

Official Memorandum of Action – MOA-15/08 Plagiarism Definition and Resource Recommendations

Name of Council/Committee:
Ad Hoc Plagiarism Committee

Meeting Dates:
25 November 2015

Implementation Date:
Upon Administrative Approval

RECOMENDATION:

The Ad Hoc Plagiarism Committee recommends that WMU adopt the following universal definition of plagiarism:

Definition

Plagiarism is the use of someone else's language, ideas, or other material without making the source(s) evident in situations where there is a legitimate expectation of original work. Plagiarism does not occur when efforts to promptly identify sources by making source use apparent to the audience of the submitted material are obvious. Plagiarism may not necessarily include mistakes in citation style.

A legitimate expectation of original work exists for numerous circumstances, including (but not limited to): scholarly writing, technical presentations and papers, conference presentations and papers, online discussion postings, grant proposals, patents, book and other manuscripts, theses and dissertations, class assignments, artistic works, computer code, algorithms, and other creative works.

This definition applies to the entire WMU community, which includes all faculty; students; staff; visiting faculty, scholars, and administrators; and any other person governed by the academic research and other policies of the university.

31 July 2015

Kim Ballard, Chair, Ad Hoc Plagiarism Committee

Date

Approve
Comments:

Disapprove

Return to council/committee

C. Dennis Simpson, Faculty Senate President

Date

Approve
Comments:

Disapprove

Other action

Timothy J. Greene, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

Date

Approve
Comments:

Disapprove

Other action

John M. Dunn, WMU President

Date

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Background

The charge to The Faculty Senate's Ad Hoc Committee on Plagiarism included 1) review the state of WMU's general policies on plagiarism, 2) determine how we can use our policies related to plagiarism to support our strongly held core value of truth-seeking in scholarship, and 3) draft a universal definition of plagiarism that would apply to the entire WMU community. We have completed our work and now offer our recommendations.

Recommended Resources

To educate individuals about plagiarism and how to avoid it, it is recommended that WMU provide these resources:

- A set of best practices on source use in scholarly and creative activity to assist the WMU community in understanding the issues of plagiarism (disseminated via a website).
- A set of workshops based on best practices and the above definition of plagiarism. These workshops should include:
 - A workshop for those who want to learn how to more effectively use source material.
 - A workshop for students who have been found responsible for plagiarism.
 - A workshop for faculty, staff, and administrators who want to learn how to help students engage more effectively with sources in their field while acknowledging different disciplinary expectations for ethical source use.