

PGR thesis plagiarism check process

1. Before the final thesis is submitted to Research Student Administration team the PGR will submit an electronic final copy of the thesis to their appropriate School administrator. The PGR will sign two dated copies of the Submission of Research Degree Theses Declarations Form (see attached document for a copy of the revised form) agreeing that what is submitted is the final version of the thesis. One copy will be retained in the School and the other will be submitted along with the hard copy of the thesis to Research Student Administration team.
2. A plagiarism check using Turnitin will be undertaken by the School and the report will be assessed by the PGR's supervisory team. To avoid delays to the thesis examination, the TURNITIN check should be completed and the outcome notified to the postgraduate researcher **within 2 weeks** of the submission of the thesis.)
3. If no plagiarism or only poor academic practice is identified then the Research Student Administration team will be notified as soon as possible so that the copies of the thesis can be sent to the examiners.
4. Should suspected moderate plagiarism be detected then a Plagiarism Meeting must be held and the appropriate stages outlined in the *Code of Practice on Plagiarism* followed. If having followed the appropriate stages it is confirmed that moderate plagiarism is present in the thesis then a decision, involving the School's plagiarism officer, will be made as to whether the offending sections/data is to be removed and the thesis resubmitted within one month of the Plagiarism Meeting. In this case, no further work on the thesis should be undertaken (see 7.2 *Code of Practice on Plagiarism*). This will still be considered the first submission.
5. Should this decision not be made or should serious plagiarism be identified, then disciplinary procedure will be initiated and the examination process halted (see below).
6. In all cases, the Research Student Administration team will be informed by the School of the outcome of the Plagiarism Meeting as soon as possible.

Serious plagiarism disciplinary procedure (taken from *Code of Practice on Plagiarism*)

When serious plagiarism has been found to have occurred, the case will become a student conduct case under section 8 of the Regulations. The matter must be treated as a non-summary case and the procedures in non-summary hearings set out in the *Code of Practice on Misconduct and Fitness to Practise Committee* shall be followed. The member of Academic Staff designated the School Investigating Officer may act as the Investigating Officer and/or Case Presenter for the purpose of the student conduct case.

Further considerations:

- i. Account will need to be taken in the way that Turnitin is used, not to make an assessment that involves any work that has been submitted by a PGR as part of the formative process.
- ii. It will need to be acknowledged that high levels of apparent plagiarism can be flagged up in the 'Materials and Methods' sections of science based theses in particular. There may be other instances like this that will need to be taken into account.
- iii. Previous publications where the PGR is an author or co-author will also need special consideration by the supervisory team when reaching their conclusions.