Recognising and Avoiding Plagiarism
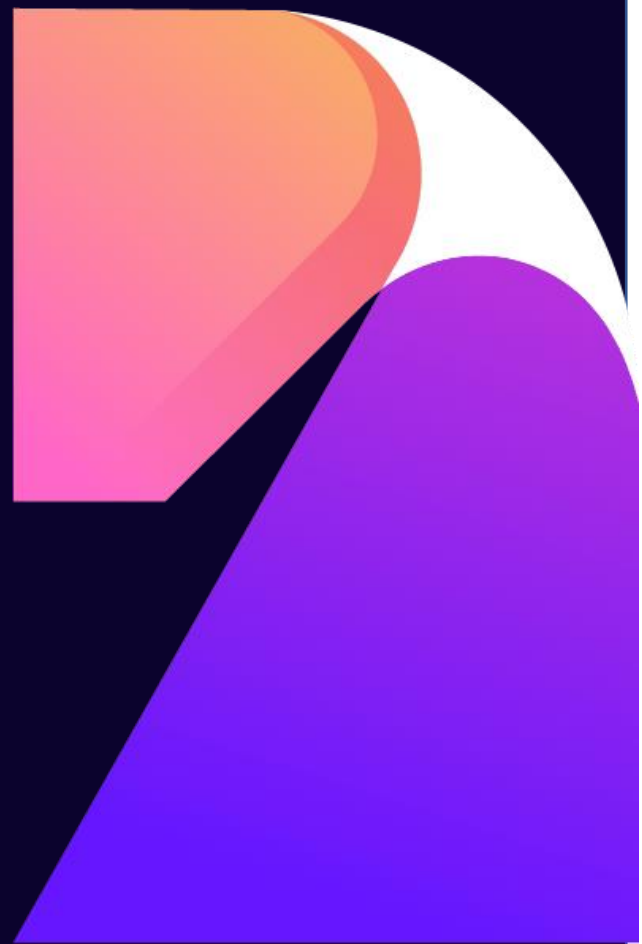
Policy and Procedure

Document Overview

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Table of Contents

1. Recognising and Avoiding Plagiarism

1.1 Scope and Applicability

The purpose of this policy is to uphold and promote academic integrity at the Central Mediterranean Business School (CMBS). It seeks to define and deter plagiarism, ensuring that all academic activities are conducted with honesty and originality. This policy aims to cultivate a culture of respect for intellectual property and individual contribution within the community of CMBS. By highlighting the importance of acknowledging the work of others, it strives to foster ethical academic behaviour and critical thinking skills vital for academic and professional success.

1.2 Purpose

This policy applies to all members of the CMBS community, including students, faculty, administrative staff, and CMBS approved learning centres. It encompasses all forms of academic work, including but not limited to, written assignments, portfolios, journals, research projects, dissertations, theses, and publications. The policy is relevant in all academic settings, from classroom activities to online course submissions and scholarly publications. It also applies to any instance of academic assessment within the institution, whether conducted on-site or remotely.

In addition, this policy mandates the use of plagiarism detection software for all submitted work to enhance the detection and prevention of academic misconduct. All assignments, portfolios, dissertations, and other academic submissions must go through this system before final submission to ensure that they meet CMBS's standards of academic integrity.

1.3 Policy Statement

The Central Mediterranean Business School (CMBS) upholds the principles of academic integrity and intellectual honesty as cornerstones of our educational philosophy. We firmly believe in the value of original thought and the respectful acknowledgment of the intellectual contributions of others in all scholarly endeavours.

CMBS considers plagiarism in any form as fundamentally unacceptable and a direct violation of our academic standards. Our policy requires that all members of the CMBS community - students, faculty, and staff - practice responsible academic behaviour by properly citing and referencing all sources in their academic work. This is in accordance with the **Harvard Referencing style guide** adopted by CMBS.

This policy is not just about upholding rules but is a commitment to nurturing an academic environment that values honesty, respects intellectual property, and encourages scholarly growth and ethical academic conduct.

