



# E-Content

Instructional Media Centre  
Maulana Azad National Urdu University  
Gachibowli, Hyderabad - 32  
T.S. India

## Subject / Course - Research

Paper : Research & References

Module Name/Title : Using Turnitin, UGC Guidelines Related to Plagiarism



### DEVELOPMENT TEAM

CONTENT	Dr. Akhtar Parvez
PRESENTATION	Dr. Akhtar Parvez
PRODUCER	Web Lecture by Dr. Akhtar Parvez



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## Academic Misconduct in Research and Publications

### 1. Introduction

As defined by the Merriam-Webster dictionary, the term ethics means the discipline dealing with what is good and bad and with moral duty and obligation, a set of principles of conduct governing an individual or a group professional ethics (“Ethic,” 2017).

Though every person who is in the early stages of his research career or is a seasoned academician/researcher, is supposed to know the ethical conduct in research and publications. It has been observed that a large number of people do not have clarity about issues related to ethics in academic writings. There are various kinds of academic misconduct involved in rendering author details, simultaneous submissions etc. The US National Science Foundation in its report on New Research Misconduct Policies, defined three types of research misconduct viz., fabrication, falsification, and plagiarism (Fischer, 2001). Fabrication means making up of results and reporting the same, falsification is manipulation of research data/material in such a way that the research is not accurately represented. The act of using another person's words or ideas without giving credit to that person is an act of plagiarizing something (“Merriam Webster Learner’s Dictionary,” 2017). Citation<sup>1</sup> brings transparency and validation to one’s research but researchers sometimes intentionally ignore giving proper citation or appropriate credit to the original source. This is also known as *citation amnesia*, the *disregard syndrome*, and *bibliographic negligence* (Garfield, 2002). Sometimes, it is difficult to identify whether researchers knowingly ignored citing the original work or did not have sufficient knowledge of the work which already existed. Since plagiarism can even happen accidentally, one needs to be more careful while using the ideas/concept/content of other researchers and must ensure the necessary credit has been given to the works of other researchers. However, information which is common like rain falls from clouds, sun rises from the east and sets in the west, Mahatma Gandhi was killed by Nathuram Godse etc. do not need citation. Plagiarism is cheating and academic dishonesty.

Chatterjee feels that though most adults acquire a sense of right/wrong or acceptable/unacceptable during their early stages of lives, moral development is a life-long process.

Though the editors or reviewers can easily identify the instances of academic misconduct, the technology has also helped the academic community in knowing the similarity in various content. Hence, it is stated that every researcher must ensure that necessary credits have been given to the works of others used by him/her.

In a recent case, Springer had withdrawn an article by three Indian scientists on plagiarism charges, 14 years after publication of their article (“Three scientists caught in plagiarism row, top publisher retracts article after 14 years,” 2016). In another incident, it was alleged that 3 teachers of Rajasthan university had plagiarised from a research paper of former director of Geological Survey of India (“Rajasthan University hit with plagiarism; 3 teachers face heat,” 2013). Some of the other allegations of plagiarism were levelled against the head of an IIM (Mohanty, 2012) IISER Thiruvananthapuram (“Science Journalist Alleges Plagiarism by Director of IISER Thiruvananthapuram,” 2017) and University of Delhi (Ghosh, 2014).

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<sup>1</sup> Citation is the method of informing readers that certain material/information/data in one’s work has come from another source. Citation is helpful to those readers who want to study/know more about the idea/concept used in one’s writing. There are various styles of citing sources including APA (American Psychological Association), MLA (Modern Language Association), Chicago, Harvard, IEEE etc. The in-text citation is brief information whereas the detailed information like author, title, publisher, date of publication, etc. gets included in the reference/bibliography.

## 2. PLAGIARISM

At the time when lakhs of pages are being uploaded on the internet and incidents of plagiarism are on the rise, it is important that the issue of plagiarism is discussed in detail. In this context, let's discuss various issues like literally copying, authorship, paraphrasing, submissions etc.

### *2.1 Literal Copying*

Literal copying is one of the forms of plagiarism involving reproduction of someone else's work word for word, in whole or in part, without citing the original source. In such cases, the researcher must ensure that quotation marks are put around the text taken from other sources. It is suggested that instead of waiting for the article to get completed and then giving citations, citation should be given as and when any text is taken from some other source.

