determinative action to the student. It shall also, where feasible, interpret its action orally to the student through two or more of its members (including *ex officio*).

(4.8) When appropriate, the Student Standing Committee shall request the President, Vice President for Academic Affairs, or a member of the faculty or administration to be responsible for personal followup with the student.

(5) **Any other instances of plagiarism** beyond three shall result in dismissal.

Appeals

All students have the right to appeal any action of the Student Standing Committee (with the exception of issues relating to grade disputes). Notice of such appeal must be filed with the appropriate degree level Dean within 10 days of the date of the receipt of the written notice of the decision of the Student Standing Committee. If no appeal is filed in writing within this 10 day period, the decision of the committee is final. If an appeal is duly filed with the degree dean she or he will communicate with the chair of the Student Standing Committee and the matter of appeal will be taken up at the next scheduled meeting of the Student Standing Committee or within 30 days of receipt of the appeal. The Student Standing Committee will take up the issues presented in the appeal and decide its merits. The decision of the Student Standing Committee will be communicated in writing to the student in a timely manner by the chair. The appeal decision of the Student Standing Committee will be final.

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