

# **PLAGIARISM AS A CURRENT PHENOMENON IN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN REPUBLIC OF NORTH MACEDONIA**

**Mirvet Sela<sup>1</sup>, Shkurte Luma-Osmani<sup>1\*</sup>, Agon Memeti<sup>1</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>*Faculty of Natural Sciences and Mathematics, University of Tetova, Republic of North Macedonia*

<sup>\*</sup>*Corresponding author e-mail: shkurte.luma@unite.edu.mk*

---

## **Abstract**

The phenomenon of plagiarism and its prevention in higher education becomes more important issue in the contemporary academic community, which represents a generally growing approach. A very important issue in the plagiarism discussion that is often overlooked is that it can have significant adverse effects in every academic institution. But unlike most European countries, Balkan universities are also faced with another urgent problem - their academic staff dishonesty.

The paper discusses the treatment of this occurrence in different legislation in the Republic of North Macedonia, the measures that have been taken, as well as its handling in higher education institutions rules and regulations. The context, the forms, the detection and its consequences, investigation of the plagiarism in the academic institutions of our country and most importantly its avoidance were categorized. The summary of this paper shows that our country needs professional improvements to increase the academic performance in education.

**Keywords:** *Plagiarism, Higher Education, Legislation*

---

## **1. Introduction**

The word plagiarism for most people is unusual, but 90% of people have (at least once in their life) done it with the full meaning of the word. Plagiarism means copying, with or without intent, someone else's work. This is a form of deception and if you do this you have committed a legally punishable offense. Recent statistics in the educational sector show that nearly 90% of all students have plagiarized something at least once and most have done it multiple times. If brought into light this could cause assignment or detention in lower education and may lead to heavy penalty/ extension of semesters/ or even expulsion in higher education (Wikipedia, n.d.) (Plagiarism, n.d.).

About plagiarism, scientists have given different definitions, but the Oxford Dictionary defines this term as: "The practice of taking someone else's work or ideas and passing them off as one's own" (Oxford Dictionaries, 2019). The plagiarism word comes from the Latin word "plagium" meaning robbery (Merriam Webster, n.d.). It also defines plagiarism as:

- Stealing others themes/ technology/ ideas/ words and report either verbally or in writing as one's own.
- Extension of an idea/ product from an established source with credibility.
- Theft in literature and arts.
- Without giving required credits/ permission make use of others production.

## **2. History of Plagiarism**

Most of the religious texts were authorless and were freely copied and incorporated into later works. Even the word scholarship meant demonstrating mastery of the ancient greats. This behavior changed during the Renaissance when original scholarship became more respected and individual accomplishment was recognized in many more fields than it had been previously. This started when painters began signing their works. By the mid-1600s, accusations of plagiarism and stealing ideas were common in every creative field including the sciences (K.R., 2011).

The plagiarism issue is not new, yet the ease of access to electronic materials through the Internet has always been a concern among the academic community. However, there is no direct evidence that students electronically make copy-paste copying since this issue has never gone to court, but as a problem exists. It is worth pointing out that training on this issue is very important for learning, teaching, and assessments in general.

*What about images, videos, and music?*

Using an image, video, or piece of music in a work you've produced without getting permission or without quoting the appropriate source you did a plagiarism. The following activities are very common in today's society. Mostly popular, they still account for plagiarism. Copy of multimedia elements (especially pictures) from websites of your work, creating a video by using other video clips or using the music of the same. Performing another person's music (e.g. cover). Of course, these situations are very challenging to determine whether or not copyright infringements have been violated. For example:

- A photograph or a copyrighted image (example: Using a book cover to present or advertise on a website).
- Recording a video and using a background artist's music.
- Mixing some images, music, audio, and creating a video.

To avoid plagiarism in these cases it is suggested to avoid copyrighted work as much as we can or cite the resources, we have received (Plagiarism, 2017).

