



## Information sheet on how to avoid plagiarism

Plagiarism violates the fundamental rules and principles of academic work, and it is punishable by law and under the General Academic Regulations for Bachelor's and Master's degree programmes at the ZHAW. Students can face severe penalties for plagiarism. This information sheet is intended to help prevent plagiarism and its consequences, and at the same time guarantee the academic quality of student work.

### 1. What is plagiarism?

Plagiarism occurs when an author presents someone else's work<sup>1</sup> in whole or in part as their own without citing the work's source and author. The following are examples of different types of plagiarism:

- The author submits someone else's work under his or her own name (complete plagiarism).
- The author commissions someone to produce a work in whole or in part and submits it under his or her own name (ghostwriting).
- The author translates texts or parts of texts written in a foreign language and publishes them as his or her own texts without indicating the source (translation plagiarism).
- The author uses extracts from someone else's work without changing them and without attributing the source in the form of a quote. This includes using parts of a work from the internet, as well as laboratory reports, etc. without citation.
- The author takes extracts from someone else's work and alters them slightly or changes the word order but does not cite the source (paraphrasing).
- The author takes extracts from someone else's work, possibly altered or paraphrased, and cites the corresponding source but not in the context of the section of the text in which the work was used (e.g. concealing the plagiarised source in a footnote or endnote).

An author is also not permitted to submit his or her own work or parts of it for more than one course assessment or other academic qualification (self-plagiarism).

General subject knowledge, which might be regarded as basic or common knowledge in a specific subject area or discipline, does not have to be cited. However, if the author presents that basic knowledge in a particular form taken from another source (e.g. a textbook), then that source must be cited.

As a general rule, students should sign a declaration attesting that they have authored the work themselves.

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<sup>1</sup> A **work** within the meaning of Art. 2 of the Swiss Copyright Act is understood as an intellectual creation with individual character. This includes, in particular: literary, scientific and other linguistic works; musical works and other acoustic works; works of art, in particular paintings, sculptures and graphic works; works with scientific or technical content such as drawings, plans, maps or three-dimensional representations; works of architecture; works of applied art; photographic, cinematographic and other visual or audio-visual works; choreographic works and works of mime; and computer programs (Art. 2 paras. 2 and 3 CopA). Also protected under the Copyright Act are drafts, titles and parts of works, insofar as they are intellectual creations with an individual character (Art. 4). However, plagiarism may result not only from a work explicitly mentioned in the Copyright Act, but from other work that may not necessarily fall within its scope. This is why, for the purposes of defining plagiarism, a work is generally understood to mean any work output.



## 2. How to deal with sources

Sources must be treated and cited according to the guidelines provided by the degree programmes. In principle, the following applies:

- Every text, part of a text or idea taken from someone else that is included in an author's work must be properly cited to allow the reader to verify it and determine which parts of the text come from which author and source. The same applies to translations, paraphrasing, adopting someone else's text structure or the use of synonyms.
- Verbatim (i.e. word-for-word) quotations must be placed in quotation marks.

## 3. What are the consequences of plagiarism?

Consequences under the General Academic Regulations:

Plagiarism is considered to be dishonest conduct under the General Academic Regulations. Any assessments involving plagiarism will result in a fail; if the assessment is to be graded, a mark of 1 will be awarded. Plagiarism may result in disciplinary action being initiated if the student is still studying at the ZHAW. If a case of plagiarism is only revealed at a later date, e.g. after the degree has been awarded, the ZHAW may withdraw any title that has already been awarded.

The ZHAW reserves the right to check student work for plagiarism using electronic aids and resources.

Consequences under the Swiss Copyright Act:

Plagiarism can constitute copyright infringement. Pursuant to Art. 25 paras. 1 and 2 of the Swiss Copyright Act (CopA), shorter passages of someone else's work may be quoted if the source is provided and the name of the author (if it is known) is cited. If this information is not provided in the form of a citation, this constitutes an act of plagiarism and therefore a copyright infringement. This can be prosecuted in a court of law and may result in a claim for damages. Pursuant to Art. 68 CopA, plagiarism is also liable to a fine of up to CHF 10,000 on the complaint of the person whose rights have been infringed.

The consequences of plagiarism as provided for in the General Academic Regulations and the Copyright Act arise irrespective of whether students have signed a declaration stating that they wrote the work in question themselves.

## 4. Regulation documentation

Concerning	Details
issued by	LeiterIn Stab Ressort Lehre
decided by	GeneralsekretärIn
archived in	2.05.00 Lehre Studium
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the original German version	<a href="#">Z-MB-Vermeidung Plagiate</a>