CMBS is dedicated to providing guidance and resources to assist all community members in understanding what constitutes plagiarism and how to avoid it. We aim to foster a culture of academic integrity through education and support. To support this commitment, CMBS provides mandatory training sessions on plagiarism prevention and detection for both students and faculty. These sessions are integrated into the induction process and ongoing development programmes to ensure that all members of the CMBS community are equipped with the skills and knowledge to maintain academic integrity.

2. Definitions

Academic Misconduct:

Any act that compromises or attempts to compromise the academic integrity of the institution. This includes, but is not limited to, plagiarism, fabrication, deception, cheating, and facilitating academic dishonesty.

Citation:

The act of acknowledging the sources of information and ideas used in academic work. Citations should follow the Harvard academic style guide adopted by CMBS.

Paraphrasing:

The process of rewriting someone else's ideas or findings in one's own words. Proper paraphrasing requires citation and should not change the original meaning of the source material.

Plagiarism Level:

The severity and extent of suspected plagiarism are determined by the percentage similarity score provided by the plagiarism detection software, after filtering out insignificant percentages stemming from common phrases or sources that do not contribute to the overall similarity.

Self-Plagiarism:

The reuse of one's own previously submitted work or parts thereof in a new academic context without acknowledging the initial submission. This includes republishing one's own work or submitting the same work for multiple assessments.

2.1 What is plagiarism?

Plagiarism is a specific form of cheating which applies to all assessments. There are many definitions, but they all have in common the idea of taking someone else's intellectual effort and presenting it as one's own.

CMBS's definition of plagiarism is the "unacknowledged incorporation into a student's work, of materials derived from published or unpublished work by another person and presented as if it were the student's own". A strict interpretation could include the original ideas, as well as the actual words, produced by another.

Plagiarism may include but is not limited to:
- Using extracts from another person's work, published or unpublished, without using quotation marks and/or an acknowledgement of the source.
- Summarising the work of another or using their ideas without an acknowledgement of the source.
- Copying or using the work of another student (past or present) without that person's knowledge or agreement.
- Purchasing essays or downloading them from the internet to submit them as your own work.

2.2 What is Collusion?

Collusion is a form of plagiarism that involves unauthorised cooperation between at least two people with the intent to mislead or deceive deliberately. Collusion may include but is not limited to:
- Two or more students conspiring to produce a piece work together with the intention that it is submitted as his/her own, individual work. Or with the intention of at least one student submitting it as his/her own, individual work
- A student submitting the work of another student (with their consent) as his/her own, individual work. In such cases, both students would be deemed to be guilty of collusion
- The submission of a piece of work that is not the student's own individual work that has been purchased from a third party. For example, from an essay or assignment

writing service or by soliciting another individual to produce a piece or work on their behalf.

- Unauthorised cooperation between a student and a third party in producing a piece of work that will be submitted as the student's own.

2.3 What is Cheating?

Cheating is an attempt to deceive assessors, examiners and/or external verifiers.

Cheating may include but is not limited to:

- Providing or receiving information about the content of an examination before it takes place, except when allowed by CMBS or the accrediting centre (e.g. case study materials issued before an examination).
- Giving excessive help to a student in writing an assignment or writing any of it for them, impersonating or trying to impersonate a student, or attempting to procure a third party to impersonate oneself.
- Students using books, notes, instruments, computer files or other materials or aids that are not permitted (usually relevant only to examinations and online tests).
- Copying or reading from the work of another student or from another student's books, notes, instruments, computer files or other materials or aids, unless expressly permitted.
- Offering a bribe of any kind to an invigilator, examiner or other person connected with assessment.
- Fabricating or falsifying data or results by individual students or groups of students.

3. CMBS Plagiarism Software

The plagiarism and AI checker that we use is called PlagiarismCheck and is from the company PlagiarismCheck.org. The process is automatic and is initiated on submission of assignments within the Learning Management System (LMS).