## **3. Types of Plagiarism**

Plagiarism may appear in various forms, but all of them constitute a violation of copyright. Here are some examples of what constitutes plagiarism:

- When someone presents a work as his when in fact someone else has created it (the real author is unknown).
- When someone presents a foreign act in his name (full plagiarism).
- When someone borrows any text (or part of any text) and does not make the source known (partial plagiarism).
- When someone translates a text (or any part of it) from any foreign language and does not indicate the source, then presents it as if it were his (plagiarism of translation).
- When someone borrows part of any foreign text and makes minor changes to it (paraphrase) without quoting the source (paraphrasing plagiarism).

- If someone borrows any piece of foreign text, even if they paraphrase it, but do not indicate the source at the right place, hiding it in the bibliography or in any other footnote (concealed plagiarism).
- When someone presents one piece of work (or any part of it) to different examinations or events (self-plagiarism) (Bowdoin, n.d.).

Of the most common forms of plagiarism on the Internet is partial plagiarism, i.e. the borrowing of foreign texts without mentioning the source, which is also, called copy & paste plagiarism. This type of plagiarism is usually done to drive people to think that the text belongs to the person who borrowed it. However, it may sometimes happen because of the jealousy that those who plagiarize feel towards the author or the web site in which the author works, not wanting to give them the recognition which could make their names and works more famous. Whatever the case, plagiarism is and will always remain despised, regardless of its forms (Penlighten, n.d.).

### **3.1 How to detect Plagiarism?**

Detection of plagiarism is the process of finding stolen parts in a document. The widespread use of computers and widespread internet development has made it easier to copy the work of others. Most cases are found in academic institutions, where these documents are essays or reports, however, plagiarism can be found in almost every area, including novels, musical pieces, design, and code (Wikipedia, n.d.).

Plagiarism detection can be manual or with adequate software. Manual disclosure requires conscientious efforts and excellent memory and is impracticable when many documents need to be compared. Software-assisted detection enables us to collect certain documents and give us real-time results.

#### *Plagiarism detection through free online tools*

Use free online applications that do not require registrations to check the work electronically. Google offers a host of apps called "plagiarism checker" that allow you to enter the desired text and detect plagiarism. Through these apps you can see which parts of the text are copied and not like some other programs that simply say "This article / text / content is copied". However, that free software's are usually with limited access.

#### *Plagiarism and Turnitin*

Plagiarism services such as Plagiarism and Turnitin are becoming more and more popular for all teachers who inform their students that any writing work will be analyzed and results will be given for the percentage of copying. Obviously, a budget should be set for this purpose, since the money spent tends to increase the quality of teaching in academic institutions.

#### *Try the poor man's plagiarism scanner — Google*

Another way of detecting plagiarism is to try the poor plagiarism scan - Google. In this way, we need to look at all those static-implicit phrases that we are looking for in Google to find the right resources (Wikihow, 2019).

#### **4. Contract Cheating**

An extreme form of plagiarism, known as contract cheating includes students paying someone else to do their work for them. Often the buyer will choose the seller who offers to complete work for the lowest price (Clarke & Lancaster, 2006). In our country, one can freely find online announcements on social media regarding different diploma thesis or seminar papers that are sold online, as illustrated in the figures below:



**Figure 1.** Diploma theses sold online

Unlike years ago, where the commitment of students to prepare a master's degree was great, today its value has faded. Diploma topics in every branch can be easily purchased with just one message, as the internet has infinite announcements about this service. According to an interview made from the journalist team of the TV emission KOD (TV, 2013), those online sellers are true and their prices vary from 100 to 500 euros, depending on the request. Also, there is a recording that displays that a seller offers a proposal idea for a Master thesis in 15 pages for a price of 4.000 den (65 €). We're not in shopping, but just a click away on social networks that understand how easy it is for a Master thesis or any kind of paper to be bought. This phenomenon is present in our country and more broadly and it is more noticeable during exam terms: in January, June, and September. Buying theses is an unethical act in every society. The best solution for this problem would be to establish a system that would control the quality of academic work and find suitable software, and it should be asked of the teacher to supervise the affairs of students who receive diplomas.

#### **5. Plagiarism in the Universities of North Macedonia**

On March 2012 the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia has launched a software that reveals plagiarism in scientific and seminar papers, master's and doctoral dissertations as well as textbooks. It has special statistical methods and algorithms to search the text and determine its originality (Government of NM, 2012). As per the Ministry of Education and Science information, 29,638 documents have been submitted in their database until November 2017, most of them were master thesis (16,143), and followed by seminar papers (7,088). In 139 documents there was founded a 99% match, and in 32 documents was found a 90 % match of plagiarism, as illustrated in Tables 1 and 2 (Fakulteti, 2017).

