

**AGA KHAN UNIVERSITY**  
**Guidelines, Policies and Procedures**

<b>Policy Name</b>	Student Academic Integrity Policy
<b>Policy Number</b>	017
<b>Approved by</b>	Academic Council
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<b>Contact Office</b>	Office of the Registrar

## **1.0 OVERVIEW**

- 1.1 The main purpose of a university is to encourage and facilitate the pursuit of knowledge and scholarship. The attainment of this purpose requires the individual integrity of all members of the University student community, including all non-degree / visiting, undergraduate, graduate and postgraduate students.
- 1.2 The mission, vision, values, policies and practices of the Aga Khan University declare unequivocally that academic integrity is considered to be an integral component of ethical, professional and personal behaviour.
- 1.3 It is the responsibility of all students at Aga Khan University to ensure that all academic work (formative, summative, certifying, papers, theses, dissertations, all examinations – professional, midterms, finals, etc. – projects, group work assignment etc.) submitted as part of their course work and / or programme of study, in whole or in part, meets the University’s test for academic integrity.

## **2.0 STUDENTS**

### **2.1 Definition**

For the purposes of this Policy, a student shall mean and include any individual admitted to and/or enrolled at the University for any course including those leading to an undergraduate, graduate or postgraduate certificate, diploma, or degree or any individual registered with any other university or institution who has been accepted for an approved programme of study or training or approved to take a course at the University.

- 2.1.1 For the purposes of the Student Academic Integrity Policy, Postgraduate Medical Education (PGME) Interns, Residents and Fellows shall be deemed to be students of the University.

- 2.2 Students are responsible for being aware of and demonstrating behaviour that is honest and ethical in their academic work, including but not limited to:
  - 2.2.1 Following faculty member's instructions related to referencing sources of information, the proper methods for collaborating on academic work and / or engaging in group work.
  - 2.2.2 Asking for clarification of the instructions where necessary.
  - 2.2.3 Adhering to the principles of academic integrity when conducting and reporting research.
- 2.3 Students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with the definitions of breaches of academic integrity in the University's research related policies.
- 2.4 Students are responsible for their behaviour and may face penalties under this Policy, if found to be guilty of academic misconduct.

### **3.0 ACADEMIC DISHONESTY**

It shall be deemed a breach of the University's Student Academic Integrity Policy to:

- 3.1 Plagiarise (cf. Appendix A).
  - 3.1.1 For first incidents of plagiarism, the charge against the student will be handled by the student's programme of study.
  - 3.1.2 Any subsequent charge of plagiarism against a student will be referred to the Academic Integrity Committee.
- 3.2 Collaborate on academic work without approval or to improperly collaborate on academic work. For example, when the instructor,
  - States that students must complete an assignment independently;
  - Asks students to complete an experiment (lab) with a partner but to write individual reports on the results.
- 3.3 Submit the same or substantially the same academic work for more than one course without prior written approval of the member(s) of faculty.
- 3.4 Cheat on examinations, including the use of unauthorized aids during the writing of the examination.
- 3.5 Submit false or altered documents.
- 3.6 Submit false information or false medical documentation to gain a postponement, advantage or leave from mandatory session(s).
- 3.7 Provide a false signature for attendance at any class or assessment procedure or on any document related to attendance or the submission of material where the

signature is used as proof of authenticity or participation in the academic assessment.

- 3.8 Misrepresent academic credentials from other institutions or to submit false information for the purpose of gaining admission or credits.
- 3.9 Misrepresent registration / participation in a conference, seminar, symposium, etc.
- 3.10 Submit or present work as one's own that has been purchased or acquired from another source.
- 3.11 Receive and / or distribute test or course materials that are in the process of being prepared or have been stored.
- 3.12 Alter a grade or using altered course materials to have a course grade changed.
- 3.13 Steal, destroy or tamper with another student's work.
- 3.14 Forge, alter or fabricate Aga Khan University documents, including, but not limited to transcripts, degree / diploma parchments, letters of reference or any other official document.
- 3.15 Impersonate another student, either in person or electronically, for the purposes of academic assessment.
- 3.16 Assist another student in the commission of academic misconduct.
- 3.17 A breach of the University's *Policy on Research Misconduct*. (cf. Appendix A)

