Vice-Chancellor

Guidelines and regulations on plagiarism and deceitful plagiarism in first-, second- and third-cycle education at Lund University

Controlling legislation – the Higher Education Ordinance (1993:100)

1. If an employee has cause to suspect an attempt by a student to deceive, by prohibited aids or other means, during examinations or other forms of assessment of study performance, the employee is obliged to report this. This obligation applies to all university employees and all education cycles (Higher Education Ordinance Chapter 10, Sections 1 and 9).

2. The Higher Education Ordinance (Chapter 10, Section 1) does not specify that the person who deceives/cheats has to do so for his or her own personal advantage. This means that even a student who provides unauthorised assistance to another student, for example by handing over his or her work, may be found guilty of attempting "by prohibited aids or other means... to deceive during examinations or other forms of assessment of study performance" and thus become the object of disciplinary measures.

3. Since the Higher Education Ordinance (Chapter 6, Section 18) stipulates that the grade awarded on completion of a course is to be determined by a teacher specifically appointed by the higher education institution (an examiner), this person can fail a student who plagiarises irrespective of whether the plagiarism was intentional or caused by an inability to work independently (see also point 3 below).

Guidelines

Definitions

The following definitions of *plagiarism* and *deceitful plagiarism* apply to first-, second- and third-cycle education at Lund University:

Plagiarism is a lack of independence in the design and/or wording of academic work presented by a student compared to the level of independence required by the educational context.

Deceitful plagiarism is a lack of independence combined with an intent on the part of the student to present the work of others as his or her own.

Quotation marks, citations and references are important tools for demonstrating independence in written work and indicating what sources have been used.

In these rules, as in the Higher Education Ordinance (see Chapter 1 Section 4), *student* refers to those who have been admitted to and pursue higher education studies and to those who have been admitted to and pursue third-cycle studies.

Application of the regulations

Determination of plagiarism

1. The following should usually constitute valid grounds for suspicions of deceitful plagiarism:

- Paraphrasing without any form of citation
- Verbatim copying not marked as a quotation (with or without citation)
- Text, with or without citation, that is too similar to the original to be considered independently formulated

2. When judging plagiarism, consideration should normally be given to the level of the course, the location of the assignment in the programme and the admission requirements (see points 4–6).

3. Students are to be informed if *Urkund* (automated service for detecting plagiarism) or other technology for automatically checking assignments is to be used. When such technology is utilised in normal cases, all submitted student assignments are to be treated in the same manner.

Plagiarism in relation to the aims and structure of the programme or course

4. The learning outcomes of the course or programme determine the level of independent work required in the knowledge and skills the student must demonstrate in order to pass.

5. All study programmes shall be designed so that the students attain a level in their writing that is relevant to the degree they are taking, and that they are made aware of the phenomena of plagiarism and paraphrasing.

6. Progression through the study programmes should be designed so that unintentional plagiarism due to insufficient skills can normally be seen as entirely an educational problem.

Referencing principles

7. Citations are to be included as soon as a source is used, irrespective of whether it is a direct quote or whether the source material is reformulated in the author's words.

8. Submitted written work should normally include citations in the running text and a complete reference list. All citations shall appear in the reference list and all references shall be cited in the text.

9. In those cases where citations and referencing are not required, the students are to be specifically informed that the normal requirements do not apply to the assignment in question.

10. Verbatim quotations are always to be marked as a quotation, e.g. with quotation marks.

11. Imitation of an *overall* structure, such as the division into introduction, methods, results, etc., is not considered plagiarism. Detailed copying of someone else's structure or arrangement without appropriate citation is considered plagiarism of an idea if it is extensive and/or the structure/arrangement is judged to be original.

12. One's own work from another context, such as a report from another course or scientific publication, is to be treated as a source. In such cases of "self-plagiarism", the same regulations as for other plagiarism are applicable, even though it is often more difficult to determine where to draw the line for self-plagiarism.

Regulations

With the support of Chapter 2 Section 5 of the Higher Education Act (1992:1434), Lund University lays down the following regulations on the division of responsibility for issues relating to plagiarism.

Division of Responsibility

Every employee

1. Every employee at the university is obliged to report if they have cause to suspect that a student by prohibited aids or other means has attempted to deceive during examinations or other forms of assessment of study performance according to the Higher Education Ordinance (Chapter 10, Section 9).