**Table 1.** Number and types of documents received at the Ministry of Education in North Macedonia

<b>Document type</b>	<b>Number of the documents</b>
<b>Seminar Papers</b>	7088
<b>Books</b>	233
<b>Master Thesis</b>	16143
<b>Scientific Papers</b>	478
<b>PhD Thesis</b>	2061
<b>Other documents</b>	1353
<b>Diploma Thesis</b>	2282
<b>Total</b>	<b>29638</b>

**Table 2.** Percentage of plagiarism of the processed documents

<b>Percentage of plagiarism</b>	<b>Number of the documents</b>
<b>0.00</b>	2337
<b>10.00</b>	685
<b>20.00</b>	123
<b>30.00</b>	44
<b>40.00</b>	21
<b>50.00</b>	20
<b>60.00</b>	16
<b>70.00</b>	8
<b>80.00</b>	15
<b>90.00</b>	32
<b>99.00</b>	199
<b>Total</b>	<b>3500</b>

In North Macedonia so far, there hasn't been a case in which any scientist got demoted from the scientific title. However, the Ministry of Education and Science will soon launch such a campaign, focusing on all scientific titles of science workers at universities and those who have benefited from scientific titles at state, private and foreign universities.

*Professors do not consider the software results*

According to the most professors, the plagiarism system, in which university professors control the papers of students, Master and PhD thesis, requires repairs. Macedonian university professors say that it is not at all functional and the main problem is that it works with a very simple mechanism as it only checks the main parts of the paper. Some of them claim that do not believe in the results of the software that examines the papers but continue to test in the same just because it is mandatory (Fakulteti, 2017).

According to the Law on Scientific Research, the software plagijati.mk is a compulsory check for all master or doctoral theses, which must be submitted by the respective mentors. Although the software will show the percentage of plagiarism of the paper, again, the final decision will be taken by the subject professor and the responsibility for it will be his (Fakulteti, 2017).

### **5.1 How to avoid Plagiarism**

Many students try to understand plagiarism, but they do not know how to avoid it. They need the right training at the right time. Indeed, before the students begin to create different seminars or topics in the first years of study, they must undergo a kind of training in which they can be briefed in detail about plagiarism, forms, and evasion. This training should be carried out using examples, case studies, exercises, etc.

Knowing the fact that students are grown and living in the world of information, it is very difficult to avoid plagiarism as the work is completed very quickly and easily, however, at least institutions are exempt from their moral and legal responsibility. It is very easy to find information in any area, but it is not always easy to get that information and integrate it into our work without plagiarism. According to (Writecheck, n.d.), each of us has to follow six steps during the execution of any work in order to "get rid of" plagiarism.

1. *Paraphrase* - If you found a material that is excellent for your work, read it and try to summarize it with your own words. Make sure that the text you have found does not copy more than two words within a line. If you copy more than two words in a row, then you should write the quotation.

2. *Cite* - Quotation is one of the most effective ways of avoiding plagiarism. Follow document instructions (APA, IEEE, Harvard, etc.) used by your educational institution or other institutions. The citation usually includes the addition of the author or authors and the publication date or similar information. The quote is really very simple.

3. *Quoting* - When quoting a source, use the citation exactly as it looks. This process requires time. The censure should be done correctly for shambling plagiarism charges.

4. *Quoting Citations* - Quote quotation and quotation have their similarities and differences. Quoting means adding a number of pages or a paragraph number if the content was taken from the internet.

5. *Citing Your Own Material* - If some of the materials you are using in your work are used by you in your current classroom, in a previous one, or anywhere else you have to cite yourself. Treat text just as someone else wrote it. It may sound weird but the use of the material you used before is called self-plagiarism and is not acceptable.

6. *Referencing* - One of the most important ways to avoid plagiarism is to include a reference page or pages of works cited at the end of your study. This information is very specific and includes the author, publication date, title and source, carefully follow the instructions for this site (Writecheck, n.d.).

