Graduate Research iThenticate Procedure

Section 1 - Purpose

Purpose

(1) This Procedure specifies the procedure for:

a. the submission of text-based research outputs by Graduate Research (GR) students (including but not limited to: research proposal, draft manuscripts and theses prior to examination) to iThenticate;
b. the assessment and interpretation of iThenticate similarity percentages and originality reports by Principal Supervisors and Research Masters Supervisors; and
c. the management of potential Plagiarism in the research outputs of GR students.

(2) This Procedure supports the [Higher Degree Research Thesis Preparation, Submission and Examination Policy](#).

Scope

(3) This Procedure applies to all:

a. Graduate Research students enrolled at Macquarie University;
b. Supervisors as defined in the [HDR Supervision Policy](#); and
c. other Macquarie University academic and professional staff providing academic and / or administrative support to GR students.

Section 2 - Policy

(4) Refer to the [Higher Degree Research Thesis Preparation, Submission and Examination Policy](#).

Section 3 - Procedure

Responsibilities and Required Actions

Flowchart

(5) There is an HDR iThenticate Procedure Flowchart available for this Procedure.

Academic and Research Integrity

(6) All researchers (including but not limited to GR students and their supervisors) are responsible for adhering to the principles of academic and research integrity. Roles and responsibilities of researchers in maintaining and managing academic and research integrity are specified in the [Academic Integrity Policy](#), the [Macquarie University Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research](#) (Macquarie University Research Code) and its accompanying standards. The appropriate use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (GAI) in research is specified in the [Using Generative AI in Research Guidance Note](#).

Plagiarism Management Framework

Initial Training in Academic Honesty

(7) Commencing GR students are required to undertake the Graduate Research Induction offered on-line by Macquarie University. As part of this program, a module on academic integrity must be completed.

Preliminary Assessment using iThenticate During Confirmation of Candidature

(8) At the time of Confirmation of Candidature (CoC), or equivalent, students are required to submit their research proposals to their Principal Supervisor / Research Masters Supervisor for submission to iThenticate. This tool will generate an originality report and will determine a similarity percentage based on the proportion of the proposal that is matched to internal or external sources.

(9) The Principal Supervisor / Research Masters Supervisor must assess the similarity percentage and the originality report generated in iThenticate and use their academic judgement to determine whether the text-matches indicate a problem with originality that needs to be addressed.

(10) There are no standard or ideal maximum or minimum similarity percentages applicable across all research outputs and disciplines. Even a document with a low overall similarity percentage could contain plagiarised text that needs to be further scrutinised or addressed.

(11) When the similarity percentage and the originality report indicates instances of text-matching for the proposal submitted for the CoC, or equivalent, the Principal Supervisor / Research Masters Supervisor must discuss the extent and nature of the matches with the student and specify the next stages of dealing with the matter.

Text-Matching Outcomes

(12) If the text-matching is deemed low to minor, or appears to be inadvertent / unintentional due to commonly used standard phrases or errors such as poor paraphrasing, the instances of text-matching can be addressed with the student and the proposal then re-submitted to iThenticate. The final version of the proposal must then be forwarded with the CoC, or equivalent, paperwork to the Departmental Research Training (RT) Director / Masters of Research (MRes) Advisor, or nominee, and to the Faculty for approval.

(13) If the text-matching is deemed to be medium overlap with previous work and / or suggestive of a problem with the originality of the writing, the student will be counselled by the Principal Supervisor / Research Masters Supervisor, and directed to further training material about appropriate incorporation and acknowledgement of the ideas and words of others. A written record of the counselling provided to the student should be kept by the Principal Supervisor / Research Masters Supervisor. The student will then be asked to rewrite their proposal prior to resubmission to iThenticate. Pending resolution of any minor text-matching, the proposal must then be forwarded with the CoC or equivalent paperwork to the Departmental RT Director / MRes Advisor or nominee and then to the Faculty for approval.