#### **4.0 DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES**

- 4.1 Once informed, the University Registrar will convene and refer the matter to the University's Academic Integrity Committee for investigation.
- 4.2 The Academic Integrity Committee
  - 4.2.1 The Academic Integrity Committee will be an ad hoc committee, appointed by the Provost, and shall consist of three to five members of the faculty, one of whom shall be the Chairperson.
  - 4.2.2 The University Registrar shall serve as secretary to the Academic Integrity Committee.
  - 4.2.3 The Academic Integrity Committee will be entitled to use services of any personnel of the University as the Committee may deem appropriate for the purposes of assisting the Committee in conducting its hearings.
- 4.3 The Committee's Proceedings

- 4.3.1 Committee hearings will be conducted in a fair and transparent manner.
- 4.3.2 The Committee will invite the concerned student(s) to present his / her (their) point(s) of view.
- 4.3.3 The Committee may, at its discretion, call other people deemed appropriate for seeking any information or evidence with regard to the offence.
- 4.3.4 Unless otherwise authorized by the Provost, the Committee will normally complete its proceedings within 15 working days.
- 4.3.5 The outcome of the Committee's investigation will be communicated in writing to the University Registrar who will inform the student(s) of the hearings outcome.

## **5.0 DISCIPLINARY PROCEEDINGS: ACADEMIC DISHONESTY**

- 5.1 When a student is found to have breached items 3.1 – 3.3 of the University's Student Academic Integrity Policy, the following penalties may be applied independently or in combination for any single violation.
  - 5.1.1 A letter reporting the academic dishonesty offence sent to the student and copied to the student's Dean / Director, the Registrar, the student's sponsoring agent, and, where applicable / appropriate, the student's parents.
  - 5.1.2 A reduction of the mark on the piece(s) of academic work.
  - 5.1.3 A mark of zero for the piece(s) of academic work.
  - 5.1.4 A reduction of the overall course grade.
  - 5.1.5 A failing mark for the course with a transcript notation.
  - 5.1.6 Suspension from the University, with a transcript notation.
  - 5.1.7 Expulsion from the University, with a transcript notation.
  - 5.1.8 A recommendation to Academic Senate, University Council, and the Chancellor to rescind the student's degree.
  - 5.1.9 Any other penalties as may be deemed appropriate for the circumstances, with a transcript notation.
  
- 5.2 When a student is found to have breached items 3.4 – 3.17 of the University's Student Academic Integrity Policy, the following penalties may be applied independently or in combination for any single violation.
  - 5.2.1 A letter reporting the academic dishonesty offence sent to the student and copied to the student's Dean / Director, the Registrar, the student's sponsoring agent, and, where applicable / appropriate, the student's parents.
  - 5.2.2 Cancellation of admission to and / or enrollment at the University.
  - 5.2.3 Suspension, with a transcript notation.
  - 5.2.4 Expulsion, with a transcript notation.
  - 5.2.5 A recommendation to Academic Council, the Board of Trustees and the Chancellor to rescind the student's degree.
  - 5.2.6 Any other penalties as may be deemed appropriate for the circumstances.

## **6.0 APPEALS**

- 6.1 Any appeal of the Academic Integrity Committee's decision must be made within 10 working days of the date of the letter notifying the student of the decision.
- 6.1.1 Disagreement with the Committee's decision is not a reason for appeal.
- 6.1.2 Students must clearly state the reason for the appeal.
- *Significant mitigating circumstances*  
There existed circumstances affecting the student's actions of which, for good reason, was not available to the Disciplinary Committee when the investigation took place.
  - *Procedural irregularities*  
There were procedural errors or irregularities in the conduct of Disciplinary Committee's investigation of such a nature as to create a reasonable possibility that the result may have been different if the irregularities had not occurred.
  - *Prejudice or bias*  
There is evidence of prejudice or bias or lack of proper conduct on the part of one or more of the Disciplinary Committee members.
- 6.1.3 Students must make their appeal in writing.
- 6.1.4 An appeal may only be made by the student. Appeals received from parties other than the student will not be considered.
- 6.2 Appeals should be addressed to the University Registrar who will be responsible for forwarding the matter to the University's Provost.
- 6.3 In cases where the Provost is not available to consider an appeal within the prescribed timelines, the Provost will forward the matter to a Vice Provost who will act in her / his place.
- 6.4 Upon the receipt of an appeal, the Provost or his / her designate will convene and refer the matter to an Appeals Committee for investigation and review.
- 6.5 The Appeals Committee
- 6.5.1 The Appeals Committee will be an ad hoc committee and shall consist of three members of the faculty, one of whom shall be designated as the Chairperson of the Appeals Committee.
- 6.5.2 The Appeals Committee will be entitled to use services of any personnel of the University as the Committee may deem appropriate for the purposes of assisting the Committee in conducting the disciplinary proceedings.
- 6.5.3 The University Registrar will serve as the secretary to the Appeals Committee.
- 6.6 The Appeals Committee's proceedings:

