

Dealing with Plagiarism in BA-/MA-Theses and Term-Papers in Economic and Social History (Information Sheet of 26.04.2019)

Plagiarism fundamentally contradicts the ethical standards of scientific work. At its core, doing scientific work means to arrive at verified findings and judgements of your own on the basis of existing knowledge. It is therefore necessary on the one hand, to refer to previous considerations and ideas upon which this knowledge is based. On the other hand, the considerations and ideas of others must be clearly distinguishable from one's own considerations. When external text passages are incorporated into one's work either verbatim (word-for-word), in a slightly altered form, or paraphrased (conveying the sense of an idea) without making proper reference either by means of a footnote or (in the case of a literal, verbatim citation) through the use of quotation marks, this is considered plagiarism. It falsely suggests that the plagiarist has written the text him/herself or that he/she has made his/her own reflection, although he/she has taken the text from a third party. In such a case, the work of the third party is (intentionally or not) misrepresented as one's own work.

Definition:

A case of **plagiarism** has occurred when a seminar paper or final paper or another written examination text reproduces – in part or whole – another text either literally (verbatim) or by paraphrasing without proper citation (quotation marks, footnote etc.).

- These include, for example, **entire sentences as well as combinations of sentence** fragments, if these have not been clearly identified as having been incorporated from a third-party text.
- 'Text' in this context also includes the **translated version** of a written work in a **foreign language**: such adoptions must be made apparent.
- It is also a matter of plagiarism when a text is **adapted and rephrased to convey a core idea (paraphrasing)**. Concretely this means that the simple conversion of some words of a text can be plagiarism if the content of the new text does not differ from that of the other text **and** there is no reference to this text (e.g. cf ...)
- 'Texts' also include documents written by oneself which have been published elsewhere or have been submitted as a paper or thesis elsewhere (**self-plagiarism**). Accordingly, the previous use of one's own texts must also be indicated.
- **Clarification:** If you take over several paragraphs, or even entire pages, verbatim or paraphrased from one and the same text but clearly identify this takeover, this is actually **not a plagiarism**. This suggests, however, that you have not made substantial personal contributions (connecting different sources/positions, bringing in your own perspective, own train of thought etc.), and this will be reflected in a lower grade.

Handling and Consequences:

Every student is obliged to enclose a written **declaration on good scientific practice** indicating that he/she carried out the work by him/herself.

In detected cases of **plagiarism**, there are considerable consequences:

Plagiarism is attempted fraud. The examination performance is marked 5.0 (fail). Students are not generally entitled to repeat this examination within the context of that course.

- In addition, we report every case of plagiarism to the Examinations Office of the faculties of Philosophy or Economics respectively. An entry will be made into the examinations register of which you will be officially notified. Repeated plagiarism offenses can result in ex-matriculation.
- Academic degrees that have already been awarded can also be revoked if plagiarism become known after the fact. This is evidenced by the recent revocation of doctoral degrees amongst public figures.

Every seminar paper and final thesis is checked for plagiarism using **special software**. Teachers can thus compare the contents of the examination performance with content from different sources, especially digitalised ones. Due to the increasing digitalisation of magazine articles or monographs, it is becoming increasingly easier to identify plagiarisms.

For further information please refer to:

- **How can I avoid plagiarism?** (Schreibzentrum Uni Göttingen <https://www.uni-goettingen.de/de/519762.html>)
- **Notes on dealing with plagiarism.** (Philosophische Fakultät: <https://www.uni-goettingen.de/de/107330.html>)
- **Guidelines for good scientific practice** (Universität Göttingen: <https://www.uni-goettingen.de/de/604506.html>)