Head of Department

2. The head of department is responsible for ensuring that:

- all course/programme directors and lecturers in the department are familiar with this document,
- the department has established routines for how a matter concerning attempts to deceive during examinations or other forms of assessment of study performance, should be handled
- all employees of the department are familiar with these routines.

Course/programme directors, supervisors and lecturers

Course/programme directors, supervisors and lecturers each have a responsibility to:

- investigate the possibilities that exist for plagiarism in the course or programme.

- be familiar with this document and the department's routines for how a matter concerning attempts to deceive during examinations or other forms of assessment of study performance should be handled.

Lecturers and supervisors are also responsible for designing the course/supervision so that:

- the student has a real opportunity to take responsibility for his or her learning and become familiar with what is required in assessments of study performance.
- the student is given a real opportunity to practise the skills that are required to attain the increased demands for independence that the course or programme places compared with the student's previous educational experience.

Programme directors, such as directors of studies, programme managers and doctoral supervisors

3. The programme director is responsible for designing the programme, and the doctoral supervisor for designing the supervision, so that the progression of written communication and other independent work results in the students' in-depth understanding and acceptance of the requirements placed upon them by these regulations. The distribution and/or oral reading of written information is normally not considered to be sufficient as the only means of informing students on longer study programmes.

Faculty boards

4. The faculty boards have overall responsibility for ensuring that this document is adhered to in programmes and courses in the first, second and third cycles, and for promoting consensus within the respective faculty on issues dealt with in the document. They may also draw up any additions to this document considered necessary for the faculty.

Entry into force

These rules enter into force on 1 January 2013.

This document is accompanied by a memorandum on plagiarism and deceitful plagiarism in first-, second- and third-cycle education.

A decision on this matter has been taken by the undersigned Pro Vice-Chancellor in the presence of Head of Administration Susanne Kristensson following a presentation by lawyer Johanna Alhem. Senior lecturer Mattias Alveteg, Department of Chemical Engineering, and lecturer Jonas Josefsson, Department of Philosophy, have also participated in the final processing of the matter.

Eva Wiberg

Johanna Alhem
(Management Support)

CC:
All faculties (for distribution to departments)
Specialised centres (via Anita Nilsson)
University Library
Rules and Regulations
Lund University Students' Unions

Memorandum on plagiarism and deceitful plagiarism in first-, second- and third-cycle education at Lund University

The Swedish Higher Education Ordinance (1993:100) (Chapter 10, Section 9) states that all those employed by the University have an obligation to report suspected attempts to deceive during examinations or other forms of assessment of study performance (Chapter 10 Section 1). There are many ways in which a student can attempt to deceive, e.g. through hidden notes during a written exam, use of prohibited aids in a take-home exam, using ghost-writers, falsification of data and collusion. In many cases, students are well aware of what is allowed or not and why that is.

The reason why Lund University issues rules on plagiarism and deceitful plagiarism is that plagiarism *may* be an attempt to deceive and that it has become apparent that different views exist among students, lecturers and supervisors on what is regarded as plagiarism and deceitful plagiarism. The aim of the rules is to encourage the growth of a consensus among students, lecturers and supervisors on where these lines are drawn at Lund University.

The aim of this document is to give a background to the rules. The reasoning in this document implies that plagiarism is both a juridical and an educational problem and that it is somewhat difficult to separate the two. A student's work may be deemed by the examiner to be a *suspected* or an *obvious case of plagiarism* but this does not automatically imply that the examiner has *reason to suspect an attempt to deceive* during examinations or other forms of assessment of study performance. If the latter is the case, the examiner is obliged to report the incident to the Vice-Chancellor of the University. Whether or not suspected plagiarism is a suspected attempt to deceive depend on the nature of the plagiarism and the educational situation in which the plagiarism took place. As drawing a line between what is allowed or not is not always straightforward, good communication between lecturers and students, supervisors and doctoral students is needed. It is hoped that this document can serve as a source of ideas for lecturers designing value judgement exercises to be used in their courses as a way of ensuring good communication between lecturers and students, supervisors and doctoral students.