- 6.6.1 The Appeals Committee hearings will be conducted in a fair and transparent manner.
- 6.6.2 The Appeals Committee will invite the concerned student(s) to present his / her (their) point(s) of view.
- 6.6.3 The Appeals Committee may, at its discretion, call other people deemed appropriate for seeking any information or evidence with regard to the offence.
- 6.6.4 Unless otherwise authorized by the Provost or his / her designate the Appeals Committee will complete its proceedings within 10 working days.
- 6.6.6 The outcome of the Appeals Committee's investigation will be communicated to the Provost or his / her designate in writing.
- 6.6.7 The Provost or his / her designate may act upon the recommendation(s) of the Appeals Committee or in accordance with his / her judgment.
- 6.6.8 In exercising his / her right of a making decision, the Provost shall not be required to provide a hearing to the student.
- 6.6.9 The decision of the Provost or his / her designate shall be final and binding on all parties.
- 6.6.10 A copy of the decision will be sent to the University Registrar who will convey the results of the appeal to the student(s).

## **7.0 USE OF PLAGIARISM-DETECTION SOFTWARE**

### **7.1 Preamble**

- 7.1.1 In an effort to ensure the highest academic standards, the University supports academic integrity through academic policies that define academic dishonesty.
- 7.1.2 The University and its faculty expect that all students will be evaluated and graded on their own individual work.
- 7.1.3 The University recognises that students often have to use the ideas of others as expressed in written, published or unpublished works in the preparation of essays, papers, reports, theses, dissertations and publications. Students are encouraged to use anti-plagiarism software as a 'plagiarism protection' and learning tool.
- 7.1.4 The University expects that both the data and ideas obtained from any and all published or unpublished material will be properly acknowledged and sources disclosed including proper citations when work is copied or paraphrased. (cf. Appendix A)
- 7.1.5 Failure to follow this practice constitutes plagiarism.
- 7.1.6 The University, through the availability of plagiarism-detection software, specifically Turnitin.com, desires to encourage responsible student behaviour, deter plagiarism, improve student learning and ensure greater accountability amongst students.
- 7.1.7 Plagiarism-detection software uses proprietary search technology to check assignments against Internet resources, proprietary databases and previously submitted student assignments.

### **7.2 Policy**

7.2.1 The University's Policy on the Use of Plagiarism-Detection Software will be published in all undergraduate and graduate programme Student Handbooks (or equivalent).

7.2.2 Faculty who wish to use plagiarism-detection software in their course(s) must comply with the requirements set out in this Policy.

7.2.2.1 "Use" is defined as member of faculty submitting students' assignments to plagiarism-detection software themselves and/or faculty members requiring students to submit their papers to plagiarism-detection software before papers are graded.

7.2.3 In the courses in which members of faculty intend to use plagiarism-detection software they must communicate this to the students in the course syllabus. The course syllabus should include:

7.2.3.1 A notice that plagiarism-detection software will or may be used for all student papers in the course:

#### Sample Statement

*In this course you will be required to submit some material in electronic form. When this is required, it will be noted. The electronic material will be submitted to Turnitin a plagiarism-detection service to which AKU subscribes. This is a service that checks textual material for originality. It is increasingly used in universities around the world. A page describing the plagiarism-detection software the University's reasons for using it are attached.*

7.2.3.2 A notice to students that the work they submit to plagiarism-detection software will become part of the plagiarism-detection software database;

7.2.3.3 A statement that if the student objects to having his or her paper(s) submitted to the student papers database of plagiarism-detection software, that objection must be communicated in writing to the instructor at the beginning of the course. The paper(s) will then be run through plagiarism-detection software excluding the student papers database, thus omitting the depositing of the paper(s) into that database.