### *2.2 Paraphrasing*

Paraphrasing of someone else's text in one's own words without acknowledging the source is also considered as plagiarism. Paraphrasing is done to include the ideas/text/information from some other source to one's own document by changing the language. In such cases, care must be taken to ensure that the meaning of the original source is not changed and the source is properly cited. Without due acknowledgment, paraphrasing will be construed as plagiarism.

### *2.3 Recycling of Text*

In cases where the author has published a paper and is using portions of his previously published paper in another paper he or she intends to publish, reference of the previous work must be provided of by the author. Hence, scholarly credits must be given to all contributors for higher level of transparency, reproducibility and robustness.

### *2.4 Authorship*

An author is a person who makes substantial intellectual contribution to any research or study. Listing and sequencing of authors is an indication to the readers about the contribution of researchers to the intellectual work. However, there have been several cases when the authorship is deliberately misrepresented. The International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE) states that authorship credit is to be given when there is substantial contributions to conception and design, or acquisition of data, or analysis and interpretation of data; drafting the work/article or revising the content; and, final approval of the article for publishing (Albert & Wager, 2003). During the preparation of the above guidelines by ICMJE, it was revealed that a junior researcher was deliberately omitted from the authors list. It was also witnessed that a sponsoring company wanted the inclusion of a person's name as author who had no contribution to the work. There have been several cases in the past where either the reporting officer of a researcher or his/her guide has deliberately omitted the name of a deserving researcher. In a newspaper article, an academic associate of a premier institution complained that one of the professors did not give due credit to her for papers she worked on (Gautam, 2016). "The writer of a review article found her name replaced with that of her boss, because she was on maternity leave when the final version was submitted" (Albert & Wager, 2003).

Three types of authorship are considered unacceptable ("Ethics in Research & Publication," 2012), viz, Ghost authors, who contribute substantially but do not find place in the authors list; Guest authors, who make no visible contribution, but are listed as authors so that the

chances of publication increase; and Gift authors, whose contribution is based solely on a tenuous affiliation with a research study.

Generally, authorship disputes arise due to lack of proper communication among the authors. Before the start of any research project, the authors should preferably sit together and decide about the responsibility of each of the persons and put it in black and white (Albert & Wager, 2003).

### *2.5 Conflict of Interest*

“A conflict of interest exists when professional judgment concerning a primary interest (such as patients' welfare or the validity of research) may be influenced by a secondary interest (such as financial gain)” (“Author Responsibilities—Conflicts of Interest,” 2012). The document further states that even perception of conflict of interest will be considered as important as actual conflicts of interest. A document by Elsevier states that “when an investigator's relationship to an organization affects, or gives the appearance of affecting, his/her objectivity in the conduct of scholarly or scientific research, a conflict of interest is said to occur” (“Ethics in Research & Publication,” 2012).

Conflict may exist either due to financial or personal relationship. An example of financial relationship could be that an individual having financial stake in a news channel hires an agency to analyse TRP of his own TV channel. Similarly, conflict of interest will exist if an editor of a journal prefers to get the review of his friend's research paper by the author's relative.

Elsevier (“Ethics in Research & Publication,” 2012) further recommends that an individual should make full disclosure about a relationship that “could constitute a conflict of interest—even if the person doesn't believe it affects their judgment—should be reported to the institution's ethics group and to the journal editor to which a paper is submitted”.

### *2.6 Simultaneous Submission*

Simultaneous or duplicate submission means that an author submits a paper to more than one journal at a time. As long as the review process is on and the author does not get any communication from the editor, he/she must avoid submitting the paper to other journal. Similarly, in cases where the author translates a paper in to some other language and submits the same to a journal for publication, complete disclosure should be made to the journal's editor.

## **3 Conclusion**

As more and more information is being uploaded on the internet every minute, plagiarism and other unethical practices is on the rise. This may be due to the ignorance and casual approach on the part of students and researchers about the understanding of issues related to authorship, paraphrasing, citing of sources, reference styles, submissions etc. Librarians and information managers have an opportunity of playing an important role in publicising the ethical publishing practices by organising workshops and awareness sessions in collaboration with the academic community of their organisations.

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