In this document, the problem of plagiarism is approached from the following angles:

- Definitions of plagiarism and academic integrity
- Learning outcomes and quality
- Citation and referencing
- Unacceptable paraphrasing

- Plagiarism versus deceitful plagiarism
- Appropriate measures when plagiarism is detected/suspected
- Preventive measures and the importance of consensus

Some of the reasoning in this document is also applicable to other forms of deceit than deceitful plagiarism.

Definitions of plagiarism and academic integrity

Academic integrity is hard to define and it is perhaps easier to explain its opposite: fabrication, falsification and plagiarism. The National Academy of Science (NAS) drew up the following definition of academic misconduct in 1992 (COSEPUP 1992):

"Fabrication is making up data or results, falsification is changing data or results, and plagiarism is using the ideas or words of another person without giving appropriate credit."

Plagiarism lacks an unequivocal and generally accepted definition. Carroll (2007) notes that a commonly used definition of student plagiarism is:

"Plagiarism is defined as submitting someone else's work as your own."

The underlying assumption here is that there is an ownership for texts, something which from a historical point of view has not always been taken for granted (e.g. Pennycook 1996). Put simply, we have gone from seeing it as important to become a part of a tradition to seeing it as important to give an original, personal contribution.

Central to both definitions above is that plagiarism implies that the author's own contribution is not made clear. In what way and to what level of detail the author should indicate what his/her own contribution was varies from context to context. One way to describe this is to say that there is an implicit contract between the creator (author) and the receiver (e.g. reader) when any independently created product is presented. Plagiarism can then be defined (Alveteg 2010) as:

"Plagiarism is a lack of independence in design and/or wording as compared to the level of independence anticipated by the receiver based on the context and form of the product."

In academic writing this means, for example, that sources of facts that are not common knowledge should be referenced since the receiver expects to see references for sources of such facts. In visual arts and music, expectations are somewhat different. In classical music, for example, it may be considered sufficient attribution if a knowledgeable listener is expected to recognises a theme from a piece by another composer. It is therefore very important that the student is given the opportunity to learn what expectations are implied by writing one's name on an article, an architectural drawing, a calculation, etc.

Learning outcomes and quality

With the changes to the Swedish Higher Education Ordinance that came into force in July 2007, the goals of a course should be specified as learning outcomes, i.e. descriptions of what the student who has passed the course is capable of doing. The learning outcomes should thus describe the level that has to be achieved in order to pass the course rather than the level towards which the course strives. The

use of learning outcomes is meant to facilitate student mobility by making it easier for comparisons to be made for credit transfer, etc. The underlying assumption is that the learning outcomes leave no room for ambiguity.

However, every lecturer who has ever tried to interpret the learning outcomes for a course from another department or indeed another university realises that the interpretation of learning outcomes is problematic. The syllabus of a course is written within a certain context and without that context it might be difficult to grasp the details of the learning outcomes in the way that the course director intended. For students, a further complication lies in understanding learning outcomes that describe something that the student is yet to master.

Helping students to a deep understanding of the learning outcomes and thus what they need to achieve is therefore an integral part of the educational task given to the lecturer. For written assignments, there are many different things, regardless of whether they are mentioned explicitly in the learning outcomes or not, that contribute to the perceived overall quality of the work, for example:

- **Correctness**: Is everything in the report correct?
- **Relevance**: Is the contents of the report relevant in light of the task given to the student and the aim stated in the report? Is there a good balance between scientific breadth and depth?
- **Structure**: Is the line of argument easy to follow? Does the division of the text into paragraphs increase readability?
- **Use of language**: Is the text grammatically correct? Is the language style adapted to the target audience?
- **Foundation**: Is the report well founded in scientific literature? Is the referencing made in a fluent and consistent manner? Is the list of references complete? Are the references used trustworthy?
- **Cooperative ability**: If more than one author has contributed to the text, do the different parts form a coherent whole or is the report a patchwork of different authors' work?
- **Independence**: Has/have the author(s) succeeded in formulating the text using their own words? Is the report a result of the author's(-s') independent work? Have the author(s) critically evaluated their sources?

There are, of course, other aspects of quality and nuances of the above aspects that might be important. The key thing is that there are *many different aspects* of quality to consider and that it is part of the educational responsibility of the lecturer to provide opportunities for the students to train their ability to understand and master these quality aspects.