3.1 Similarity Check

PlagiarismCheck compares the content of the submission against all of the content that has been published on the internet – including pages which are no longer available. It also compares against its own database which is populated by users not only within the current organisation (CMBS) but also globally.

A report is then generated and sent directly to the LMS where it is accessible by the student, tutor and the academic team.

4. Procedure

4.1 Responsibilities

4.1.1 CMBS

CMBS is committed to fostering a culture of academic integrity and provides comprehensive support and resources to ensure that all members of the community adhere to high academic standards.

CMBS provides continuous support to students on issues related to academic integrity. In addition to academic writing workshops, students can access one-on-one guidance from the Academic Affairs team to discuss plagiarism concerns, citation practices, and the use of plagiarism detection software.

The responsibilities of CMBS include:

- Providing specific training to all students on how to reference correctly using CMBS's appointed Harvard referencing style and how to avoid academic misconduct.
- Offering training for tutors and students during induction on how to use plagiarism detection software effectively.
- Supplying comprehensive guidelines on what constitutes plagiarism and how to avoid it.
- Implementing and maintaining reliable plagiarism detection software to assist in identifying potential cases of academic misconduct.
- Ensuring a transparent and fair process for investigating alleged plagiarism incidents.
- Fostering a supportive academic environment that encourages questions, discussions, and ongoing education about academic integrity.

4.1.2 Academic Affairs Team

The Academic Affairs team at CMBS plays a pivotal role in maintaining academic integrity and ensuring that all cases of suspected plagiarism are handled efficiently and fairly.

The responsibilities of the Academic Affairs team include:

- Being available to answer questions and provide support to students who are uncertain about citation practices or facing challenges in their academic work.
- Maintaining comprehensive records of all plagiarism cases and actions taken, ensuring that these records are used to monitor trends and inform policy improvements.
- Communicating decisions and actions taken to the relevant stakeholders, including students, tutors, and administrative staff.
- Ensuring that the institution's plagiarism policies are up-to-date and consistently applied across all departments.
- Providing guidance to tutors and students on understanding and preventing plagiarism, as well as how to use plagiarism detection software effectively.
- Organising and conducting training sessions and workshops on proper citation practices, the use of plagiarism detection software, and strategies for maintaining academic integrity.

4.1.3 Admissions and Student Affairs Team

The Admissions and Student Affairs team at CMBS plays a critical role in fostering an environment that promotes academic integrity and supports students in understanding and adhering to the institution's policies on plagiarism.

Their responsibilities include:

- Offering clear, accessible information about plagiarism and academic misconduct, including how to avoid it and the consequences of engaging in such behaviour.
- Acting as a liaison between students and the academic team, ensuring that students are informed about the policies and procedures related to plagiarism and any changes to these policies.
- Keeping track of student queries and issues related to plagiarism and academic integrity, and reporting any trends or recurrent issues to the Academic Affairs Team to help improve policies and support services.

4.1.4 Student

Students are expected to fully adhere to the CMBS Code of Academic Integrity, ensuring that all their work reflects the principles outlined in this document. They must actively engage in understanding the ethical expectations set forth by CMBS and seek clarification from tutors or the Academic Affairs team whenever necessary.

Students are required to submit their work through the plagiarism detection software provided by CMBS. This step is mandatory for all written assignments, and students must review the similarity report generated before final submission to ensure compliance with the academic integrity standards. Failure to submit work through this software may result in the assignment not being accepted for grading.

Their responsibilities include:

- Familiarising themselves with this policy and understanding what constitutes academic misconduct.
- Students are required to use the Harvard Referencing Style in all their academic submissions.
- Students should ensure that every source is accurately cited, and any direct quotes are properly referenced to avoid unintentional plagiarism.
- Submitting original work and avoiding any form of copying, unauthorised collaboration, or use of uncredited material.
- Utilising available resources and tools provided by CMBS to understand and prevent plagiarism, including plagiarism detection software and academic writing workshops.
- Actively seeking guidance from tutors or academic staff if they are uncertain about citation practices or academic integrity issues.
- Reporting any observed instances of plagiarism or academic misconduct to the Academic Team at CMBS.
- Engaging in continuous learning and development to improve their understanding and practices related to academic writing and integrity.

