

Factsheet concerning plagiarism

Scope

The present factsheet applies to all written work by students and researchers of the University of Bern¹. Written work may include seminar papers, Bachelors or Masters dissertations or Doctoral theses, presentations, scientific publications or applications for research.

The factsheet also constitutes an annex to the University of Bern Regulations concerning scientific integrity of 27 March 2007 / 30 April 2007 and the Guidelines of the University Board of Directors regarding the procedure for dealing with plagiarism dated 28 August 2007².

About plagiarism

Plagiarism means using some or all of another author's work in one's own work without indicating the source or the name of the author³. Plagiarism constitutes an infringement of copyright law.

Shorter extracts from another author's work may be quoted, provided that the quotation is marked accordingly and the source indicated (Art. 25 para. 2 of the Swiss Copyright Law).

Possible forms of plagiarism are⁴:

- a) Submission of a work produced to order by another person under one's own name ("ghost writing").
- b) Submission of the work of another author under one's own name ("full plagiarism").
- c) Submission of the same work, or parts of it, for different examinations or seminars, or submitting of identical manuscripts, or parts thereof, for publication purposes to a number of editors without marking the passages concerned ("self-plagiarism").
- d) Translation of foreign language texts, or parts of foreign language texts and handouts and publishing these as one's own texts without indicating the source ("translation plagiarism").
- e) Borrowing of sections of texts from another author's work without using a citation to clarify the source; this also includes the use of sections of texts taken from the Internet without indicating the source ("copy & paste plagiarism").
- f) Borrowing of sections of texts from another author's work and slightly adapting or restructuring the text without marking the source with a citation ("paraphrasing").

¹ The factsheet is adapted from the "Information Sheet on the Treatment of Plagiarism" by the Teaching Committee of the University of Zurich of 30 April 2007 (cf. <http://www.lehre.uzh.ch/plagiate.html>) and the leaflet "Citation Etiquette" by the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Zurich (see <http://www.ethz.ch/faculty/exams/plagiarism/>).

The following sources were also used: CHRISTIAN SCHWARZENEGGER/WOLFGANG WOHLERS, Plagiatsformen und disziplinarrechtliche Konsequenzen, unijournal (journal of the University of Zurich) 4/2006, p. 3, and GIAN MARTIN, Universitäres Disziplinarrecht – unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Handhabung von Plagiaten, AJP 4/2007, p 473 ff., and especially p. 482 ff.

² Both documents may be found in the Legal Services legal collection under the headings "Study" and "Research": http://www.rechtsdienst.unibe.ch/content/rechtssammlung/weisungen_der_universitaetsleitung/index_ger.html

³ The source must also be indicated even if the author is unknown, as is the case, for example, with contributions to Wikipedia.

⁴ Cf. SCHWARZENEGGER/WOHLERS (FN 1), p. 3.

- g) Borrowing of sections of text from another author's work, possibly paraphrasing and citing the relevant source, but not in the context of the section or sections of text borrowed (e.g.: hiding the plagiarised source in a footnote at the end of the work).

The following basic rules must be observed:

Other people's intellectual creations, ideas and theories in the form of texts, tables, images, figures and drawings, etc. must be marked by means of a citation, even if there is no word-for-word borrowing but simply an analogous rendering of other people's ideas in one's own words. If ideas are borrowed word for word, the citation must also be placed within quotation marks. In particular specialist areas, special citation regulations must also be observed. These must be taken into account and complied with when writing scientific texts.

The following must be adhered to in particular⁵:

- 1) **Indication of source:** All sources used must be shown in full and transparently, so that an outside observer can verify them. The current scientific citation rules for the specialist area concerned must therefore be used, together with the special regulations for quoting from electronic sources.
- 2) **Personal contribution:** Clear distinction must be made between personal and external contributions. In the case of external contributions, the author and/or the source (e.g. Wikipedia) must be named. This applies equally to texts, computer codes, tables, diagrams and data, and also, of course, if these come from the Internet.
- 3) **Word-for-word quotations:** Text borrowed word for word (which also includes parts of sentences or expressions) must be placed within quotation marks, and the source must be indicated.
- 4) **Analogous quotations (paraphrase):** For literary references which are expressed in one's own words or repeated in summary, the source must be indicated (and – in brackets or as a footnote – directly with the text concerned).
- 5) **Secondary sources:** A quotation must be marked as a secondary source if this has been borrowed from another author without verifying the original source⁶.
- 6) **Bibliography:** At the end of the work all sources and "intellectual mentors" of the work used must be listed.
- 7) **Basic knowledge:** The source does not have to be indicated for anything that might be regarded as general knowledge (basic knowledge). However, if the basic knowledge is borrowed word for word from other authors (for instance, from a textbook), the source must be given.

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⁵ Cf. "Citation Etiquette" by the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Zurich (FN 1), section A.

⁶ Example: Müller, *Allgemeines Verwaltungsrecht*, p. 10, cited in: Meier, *Bundesstaatsrecht*, p. 71.