To be able to communicate in writing and/or orally with a clear line of argument that is well founded in sources acknowledged as important by the listeners/readers is valuable in many circumstances, not only within academia. The longer study programmes should therefore offer the students opportunities to train their communicative skills in a range of different settings so that students learn to transfer skills and knowledge from one context to another.

The course director is responsible for quality assurance of the assessment in the course so that only those students who have achieved the level described by the learning outcomes are given a pass on the course. Since plagiarism is a way by which students may avoid learning, the course director therefore needs to:

1. investigate what opportunities exist for plagiarism within the course

2. ensure that the students understand what is required of them. Since drawing the line between what is accepted or not is no trivial matter, the lecturer needs to do more than just handing out written information, or reading it out loud. The programme director has a special responsibility to create an overview of how these issues are dealt with on different courses.

3. design learning experiences in which students are given a reasonable opportunity to train the skills needed to attain the increased requirements specified by the learning outcomes as compared to the student's earlier educational experience.

4. use complementary forms of examination as required, for example requiring students to give a short oral explanation of a part of their assignment on submission, in order to help judge whether the assignment is the student's own work.

It should be noted that the obligation to report *valid* suspicions of deceitful behaviour to the Vice-Chancellor is not limited to the course director. This obligation holds for all those employed by the University. *Valid* suspicion means that there must be some sort of objective basis for the suspicions.

Plagiarism that is not discovered may mean the lecturer perceives the student's work as higher quality than it actually is. A student who plagiarises instead of writing independently misses out on a learning opportunity. It is therefore important to work to increase awareness of plagiarism and academic integrity as part of the quality assurance of our programmes and courses.

Referencing and citation

Handling sources and references is central to the academic tradition today. There are many reasons why it is so important to correctly refer to one's sources, including:

- to give credit where credit is due
- to show the reader that one masters the field
- to support claims made
- to defend oneself from criticism by showing the reader that others have come to similar conclusions
- to give the reader an opportunity to dig deeper

Some aspects of referencing might seem simple enough, at least when we limit ourselves to one referencing standard. Scientific journals usually provide long lists of examples showing how different sources should be written in the list of references and how to properly give a reference within the text. Following such instructions is something that at least those who wish to become researchers need to master.

A more difficult aspect of referencing is how to properly give a reference within the text in such a way that it increases rather than decreases readability. I have met many students who find it difficult to know how to indicate, by giving references, exactly what and how much information is taken from which source, a problem which is not seldom made even *more* difficult by the fact that the novice student is given tasks which do not require an in-depth analysis. On the other hand, more experienced students are often given assignments which require in-depth analysis, which in turn often is experienced as a task where it is *easier* to give references in a clear way.

To oversimplify this dilemma slightly, one might argue that the simpler the assignment is and the earlier in the programme it comes, the more crucial the design of the assignment is for the learning efficiency of the assignment. Ideally there should be a well-designed progression within the programme with successively more in-depth assignments, where the students are gradually given more freedom and where the assignments become increasingly more realistic.

Another problem with referencing relates to the concept of 'common knowledge'. Facts and circumstances that can be regarded as common knowledge by the author and the target audience do not need to be supported by references. However, it is important to realise that this does not imply that one is allowed to "borrow" text from others without giving an appropriate citation. The idea is instead that knowledge mastered by the author as well as the audience, can be expressed freely by the author without having to give references. This means that there is a progression in what the student is expected to give references for. A fact which a final-year student can successfully argue is common knowledge might need to be supported by a reference in an essay written by a first-year student. Indirectly, this also implies that there should be a progression in the kind of sources to which students refer. Sources that are acceptable in an essay by a first-year student are not automatically acceptable in the work of a final-year student.

A third problematic aspect of referencing is that practices vary between contexts. A newspaper article or an article in a popular science magazine usually only gives summary reference to sources. In radio and television interviews, opportunity is not usually given for references. On the other hand, it is taken for granted (and thus not self-plagiarism) that the research findings explained by the researcher are either already published or soon will be. Those who are interested in the details are thus able to look up these publications and study their references. It is not uncommon that textbooks, lecture notes, etc. fail to give proper references. In some subjects, simply providing the name of a theory or a formula (e.g. the Pythagorean theorem) is considered adequate. The student thus experiences a vast variation in referencing culture that he/she might need help in understanding.