(14) If the text-matching is deemed to be major (or continues to be medium after initial counselling was provided) the Principal Supervisor / Research Masters Supervisor will inform the Departmental RT Director / MRes Advisor, or nominee, who will refer the matter to the Associate Dean, Research Training and Performance (RTP) of the Faculty (Research Integrity Advisor), or nominee, or in cases where a conflict of interest may exist an alternative Associate Dean, RTP, or nominee. It is at the discretion of the Associate Dean, RTP, or nominee, to determine if the case requires referral to the Research Integrity Office. Any referral should be accompanied by a record of prior counselling provided to the student regarding text-matching (where applicable).

(15) Cases referred to the Research Integrity Office may be assessed as a potential breach of the Macquarie University Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research and may result in a research integrity investigation in accordance with

the [Macquarie University Research Code Complaints, Breaches and Investigation Procedure](#) and / or the [Student Conduct Procedure](#).

(16) If a serious breach of the [Macquarie University Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research](#) is substantiated the student may be subject to disciplinary action which may include having their candidature and / or scholarship terminated.

Submission of GR Thesis

(17) In accordance with the [Higher Degree Research Thesis Preparation, Submission and Examination Policy](#), students must submit their research thesis to their Principal Supervisor / Research Masters Supervisor for submission to iThenticate. This tool will generate an originality report and will determine a similarity percentage based on the proportion of the thesis that is matched to internal or external sources. The Principal Supervisor/ Research Masters Supervisor will assess the similarity percentage and originality report using their academic judgement.

Text-Matching Outcomes

(18) If the text-matching is deemed low to minor, or appears to be inadvertent / unintentional due to commonly used standard phrases or errors such as poor paraphrasing, the instances of text-matching can be addressed with the student and the proposal then re-submitted to iThenticate and the final version sent forward to the Departmental RT Director / MRes Advisor or nominee for endorsement.

(19) If the text-matching is deemed to be medium overlap with previous work and / or suggestive of a problem with the originality of the writing, the student will be counselled by the Principal Supervisor / Research Masters Supervisor and Departmental RT Director / MRes Advisor, or nominee, and asked to rewrite sections of their thesis prior to resubmission to to iThenticate. A record of the counselling provided to the student should be kept by the Departmental RT Director / MRes Advisor. Pending resolution of any minor text-matching, the thesis will be forwarded to the Faculty for approval. If the text-matching persists as medium, the thesis will be treated as having major text matching.

(20) If the text-matching is deemed to be major (or continues to be medium after initial counselling) the Principal Supervisor / Research Masters Supervisor will inform the Departmental RT Director / MRes Advisor, or nominee, who will refer the matter to the Associate Dean, RTP (Research Integrity Advisor) of the Faculty, or nominee, or in cases where a conflict of interest may exist an alternative Associate Dean, RTP or nominee and to the Research Integrity Office. This referral should be accompanied by a record of prior counselling provided to the student regarding text-matching (where applicable).

(21) Cases referred to the Research Integrity Office will be assessed as a potential breach of the [Macquarie University Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research](#) and may result in a research integrity investigation in accordance with the [Macquarie University Research Code Complaints, Breaches and Investigation Procedure](#) and / or the [Student Conduct Procedure](#).

(22) If a serious breach of the [Macquarie University Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research](#) is substantiated the student may be subject to disciplinary action which may include having their candidature and / or scholarship terminated.

Section 4 - Guidelines

(23) Nil.

Section 5 - Definitions

(24) The following definitions apply for the purpose of this Procedure:

    a. Plagiarism means adopting or reproducing the work or ideas of another person, whether intentionally or not, and presenting this as one's own without clearly acknowledging the source of the work or ideas.

    b. Graduate Research output means any record that communicates or makes available the findings of Graduate Research. A research output may be in any form (hardcopy, electronic or other) of academic or public communication of the research from any stage of the research process (e.g. including but not limited to: Graduate Research proposals or thesis chapters, conference papers, reports, datasets or journal articles).

    c. iThenticate means a text-matching tool which enables a comparison of Graduate Research Outputs with an extensive database of existing research and academic literature and varied web sources in order to identify potential instances of Plagiarism.

Status and Details

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