7.2.4 Students who are advised of the use of plagiarism-detection software in a particular course, as set out above, are deemed to agree, by taking the course, to submit their papers to plagiarism-detection software for "textual similarity review."

7.2.5 Students at all times retain the copyright in their work. Moreover, plagiarism-detection software protects students' privacy because it does not make students' papers available to outside third parties. Students should be advised of this.

- 7.2.6 In the courses in which plagiarism-detection software will or may be used, students should be provided with instruction and/or resources about what plagiarism is and how to avoid it.
- 7.2.7 Where the results of a plagiarism-detection software originality report may be used to charge a student with academic misconduct, the student must be notified of the result of the report, and the student must be given an opportunity to respond before any disciplinary penalty is imposed. The date, time, and results of such a meeting should be documented. A hard copy of the original plagiarism-detection software originality report must be retained.

## APPENDIX A

### 1.0 Definitions

#### 1.1 Plagiarism

Plagiarism is defined as the submission or presentation of another person's thoughts or words or software, in whole or in part, as though they were your own. Any quotation from the published or unpublished works of other persons must, therefore, be clearly identified as such by being placed inside quotation marks, and students should identify their sources as accurately and fully as possible.

##### 1.1.1 What does this mean?

- When writing an assignment, you must use your own words and thoughts.
- When you use another person's exact phrasing, you must distinguish the text or material taken from that source from your own (i.e. through the use of quotation marks or an indentation).
- When you use another person's thoughts or ideas, though you may not be directly quoting them, you must both acknowledge that these are not your own and reference the original source (i.e. through a footnote or other appropriate form of reference).
- If you are paraphrasing what another person has stated, you must use completely different language, essentially re-writing it. Altering a sentence or paragraph slightly is neither appropriate nor adequate. And remember, paraphrases still require a reference notation.
- Each instructor has specific expectations for how students are to acknowledge sources in their courses. These are often explained in the course outline or in class. You are encouraged to ask questions if you do not understand what your instructor expects of you when it comes to acknowledging sources used in course work or assignments.
- The work you do for a course must be unique to that course. Submitting an assignment that has already been graded in another course constitutes plagiarism unless you have sought and obtained the permission of the instructor in whose course you are currently enrolled.
- If you are unsure whether or not to reference a source, err on the side of caution and do so anyway, as the sanctions for plagiarism may be quite severe.

##### 1.1.2 Why is this important?

The main purpose of a university is the pursuit of knowledge and scholarship. This requires the integrity of all members of the University community. As a student at the Aga Khan University, you are expected to practice intellectual honesty and to fully acknowledge the work of others by providing appropriate references in your scholarly work. Scholars do not take credit that is not earned. Academic dishonesty is destructive to the values of

the University, not to mention unfair to students who pursue their studies honestly.

## 1.2 Research Misconduct

The University's *Policy on Research Misconduct* states that "Misconduct in research is defined to include any one or more of the following acts:"

- 1.2.1 Fabrication and / or falsification of research related data or in reporting research outcomes.
- 1.2.2 Plagiarism in all research related matters including publications, appropriation of another person's ideas, processes, results, outputs or words without giving appropriate credit.
- 1.2.3 Inappropriate use of others' intellectual property (without reference or acknowledgment).
- 1.2.4 Denial of individual rights such as authorship to collaborative partners in research publications.
- 1.2.5 Non-compliance with Institution's policies on 'conflict of interest', 'intellectual property rights' and 'authorship guidelines'.
- 1.2.6 Deliberate misuse of institutional or sponsor's funds for financial gains.
- 1.2.7 Wilful failure to honour an agreement or contract with the funding agency to perform certain tasks.
- 1.2.8 Publishing any data or results that are against the internationally accepted general principles of research and scholarly activities.
- 1.2.9 Deliberate destruction of one's own or others' research data or records or research related property.
- 1.2.10 Making use of any information in breach of any duty of confidentiality associated with the review of any manuscript or grant application.