Unacceptable paraphrasing

One type of plagiarism is when a text contains passages not in quotation marks that are copied *almost* word for word. This is known as unacceptable paraphrasing.

When an inexperienced student produces a text of this kind but gives references, it is often a sign of a lack of skill in independent writing. Feedback from the lecturer is usually required to enable the student to improve his or her ability to write independently.

Experienced students, on the other hand, should have developed their skills in paraphrasing and citation during their time at Lund University. Unacceptable paraphrasing in a degree project should therefore normally be regarded as an attempt to deceive, even if the source is referenced. Indirectly, this means that demands are placed *on the student* to gradually develop the skills required to avoid plagiarism, and *on the programme director* to design the programme to ensure progression in the development of necessary skills.

Plagiarism versus deceitful plagiarism

A plagiarised report can give the impression of being a high quality report in that it fulfils nearly all the quality aspects described above. However, if the student has not been independent in his/her work, this impression of quality does not match the quality of the skills and knowledge acquired by the student. This is both a juridical and educational problem. It is a juridical problem since the student might have had *an intention* to deceive the lecturer with his/her plagiarism. It is an educational problem since the plagiarism often implies that the student does not meet the quality standards as described by the learning outcomes. Unintentional plagiarism can be caused by, for example, limited language skills or a limited understanding of what independence in writing is all about.

The more training a student has had in written communication, the greater independence in writing it is reasonable to demand of the student. Study programmes at Lund University should, however, be designed in such a way that even an inexperienced student should know the basic principles that references should always be given and that verbatim quotes must always be marked as quotes.

This means that *unacceptable paraphrasing*, for which references are given, by *students taking their first course(s)* should normally be treated as an educational problem only. Thus, courses for new students where written communication is an integral part should be designed in such a way that the students are given an opportunity to get feedback on their writing, especially on their ability to formulate phrases in an independent manner.

Unacceptable paraphrasing in a degree project or similar should however normally be treated as valid grounds to suspect an attempt to deceive, even if references are given, and should therefore be reported to the Vice-Chancellor. It is not possible to decide exactly where the limit is, e.g. how many words that one can "copy" before it becomes unacceptable paraphrasing. The text must instead be judged from the context in which it was written and normal language use within the discipline in question.

Appropriate measures when plagiarism is detected/suspected

It is essential for the credibility of Lund University that the measures taken when plagiarism is detected/suspected are consistent, experienced as fair and are in accordance with current legislation. All employees are obliged to report to the Vice-Chancellor if they have valid reason to suspect an attempt to deceive in an examination or other assessment of study performance (see Chapter 10 Section 9 of the Higher Education Ordinance). With regard to what is required for a suspicion to be 'on valid grounds', Hans-Heinrich Vogel (2002) states that:

"There must be some objective basis for the suspicion; it must be based on something more than subjective intuition. A suspicion with very shallow support may be enough for a report [to the Vice-Chancellor] to be required. A deliberation over the strength of possible evidence should not as a rule be necessary at this stage."

Plagiarism can, as described earlier, cause a lecturer to misinterpret a student performance as being of higher quality than it actually is. Depending on the situation in which plagiarism is discovered, e.g. how grave and extensive the plagiarism is, at what point in the student's academic career it is discovered, and

whether there are valid grounds to suspect attempted deception, different measures and combinations of measures may be appropriate. These measures might include:

- informing the student why the lecturer deems the work to be of poor quality and thus why a lower grade is given to the student
- informing the student why the lecturer deems the work to be of such poor quality that the student must redo the work
- encouraging the student to sign up for a special course in academic writing
- reporting the incident to the Vice-Chancellor for possible processing by the Disciplinary Board. This measure is required if there are valid grounds to suspect attempted deception.
- further informing the students taking the course regarding the requirements built into the assessment
- redesigning the course/component of the course in such a way that future students will not misunderstand the purpose of the assignment(s)
- redesigning the study programme
- altering Lund University's guidelines and/or local instructions

For the measures taken to be experienced as adequate and fair by the parties involved, an open climate is needed within Lund University so that experiences related to these matters are shared and communicated. This is a prerequisite for ensuring progression within study programmes. The proof threshold for a report of plagiarism to be required is low (Vogel, 2002) and student work that clearly deviates from a reasonable level of independence should *always* result in *some kind* of measure taken.