4.1.5 Tutor

Tutors at CMBS have a vital role in promoting academic integrity and supporting students in maintaining high standards of academic conduct.

Their responsibilities include:

- Providing clear guidance to students on what constitutes plagiarism, proper citation methods, and academic writing standards.
- Demonstrating and upholding high standards of academic integrity in their own work and interactions.
- Vigilantly detecting potential plagiarism in student submissions and promptly reporting verified cases to the Academic Affairs team.
- Offering educational support to students, including training on how to use plagiarism detection software and effective academic writing techniques.
- Providing constructive feedback to students on their academic work, highlighting areas for improvement in terms of originality and citation practices.
- Acting as mentors to students, encouraging a culture of honesty, respect for intellectual property, and continuous learning.

4.1.6 Academic Affairs Committee

The Academic Affairs Committee at CMBS has the ultimate responsibility for maintaining the integrity of the academic process and ensuring that all cases of plagiarism are handled fairly and consistently.

Responsibilities include:

- Ensuring that the institution's plagiarism policies are up-to-date, effectively communicated, and consistently applied across all departments.
- Reviewing severe cases of plagiarism and making final determinations regarding disciplinary actions in accordance with the institution's guidelines.
- Deciding on appropriate sanctions for serious breaches of academic integrity, which may include permission to resubmit work with penalties, awarding a fail grade for the module, or expulsion from the institution.
- Overseeing the appeals process to ensure that students have a fair opportunity to contest decisions related to plagiarism accusations.

4.2 Process - Handling cases of Suspected Plagiarism

1. Findings of plagiarism (10% or higher) are identified by the Academic Affairs team prior to submission of student work for correction.

2. The Academic Affairs team will investigate the case, look at the report and if necessary, involve the System Administrator.

3. If the investigation confirms the initial finding then the Academic Affairs team will have a one to one meeting with the student to discuss the matter and determine a way forward.

4. After the meeting the matter is discussed at the Academic Affairs Committee and the Committee will evaluate the findings and proceed with sanctioning the student.

    a) **First time breach**: students will be awarded a FAIL and requested to resubmit their work (as a 2nd submission) and can only obtain a maximum 50% pass mark.

    b) **Repeated breach**: students will be awarded a FAIL with no possibility to resubmit and they will be required to attend a meeting to justify their repeated misconduct before the Academic Affairs committee before a decision regarding disciplinary action is taken.

5. A decision regarding the case will be communicated to the student by the Admissions and Student Affairs team within 5 working days of the committee hearing.

4.2.1 Plagiarism Penalties

Penalties based on Plagiarism Software Report	
Similarity % (copied text)	
0% -10%	Percentage is not treated as plagiarism.
*11% and over	Case will be investigated by the Academic Affairs team and if needed escalated to the Academic Affairs Committee. Penalties in this case may consist of repeating the module at a charge that includes correction and IV fees or expulsion from the programme.
*In the initial phases of study, the Academic Affairs team consider the potential for academic underperformance in the student's work and may categorise such instances as 'academic underperformance'. In cases of academic underperformance, the Academic Affairs team will offer guidance on preventing such errors in future assessments. In these instances, marks may be adjusted in line with the grading rubric without imposing additional penalties for plagiarism.	

4.2.2 Appeals

CMBS is committed to ensuring that all students have the right to appeal decisions related to accusations of plagiarism. The appeals process is designed to be fair, transparent, and accessible to all students.

The process includes the following steps:

- Students who wish to appeal a plagiarism decision must submit a formal appeal in writing to the Admissions and Student Affairs team studentsupport@cmbs.edu.mt within 5 working days of receiving the decision. The appeal should include a detailed explanation of the grounds for the appeal and any supporting evidence.

