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## **Policy Document of Academic Integrity of Samtskhe-Javakheti State University**

### **Introduction**

The document has been elaborated in the framework of Erasmus+CBHE INTEGRITY–ACADEMIC INTEGRITY FOR QUALITY TEACHING AND LEARNING IN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN GEORGIA (Project number: 585841 EPP-1-2017-1-GE-EPPKA2-CBHE-SP). The document was based on the experience of Dublin City University (Ireland), Vienna University (Austria), University of Roehampton (The UK), Uppsala University (Sweden) and their normative documents.

The document envisages the Law of Georgia on Higher Education; order No. 07/N of the Minister of Education and Science of Georgia issued on 31 January 2018 (Standard 2.3 from the Authorization Standards of the Higher Educational Institutions which evaluates the Protection of Ethics and Academic Integrity at the Institution); the Order No. 52/n of May 13, 2014 by the Ministry of Education and Science approving the Charter of LEPL Samtskhe-Javakheti State University and the Ethic Code of SJSU.

This document describes the rules of detection, prevention and reaction to plagiarism at Samtskhe-Javakheti State University.

### **General provision**

The Samtskhe-Javakheti State University (hereinafter the University) establishes high standards of learning, teaching and research, strictly adheres to the principles of academic integrity.

The reputation of the University depends on academic honesty of its academics, invited personnel, students and graduates. Consequently, students are obliged to follow the following conditions:

1. Identify the ability of independent thinking based on the obtained knowledge;
2. Specify referenced sources in the entire work as well as in separate parts of it.

The aim of the abovementioned document is to establish high standards of academic integrity in order to improve the quality of teaching and learning at the university and to implement preventive activities.

### **Field of action**

The document applies to all students registered at the university.

### **Policy Formulation**

#### **Academic Integrity**

The academic community respects the authors whose works are based on high responsibility, originality and reliable sources. Similar works create new knowledge and are oriented towards development.

#### **Plagiarism**

Plagiarism is generally interpreted as an act of presenting/reproducing and distribution of the result of the intellectual work, a text, idea and argument of another (whether whole or part of it) intentionally or unintentionally without author's referencing.

Plagiarism is a form of serious academic fraud and intellectual misconduct, theft that is not only unethical but immoral and a serious academic offense.

Plagiarism is considered as:

(A) reproduction of someone else's work (whether it is an idea, writing part, image, table or data) without the author's referencing; copying from a source without quotation marks and citation, or other type of reference that will explicitly distinguish quoted text from the

author's text. Appropriation can involve ideas, several phrases or entire works. Plagiarism, as a form of academic dishonesty, creates an incorrect / false impression of the original nature of the work. Reproducing someone else's work is considered to be copying without the permission of others. Plagiarism in this case is from the position of original knowledge;

(B) paraphrasing other's opinion without the explicit reference of the author. The slight change in the words of the author in the paraphrase, which gives the text the impression of ambiguity and do not show whose idea the author refers to and when. Referencing the source in the text or at the end of the text is not enough in this case to distinguish where the paraphrase and where the original opinions are. Sometimes the change in paraphrase is so close to the original text that their distinction is unnoticed but is not included in the quotation due to paraphrase;

C) Unifying the opinions taken from different sources without summarizing the individual authors, summarizing the different authors without specific reference sources (in some cases the scientist / author is indicated at the end of the work, but it is impossible to read the text where the author's original opinion is written and where are the quotations inserted);

D) self-plagiarism (publish repeatedly the own work or part of it without referencing the source);

E) purchase of software / work;

F) Translation from a foreign source without referencing.

### **Prevention of Plagiarism**

- Increase awareness of academic personnel, invited lecturers, teachers and students through meetings, delivering information to students by professors and teachers, recording in the syllabus the sanctions in case of detection of plagiarism, posting relevant information on website, preparing guidance and delivering it to the students at the beginning of each academic year;
- Increase the publicity of the works developed for teaching and research purposes; creating electronic database of scientific papers, bachelor's, master and doctoral dissertations;
- Enhancing the teaching courses such as Academic writing and Basics of Scientific Writing and implementing other similar courses;

- Checking each written assignment on plagiarism and giving feedback.
- Students' Services divided into the following different directions:
  - Students' services within the Academic Writing module;
  - Library services;
  - Using TURNITIN for assessing the assignments and giving the feedback;
- PR Campaign

### **Plagiarism detection mechanisms, reactions and sanctions**

Assignments and papers are reviewed in the MOODLE program through the integrated electronic program TURNITIN, which matches the submitted text with the original ones.

#### **The following are the rules for the assignments within a single course:**

A teacher (thesis supervisor, lecturer, a person responsibility for assessing the assignment) checks an assignment (thesis, essay, project, practice report or other written assignment) uploaded by a student with the Turnitin, gives feedback (gives recommendations) and in case of similarities returns it to the students for further improvements.

In case of suspicion or confirmation on plagiarism in the assignments written by a student the following steps are taken:

- If this is the first case for a student, a teacher consults him/her on improvements and gives maximum two-weeks period for re-submission of the work; In the re-submitted work, if all the comments are not considered, the issue is handed over to the Faculty Disciplinary Council.
- If this is the second case for a student, a teacher directly addresses the issue to the Faculty Disciplinary Council.
- In case of plagiarism, an author of the work (depending on the scale of the violation) can be given the following punishments:
  - a. warning;
  - b. monitoring of the subsequent activities of a students;
  - c. fail (F) and re-taking a course.