When an employee of the University has reason to suspect an attempt to deceive, the rule of thumb is that the employee should not discuss the issue with the student(s) involved. It should be noted that grounds to suspect deceitful behaviour might arise during a discussion with a student, e.g. when a student is asked to clarify or discuss certain aspects of his/her work with the lecturer. A student's inability to explain or discuss such issues might imply valid grounds to suspect an attempt to deceive. Once such a suspicion has arisen, however, the lecturer should refrain from discussing the issue further with the student and instead report the incident promptly to the Vice-Chancellor.

Preventive measures and the importance of consensus

There are many ways to work to improve academic integrity among students and thus to deter plagiarism (see e.g. Carroll 2007) and increase learning. One might motivate the students to learn, design learning situations in which plagiarism is either impossible or where the perceived advantage of plagiarism is minimised, design multiple assessment tasks that complement each other in such a way that plagiarism in one assignment makes it difficult for a student to pass the next assignment, etc.

However, if our efforts are to be perceived as credible there must also exist good opportunities for detecting plagiarism. It is not enough to use only one method for detecting plagiarism, rather several methods need to be used. Employing a text comparison tool such as Urkund is one method that should be used for assignments where such tools are effective. In other assignments, e.g. short lab reports and calculation tasks, other methods are needed. The incidents of plagiarism that are

detected must lead to measures that are experienced as fair and appropriate and that are in agreement with current legislation.

According to Jude Carroll (personal communication), who has many years of experience of working with academic integrity in first- and second-cycle education, once a university has begun working systematically on these issues, it takes at least 4–5 years until the work runs satisfactorily. In her view, in order for the work to run satisfactorily the system must be perceived as *consistent* and *fair* by both lecturers and students. The work ahead of us is thus a long-term undertaking. However, every step on the way can help to improve students' learning if we make sure that the measures we take are perceived as consistent and fair by those concerned.

In order to accomplish consensus on these issues within Lund University, we need people who will inform and discuss the issues with students and lecturers. Apart from informing lecturers and students, these individuals should also be able to provide assistance when an incident needs to be reported to the Vice-Chancellor. It is reasonable to say that it is an advantage if these individuals:

- have a formal position that provides insight into teaching and learning e.g. director of studies, programme director or similar.
- have contact with each other to ensure consensus within Lund University
- have time allotted for this task

Background to the rules

This document and the Lund University rules on plagiarism and deceitful plagiarism have been inspired and influenced by many people in ways that are difficult to disentangle and present in a way that gives due credit to all involved. The policy prepared by the department of Environmental and Energy Systems Studies under the guidance of Per Svenningsson just after the turn of the century have been used as a point of departure as well as the ideas of Lars-Erik Nilsson and the dual policy on plagiarism and deceitful plagiarism that was adopted by the University of Borås. Others that should be mentioned include:

- the many lecturers, doctoral students and innumerable students who actively participated in discussions regarding what constitutes plagiarism
- the lecturers at Lund University who participated in and carried out projects within the higher education teaching and learning course "Academic Conduct: students beyond plagiarism"
- Jonas Josefsson (Lund University), Elin Bommenel (Lund University), Carl-Mikael Zetterling (KTH), Jude Carroll (Oxford Brookes), Johanna Alhem (Management Support, Lund University), Per Warfvinge (Lund University) and many others who contributed in different ways with their comments and ideas during the drawing up of the Faculty of Engineering policy
- the many lecturers and students at the Faculty of Engineering and staff at Lund University Library who contributed to the work to draw up a policy for the Faculty of Engineering
- Jonas Josefsson and, in particular, Johanna Alhem who reworked the Faculty of Engineering policy and the allocations of responsibility

contained therein into guidelines for Lund University, and Vice-Chancellor Per Eriksson who has supported this work.

This memorandum is a reworking of the memorandum previously used at the Faculty of Engineering.

Lund, as above

Mattias Alveteg

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