## **5.2 Consequences**

There are many convictions for people who have committed or commit plagiarism, each of which is extremely severe and negatively affecting the career and academic future of the student who has done it. At the same time, it may result in fines and penalties. These consequences also damage other groups; other students and academic institutions. Of course, the biggest consequences are for the student, but at the same time the image of the academic institution. There are also legal issues for the student who has committed this offense, especially in relation to copyright and copyright infringement. Typically, these cases are small and focus on financial punishment and so are kept in the civil court (Scan My Essay, n.d.). The problem is that students today face not only the growing pressure of persistent temptation for plagiarism but also the potential for plagiarism that is increasingly available through the internet - for these reasons' plagiarism is on the rise.

## **5.3 Legal Consequences of Plagiarism**

There are also legal consequences for students plagiarizing the content of another author. This is because a plagiarist student may have been in breach of copyright laws, especially for a student who pretends to have created his own. An author has the legal right to sue a plagiarist in court. At worst, plagiarism can be a criminal offense and is legally dealt with but this is more important in the journalistic and publishing industry. Regarding the author's laws, in particular, students should take great care to avoid plagiarizing the work of other authors, as they must be aware that they may end up in court (Scan My Essay, n.d.).

Taking into consideration issues that come out of plagiarism phenomena we have analyzed several rules and regulations within the Republic of North Macedonia.

The **Law on Higher Education** of the Republic of North Macedonia (Ministry of Education and Science, 2018), does not mention the phenomenon of Plagiarism in any of its articles at all.

Based on the **Law on the Scientific and Research Activities**, (North Macedonia Assembly, n.d.) regarding Databases for scientific-research activity, article 54, states that:

*“To monitor the scientific and research activity in the Republic of North Macedonia, The Ministry provides conditions for the establishment and provision of:*

- *Databases for scientific-research institutions*
- *Databases for scientific researchers*
- *Database for doctoral thesis*
- *Base for checking plagiarism of master's theses, specialized experts' papers and seminar papers”.*

This article indicates that all kind of papers, including the doctoral, master's thesis or specialist work, is obligatory to be checked in the database for plagiarism, at least 30 days before the defense of the same. Meanwhile, the student's seminar work must be entered in the database, at least 10 days before the assessment of the seminar work.

The **Law on Copyright and Related Rights** (North Macedonia Assembly, 2016), among others regulates the authors' rights over their copyright works, as well as the exercise and protection of copyright and related rights and the validity of the law. In the article 3 is mentioned that:

“(1) *A copyright work, within the meaning of this Law, is an intellectual and individual creation in the field of literature, science and art, expressed in any manner and form.*

(2) *A copyright work shall be, in particular:*

1. *A written work (book, paper, article, handbook, brochure, treatise and other works of the same nature);*
2. *A computer program, as a written work;*
3. *A spoken work, (lecture, speech, address, and other works of the same nature);*
4. *A musical work, with or without words;*
5. *A dramatic work, dramatic-musical work, choreographic work and a work of pantomime;*
6. *A photographic work and a work created in a process analogous to photography;*
7. *An audiovisual work (cinematographic work and other work expressed in moving images);*
8. *Works of fine art (painting, drawing, print, sculpture, etc.);*
9. *Works of architecture,*
10. *Works of applied art and design; and*
11. *A cartographic work, plan, sketch, technical drawing, project, table, plastic work and other work of identical or similar character in the domain of geography, topography, architecture and science.*

Article 17 of the same Law gives explanation that “(1) *The author, within the meaning of this Law, shall be a natural person who has created the copyright work*”, whereas article 19 states that “(1) *The copyright in a work created in collaboration of two or more persons shall belong to all those persons (co-authors)*”.

Regarding protection of copyright, the Article 159 says that “(1) *Copyright and related rights shall enjoy criminal, civil and misdemeanor protection, (2) Criminal protection of copyright and related rights shall be carried out according to the provisions of the Criminal Code and the regulations on criminal procedure*”.