In order to respond to plagiarism cases at Samtskhe-Javakheti State University, the following units are created at the faculties:

1. **Faculty Disciplinary Council**
2. **Plagiarism Commission for Qualification Papers**

## **Faculty Disciplinary Council**

### **a) Council Composition:**

The Council is composed by the following members:

- Dean of the Faculty;
- Faculty Quality Assurance Specialists;
- Head of the Programme;
- Head of the Course (Lecturer);
- In case of necessity the Disciplinary Council invites the sector specialist;

### **b) Powers of Disciplinary Council:**

- a. the Disciplinary Council has a power to take appropriate measures in case of confirmation of the plagiarism in written assignments (essay, project, abstract, research, etc.) within the single course and in the qualification papers (doctoral dissertation, master's and bachelor's thesis);
- b. In case of confirmation of plagiarism in the qualification paper (doctoral dissertation, master's and bachelor's thesis), Disciplinary Council is authorized to make a decision (either positive or negative).

## **Plagiarism Commission for Qualification Papers**

Composition of the Commission:

- Technical Administrator;
- Academic personnel of the appropriate sector;
- Faculty Quality Assurance Specialists;

The power of the Plagiarism Commission is to determine the cases of plagiarism in qualification papers (doctoral dissertation, master's and bachelor's thesis) and to take a further action;

## **Plagiarism Detection Procedures in case of Qualification Papers**

### **1. Doctoral Dissertation**

- A student submits an electronic version of the completed doctoral dissertation (according to the instructions for preparing the doctoral dissertation) together with the decision of the supervisor to the dean of the faculty no later than five weeks before the defense and uploads it in the Moodle-Turnitin programme for checking on plagiarism. The dean

hands over the paper to the Faculty Quality Assurance Specialist who determines the compliance of the paper to the instructions and make the approval.

- The verified text is returned to the supervisor in order to check all the possible similarities. In case of a high rate of similarity or the suspicion on plagiarism, the supervisor returns the paper to a doctoral student and gives him/her 15 calendar days to correct the deficiencies.
- During this period, a doctoral student re-submits the paper, which is checked by the Plagiarism Commission based on the relevant software. The Plagiarism Commission is given 10 calendar days to reconsider the paper.
- In case of suspicion on plagiarism, the Commission refers the case to Disciplinary Council for review and appropriate sanctions.
- Disciplinary Council studies the case and the history of a PhD student's work. Accordingly, Council may make two decisions:
  - Give a PhD student an additional period (one month) to correct the paper;
  - To submit a petition to the Faculty Dissertation Board to recognize the dissertation as disqualified. Board makes a decision on the re-taking the scientific component by a PhD student and offers him/her to prepare a new paper.

## **2. Master's Thesis**

- A student submits an electronic version of the completed master's thesis (according to the instructions for preparing the master's thesis) together with the decision of the supervisor to the dean of the faculty no later than five weeks before the defense and uploads it in the Moodle-Turnitin programme for checking on plagiarism. The dean hands over the paper to the Faculty Quality Assurance Specialist who determines the compliance of the paper to the instructions and make the approval.
- The verified text is returned to the supervisor in order to check all the possible similarities. In case of a high rate of similarity or the suspicion on plagiarism, the supervisor returns the paper to a MA student and gives him/her 15 calendar days to correct the deficiencies.
- During this period, a MA student re-submits the paper, which is checked by the Plagiarism Commission based on the relevant software. The Plagiarism Commission is given 10 calendar days to reconsider the paper.
- In case of suspicion on plagiarism, the Commission refers the case to Disciplinary Council for review and appropriate sanctions.

- Disciplinary Council studies the case and the history of a MA student's work. Accordingly, Council may make two decisions:
  - Give a MA student an additional period (one month) to correct the paper;
  - To recognize the master's thesis as disqualified. In this case a student must submit a new master's thesis;

### **3. Bachelor's Thesis**

- A bachelor's student submits an electronic version of the completed bachelor's thesis (according to the instructions for preparing the bachelor's thesis) together with the decision of the supervisor to the dean of the faculty no later than five weeks before the defense and uploads it in the Moodle-Turnitin programme for checking on plagiarism. The dean hands over the paper to the Faculty Quality Assurance Specialist who determines the compliance of the paper to the instructions and make the approval.
- The verified text is returned to the supervisor in order to check all the possible similarities. In case of a high rate of similarity or the suspicion on plagiarism, the supervisor returns the paper to a BA student and gives him/her 15 calendar days to correct the deficiencies.
- During this period, a BA student re-submits the paper, which is checked by the Plagiarism Commission based on the relevant software. The Plagiarism Commission is given 10 calendar days to reconsider the paper.
- In case of suspicion on plagiarism, the Commission refers the case to Disciplinary Council for review and appropriate sanctions.
- Disciplinary Council studies the case and the history of a BA student's work. Accordingly, Council may make two decisions:
  - Give a BA student an additional period (one month) to correct the paper;
  - To recognize the bachelor's thesis as disqualified. In this case a student must submit a new bachelor's thesis;

### **Appeal against the decision**

- A student who disagrees with the decision of the Faculty Disciplinary Council has the right to request an appeal from Rector of the University no later than 3 working days after receiving the decision;
- The appeal statement must substantiate the subject matter of the appeal and the arguments, the appeal of a general nature shall not be considered.

- Rector of the University establishes a temporary appeal commission within three days after receiving the appeal, taking into account the sector specialist. A member of the Faculty Disciplinary Council may not be included in the Appeals Commission;
- The decision of the Appeals Commission is final and cannot be a subject to a new appeal.