CODE OF CONDUCT ON PLAGIARISM LEIDEN UNIVERSITY

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**LEIDEN UNIVERSITY CODE OF CONDUCT ON PLAGIARISM**

**Plagiarism**

On these pages, Leiden University will explain its views on plagiarism, how it is defined, and what consequences may be faced by students who commit this offence.

Generally, plagiarism is understood as presenting, intentionally or otherwise, someone’s elses words, thoughts, analyses, argumentations, pictures, techniques, computer programmes, etc. as your own work - including generated texts or programming codes by software such as AI software without indicating the source. This includes not only 'cutting and pasting' digital sources such as encyclopaedias, digital magazines without inverted commas and reference.

Most students will understand that cutting and pasting is not allowed without mentioning the source of the material, but plagiarism has a wider meaning. This also applies to presenting AI software-generated text or programming code - as by ChatGPT - as your own text in an exam or thesis , without proper citation of the source. Paraphrasing someone else’s texts, e.g. by replacing a few words by synonyms or interchanging some sentences is also plagiarism. Even reproducing in your own words a reasoning or analysis made by someone else may constitute plagiarism if you do not add any content of your own; in so doing, you create the impression that you have invented the argumentation yourself while this is not the case. The same still applies if you bring together bits of work by various authors without mentioning the sources. Plagiarism is the act of copying data or sections of text from others in a thesis or other work without citing the source.

The use of language models such as ChatGPT offers all kinds of new possibilities for creating texts. Realise that if you do this and present it as your own work, it will be considered fraud. Therefore, use ChatGPT in your studies only when the lecturer approves it and when you mention it.

**Quoting sources**

Plagiarism is always a violation of someone else’s intellectual property rights. Obviously, each discipline advances by building on the knowledge and understanding gained and published earlier. There is no objection at all if you refer to previous work and quote it while mentioning the source. It must, however, remain clear where existing knowledge ends and where you start presenting the results of your own thinking or research. As long as you are not capable of contributing to the discipline by adding something essential to what others have already found, it is misleading and therefore wrong to pretend you have reached that level. It is very important for both the teacher and the student to have a correct impression of the knowledge, understanding and skills of the latter.

**Internet texts**

The rules concerning plagiarism apply to all data sources, not just books; extracts from internet pages may not be used without mentioning the source either. Contrary to what some people may think, internet texts are not public property; it is equally important here that you never present someone else’s work as your own.

**Dos and don’ts**

To help you to avoid committing plagiarism or related offences, we indicate below some dos and don’ts.

1. When copying someone else’s texts, pictures, graphs, etc., including texts generated via software such as AI software, obey the rules set out by your department, for example, in the thesis regulations. As a rule, you should generally put the text between quotes. In certain cases, a clearly different lay-out may be used.. Always mention their author and origin, using one of the common or prescribed ways to indicate references.

2. If you want to reproduce someone else’s thoughts, considerations, ideas, etc., in your own words without using literal quotes, make unambiguously clear who is the source of these ideas and avoid giving the impression they may be attributed to you

3. Be even more cautious when copying texts from the internet. Take Wikipedia as an example: the author is usually unknown, but the article may well be plagiarised, in part or in full. In general, avoid copying texts from unknown authors, even if you mention the source you used. Also, texts generated via AI software, such as ChatGPT, you cannot just copy as your own.

4. When you partially copy texts, be careful not to change their meaning by leaving out sentences or parts of sentences, or by turning them around, etc. If you do not have the original version of a text and therefore must rely on a reproduction by someone else, make this clear as well; if it turns out the original author has been quoted incorrectly, it will then be clear who made the mistake.

5. If others have contributed to your work, for instance by carrying out experiments, preparing illustrations, etc., you should mention this too. This does not apply to advice and comments from your supervisor, nor if someone proofreads your text for style, grammar and spelling errors. In some cases, relevant rules are set out in departmental regulations.

6. In some cases, even citing your own work may be considered plagiarism (sometimes called ‘autoplagiarism’). When you largely copy a paper you have produced for a prior assignment and then submit it again for another assignment, you deliver only one performance instead of the

required two. This will not always be considered problematic, but you should discuss it with the lecturer involved.

7. Strictly speaking, composing a thesis, for example, largely from acknowledged quotations does not result in plagiarism. Yet, few teachers will accept your paper if your contribution is limited to cutting and pasting texts. After all, teachers will hold you to the learning objectives of a unit of study. Moreover, very long quotations may violate copyrights. If work by others in its entirety is essential for your paper, then refer to it, possibly with a short summary of its contents, without quoting from it.

8. If a paper or thesis was written in co-operation between several students, make clear, as far as possible, who authored the various parts.

9. In principle, the same set of rules applies to copying computer programmes. Using standardised procedures that are common to many applications, there is no question of plagiarism; in such cases, the original author is often unknown. It is a different matter if you copy the underlying idea or the approach of a whole programme, even if it is developed somewhat differently. When comparing it to ordinary language, the use of words and common sentences is not plagiarism, but copying whole paragraphs or the underlying ideas and thoughts is.

**Combatting plagiarism**

Plagiarism is a form of fraud and is therefore an offence. For some time now, the University has been taking active steps to combat plagiarism. Computer software is often used to analyse papers and theses. If plagiarism is proven, the relevant Board of Examiners will, as a rule, impose penalties. Their severity will depend on the seriousness of the offence, and may be influenced by previous infringements. The heaviest penalty that may be imposed is exclusion from all examinations for one full year. This might mean that you would have to wait for a year for your thesis to be marked; as a consequence, you cannot graduate during that year. The penalty may also relate to just one or a few examinations, or may apply for a shorter period.

The University of Leiden that considers plagiarism a serious offence for which severe penalties may follow.

These Code of conduct comes into effect on 1 September 2023.

Established by the Executive Board on 11 July 2023