So, how does the **Criminal Code** (North Macedonia Assembly, n.d.) defend the author rights is described in the paragraph of Violation of an author's right and related rights, article 157,

“(1) *A person who in his own name or in the name of another unauthorized publishes, shows, reproduces, distributes, performs, transmits or in some other way unauthorized encroaches upon the author's right or some related right of another, respectively author's work, performance, or object of related right, shall be punished with a fine, or with imprisonment of up to one year.*

(2) *A person who commits the crime from paragraph 1 through a computer system, shall be punished with imprisonment from six months, up to three years*”.

The last part of this paper contains the University of Tetova rules and regulations regarding Plagiarism, explaining as well the measurements that are taken to avoid this phenomenon.

Firstly, we have analyzed the Statute (Senate of the University of Tetova, 2016) of The UT. This document stands as the highest legal confirmation of the institution. In accordance with the **Statute**, in the section of Types of disciplinary violations, article 351, states that “*The most serious violations are considered:*

- *Plagiarism*
- *Falsification of teachers signatures, respectively of the University bodies in the Student Index or any other official evidence, as well as falsification of the invoice, financial account and similar*”
- *Unauthorized use of audio and video recording equipment for copyright work, including connected mobile phones by the students during the period of lectures, exercises and interactive learning*



▪ *Unauthorized interferences in the university (faculty) information system (web pages, electronic files and alike)*”.

As regards the types of disciplinary measures that can be taken for the violation of the obligations, the following disciplinary measures may be imposed upon a student:

- *Warning;*
- *Public warning;*
- *Exclusion - applies to the academic year in which the warning was pronounced.*

*If the disciplinary violation has been conducted for teaching purposes (lectures, exercises, continuous and final evaluation) by giving a disciplinary action, the student may be denied for submitting the exam or mid-term exam in the relevant subject in the following exam period”.*

Article 252 mentions that the “*Scientific Research activity of employees is carried out through:*

- *Undertaking the decision-making responsibilities and tasks on research programs, projects, analyzes, expertises, or application activity.*
- *Individual work and research”.*

As related to the **Rulebook** (Senate of the University of Tetova, 2006) on determining the working relations and the principles for arranging the working relations of teachers and associates who perform educational, scientific and artistic activity at the University of Tetova, article 9, “*For severe disciplinary violation is considered: stealing, lying, forgery, damage or unauthorized use of assets and property of the university”.*

Article 10 of the same rulebook cites the measurement that shall be taken in case of violation of these rules. “*The Disciplinary Commission shall adopt the following measures in accordance with the provisions of this Rulebook:*

1. *Written warning*
2. *Last warning*
3. *Deduction of the monthly salary from 10% to 15%*
4. *One year salary increase prohibition*
5. *Prohibition on promotion to a higher position for up to three years*
6. *Acquisition of responsibilities from the workplace*
7. *Termination of employment relationship”.*

Based on the **Code of Ethics** (Senate of the University of Tetova, 2018) of the UT, article 5, Ethical organizational behavior, states that: “*The University is making special efforts against the ill-treatment and immoral use of other achievements (plagiarism), against unethical manipulations and similar actions unworthy of science”.* Whereas according to article 5.3, ethical behavior and responsiveness towards work and the institution, “*It is unauthorized the appropriation of other people's research results, nor their improper use, in the spirit of the worldly applied ethical dogma within scientific and professional research, and the presentation of the results”*, and in the same article it is also noted that “*It is unacceptable forgery and plagiarism in the work of no member of the academic or the university community”.*

## 6. Conclusions

Plagiarism is a crime - this is a fact and is punishable by any law or regulation, whether in the Republic of North Macedonia or anywhere else in the world. Measurements to prevent plagiarism must be urgently taken, either to educate people about what plagiarism is, why it is wrong and how to properly cite resources. Or another solution would be the use of detection software that can accurately clean cases of duplicate content before delivery. There are many reasons why you should avoid plagiarism. You are enrolled at a university in order to learn to speak, to express your thoughts, not just to reproduce or repeat the thoughts of others. It is not necessary for you to be an original thinker, but you must become independent - learning to critically evaluate the work of others, compare different arguments and draw your own conclusions.