- The Academic Affairs team will review the appeal to determine its validity. If the appeal is deemed valid, it will be forwarded to the Academic Affairs Committee for further consideration.

- The Academic Affairs Committee will include senior academic staff and, if necessary, an external advisor. The student may be invited to present their case to the committee.

- The Academic Affairs Committee will review all evidence and testimonies before making a decision. The student will be notified of the committee's decision in writing within 5 working days of the hearing.

- If the student is not satisfied with the decision of the Academic Affairs Committee, they may request a further review by an independent adjudicator appointed by CMBS. The decision of the independent adjudicator will be final. A fee may apply.

By adhering to this structured appeals process, CMBS ensures that all students have a fair opportunity to contest decisions and that all cases of alleged plagiarism are handled with the utmost integrity and transparency.

5. Student Support and Guidelines on how to avoid plagiarism

CMBS strongly encourages students to use plagiarism detection software offered as part of the learning management system (LMS, prior to submitting any academic work. This practice allows students to identify any unintentional plagiarism and correct it before final submission. Students are responsible for reviewing the generated reports and making necessary adjustments to ensure their work complies with CMBS's academic integrity standards.

5.1 Guidelines

The following guidelines are to be followed by students:

- The large majority of every assessment must be original work. Substantial copying of course notes or other published or unpublished work is unacceptable as this does not demonstrate the student's knowledge or effort; even if acknowledged and properly referenced, excessive use of other people's work is unacceptable.

- Using someone else's exact words in one's work must be in quotation marks. Quotations must be used sparingly and only when the author has expressed something so well and so concisely that the words cannot be improved.

- Even when explaining somebody else's work without quoting word-for-word, the source must be referenced.

- When referencing a source, the following details must be provided: the name of the author, the date of their work and the page number where the quotation was found immediately after the quotation (e.g., Hill, 2004, p. 42) Full details of the reference must also be presented in the reference list.

- A reference list must be provided at the end - a list of books, articles and any other sources that have been quoted –must be provided at the end of an assignment.

- The Harvard system for referencing sources is well-established, and one can find guidance on how to use it on the CMBS assignment writing guidance notes.

5.2 Tips

- **Understand What Constitutes Plagiarism**: Familiarise yourself with the different forms plagiarism can take, from direct copying to paraphrasing without proper credit.

- **Effective Note-Taking**: Develop a system for note-taking that clearly distinguishes between your own ideas and those sourced from others.

- **Cite Sources Rigorously**: Ensure that you provide accurate citations for all ideas, data, and text that are not your own, following the Harvard citation style adopted by CMBS.

- **Use Quotation Marks for Direct Quotes**: When directly quoting text, use quotation marks and reference the source.

- **Paraphrase Properly**: When paraphrasing, make sure you are genuinely rewriting in your own words and not just altering a few words here and there.

- **Utilise Plagiarism Detection Software**: Before submission, use the plagiarism detection software provided by CMBS to check your work for any unintentional plagiarism.

- **Manage Your Time Wisely**: Allow enough time to research and write properly, as rushed work can lead to inadvertent plagiarism.

- **Attend Academic Writing Session**: Participate in the free Academic Writing session provided by CMBS to improve your research and writing skills.

- **Reference Management Software**: Learn to use reference management tools/software such as Microsoft word to keep track of sources and format citations.

- **Ask Questions**: If you're unsure about how to acknowledge a source, seek advice from your tutor or contact our academic affairs support team on academicsupport@cmbs.edu.mt

6. Associated Policies

- CMBS Ethos
- Code of Ethics
- Code of Academic Integrity Policy
- Research Ethics Policy
- Student Rights, Responsibilities and Code of Conduct Policy and Procedure
- Programme and Academic Regulations Policy and Procedures
- Assessment and Internal Verification Policy and Procedure
- Assessment of Dissertations
- Malpractice and Maladministration Policy and Procedure
- Data Privacy and Information Management
- Grievances and Appeals Policy and Procedure