## References

- [1]. Anon, n.d. Avoiding Plagiarism, Berlin, Freie Universitat
- [2]. Bowdoin, n.d., [Online] Available at: <https://www.bowdoin.edu/dean-of-students/judicial-board/academic-honesty-and-plagiarism/common-types-of-plagiarism.html> [Accessed 8 February 2019].
- [3]. Clarke, R. & Lancaster, T., (2006). *Eliminating the successor to plagiarism? Identifying the usage of contract cheating sites*, Department of Computing, University of Central England,; s.n.
- [4]. Education Committee., n.d. [Online] Available at: <http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/edc/goodpractice/about/> [Accessed 2 February 2019].
- [5]. Fakulteti, (2017). [Online] Available at: [https://www.fakulteti.mk/news/17-11-20/univerzitetските\\_profesori\\_nezadovolni\\_dali\\_softverot\\_na\\_mon\\_navistina\\_lovi\\_plagijati](https://www.fakulteti.mk/news/17-11-20/univerzitetските_profesori_nezadovolni_dali_softverot_na_mon_navistina_lovi_plagijati) [Accessed 15 January 2019].
- [6]. Government of NM, (2012). [Online] Available at: <https://vlada.mk/node/2181> [Accessed 10 February 2019].
- [7]. Guardian, n., (1986-2005). s.l.: November 24 1986, March 10 1997, July 11 1997, November 22.
- [8]. K.R., V.e.a., (2011). Plagiarism- history, detection and prevention. *Hygeia: journal for drugs and medicines*, 3(1), pp. 1-4.
- [9]. Mallon, T., (1989). *Stolen words: Forays into the origins and ravages of Plagiarism*. South Tryon(Charlotte): Ticknor and Fields Publications.
- [10]. Merriam Webster, n.d. [Online] Available at: <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/plagiarism> [Accessed 10 February 2019].
- [11]. Ministry of Education and Science, (2018). *Law on Higher Education*. Skopje: Ministry of Education and Science.
- [12]. North Macedonia Assembly, (2016). *Law on Copyright and Related Rights*. :of the Republic of North Macedonia.
- [13]. North Macedonia Assembly, n.d. *Law on the Scientific and Research Activities*.:Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia.
- [14]. North Macedonia Assembly, n.d. *The Criminal Code: The Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia*.
- [15]. Oxford Dictionaries, (2019). [Online] Available at: <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/plagiarism>
- [16]. Paola Brown, (2019). [Online] Available at: <https://www.mesacc.edu/~paoih30491/ArgumentsQuoteSummarizeParaphr.html>
- [17]. Penlighten, n.d. [Online] Available at: <https://penlighten.com/different-types-of-plagiarism> [Accessed 15 March 2019].
- [18]. Plagiarism, (2017). [Online] Available at: <https://www.plagiarism.org/article/what-is-plagiarism> [Accessed 10 March 2019].
- [19]. Plagiarism, n.d. [Online] Available at: [www.plagiarism.org](http://www.plagiarism.org) [Accessed 15 March 2019].
- [20]. Scan My Essay, n.d. [Online] Available at: <https://www.scanmyessay.com/plagiarism/consequences-of-plagiarism.php> [Accessed 20 March 2019].
- [21]. Senate of the University of Tetova, (2006). *Rulebook*. Tetovo (North Macedonia): University of Tetova.
- [22]. Senate of the University of Tetova, (2016). *Statute of the University of Tetova*: University of Tetova.
- [23]. Senate of the University of Tetova, (2018). *Code of ethics*, Tetovo (North Macedonia): University of Tetova.
- [24]. TV, C., (2013). *Balkan Investigative Reporting Network and the CODE TV Emission* [Interview] 2013.
- [25]. Wikihow, (2019). [Online] Available at: <https://www.wikihow.com/Detect-Plagiarism>
- [26]. Wikipedia, n.d. [Online] Available at: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Plagiarism\\_detection](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Plagiarism_detection) [Accessed 13 February 2019].
- [27]. Wikipedia, n.d. [Online] Available at: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Plagiarism> [Accessed 15 March 2019].
- [28]. Writecheck, n.d. [Online] Available at: <http://en.writecheck.com/ways-to-avoid-plagiarism/> [Accessed 20 February 2019].