



Information for students on the use of the anti-plagiarism service Turnitin

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In order to combat the plagiarism of texts, Trento University has installed an anti-plagiarism service, named Turnitin. This service helps the teaching staff to verify that students' written work, at undergraduate, doctoral, and master levels is authentic, the result of their own creative contribution, and that citations and bibliographic references are entered correctly.

Ethics prohibits the partial or total attribution to oneself of other people's words, ideas, research, discoveries and images, in any language in which these are officially presented, as well as the omission of the citation of sources.

"The Code of Ethics of Trento University", "the Code of Honour for the students of Trento University" and "The Charter of Rights and Duties of Students of Trento University" include, among other specific conducts, the prohibition of plagiarism of the works of others.

The "Code of Ethics of Trento University", which is valid for the entire university community, expressly states that "All research is based on the correct recognition and correct attribution of intellectual results. University students must therefore avoid any form of plagiarism or improper use of other people's intellectual activity. [...] With regard to the drafting of theses and papers, as well as when carrying out examinations, it is the specific responsibility of individuals to respect these rules, avoiding all forms of plagiarism and dishonest conduct. It is also the duty of all university members to report any case of plagiarism or improper use of intellectual activity of which they have become aware".

The "Student Honour Code of Trento University", which is valid for all students enrolled in any university course, states that "plagiarism involves the improper reproduction of the intellectual activity of others in the preparation of any kind of paper, a lack of reference to the intellectual activity of others in the paper's sources, and the undue appropriation of ideas, concepts, presentations, data and any other information reported in written or oral form, including digital formats, without having expressly and correctly indicated its source or without having obtained express consent from the author / inventor".

The "Charter of Rights and Duties of Trento University Students" specifies students' rights, outlining required duties and standards of behaviour, according to various national and international laws. In point 12, lett. V) it is explicitly stated that each student "must not plagiarize the works of others. The student must be aware that improper reproduction or improper appropriation of another's intellectual activity constitutes plagiarism. When



making use of other people's ideas, concepts, presentations, data and any other information reported in written or oral form, including digital formats, for the purpose of drafting documents of any type, the source must be correctly cited and, in the case of unpublished material, the express consent of the author / inventor must have been previously acquired in compliance with copyright".

All the documents mentioned above can be found at the page "[The Rights and duties of doctoral students](#)".

Part of the rights and duties of doctoral students involves the prohibition of any form of plagiarism or improper use of the intellectual activity of others, given that any research activity is based on the correct recognition and correct attribution of intellectual results.

The copyright law (L. 22 April 1941, no. 633) protects intellectual works of a creative nature. This legislation grants authors a series of exclusive rights of economic use of their work (distribution, communication, reproduction, translation, etc.) and moral rights (right to authorship and integrity of the work, etc.).

Art. 70 of Law 633/1941 states that "1. A summary, a quotation or the reproduction of passages or parts of a work and the communication of these to the public are free if used for criticism or discussion, within the limits justified by these purposes and provided that their use does not constitute competition to the economic use of the work. If made for teaching or scientific research purposes, their use must be used for illustrative and non-commercial purposes. [...] 3. The summary, quotation or reproduction must always be accompanied by the mention of the title of the work, the name(s) of the author(s), the publisher and, in the case of a translation, of the translator if this appears on the work to be reproduced".

Furthermore, the law of 19 April 1925, n. 475, aimed at combating the false attribution of the work of others by any person taking a degree, diploma, certification, or applying for state employment or a public position, states in art. 1 paragraph 1 that "anyone taking examinations organised by a public authority for the conferral of a degree or any other school or academic qualification, for a teaching or professional training qualification, or for the issue of a diploma or license, who presents dissertations, studies, publications, technical projects and, in general, works that are the work of others as his or her own, is punished with imprisonment from three months to one year [...]".

Whoever writes a university thesis, or any other paper for the purpose of taking educational exams or for research purposes, must be aware of their own and others' rights, but also of the obligations that ethics and the law impose. This means that in exams and in the writing of an undergraduate, doctorate or master's thesis, attention must be paid to the way in which the discussion is structured and the text is drafted, as well as to the



insertion of citations, data and images in order not to risk disciplinary, administrative, civil and criminal sanctions set out by law.

It should be noted that files containing the written texts which are uploaded to the Turnitin platform (also through the Turnitin plug-in on Moodle) enter the databases of the Turnitin LCC company, provider of the plagiarism service, in purely anonymous form and are subsequently made available to all their clients.

In this way, the need to protect the personal data of students and teachers who use the anti-plagiarism service is reconciled with that of allowing a broad comparison of the writings uploaded with those texts already present in the system, in order to verify any similarities and consequently prevent plagiarism.

To this end, it is recommended not to include in texts or papers:

- Personal data¹
- Particular data² and personal data concerning criminal convictions and offences³.

Any personal data in the text must be anonymised, making sure that from reading the text it is not possible to identify any person, even indirectly.

¹ It should be noted that according to art. 4 of EU Regulation 2016/679 (Gdpr) personal data means "any information concerning an identified or identifiable natural person" bearing in mind that "a natural person can be identified, directly or indirectly, by particular reference to an identifier such as a name, an identification number, location data, an online identifier or one or more characteristic elements of the person's physical, physiological, genetic, psychic, economic, cultural or social identity".

² Particular data, according to art. 9 of the Gdpr, refers to data revealing racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, trade union membership, genetic data, biometric data intended to uniquely identify a natural person, data relating to health or a person's sexual life or sexual orientation.

³With regard to this type of data, Article 10 of the Gdpr specifies that "the processing of personal data relating to criminal convictions and crimes or related security measures on the basis of Article 6, paragraph 1, must only take place under the direction of the relevant public authority or if the processing is authorized by Union or Member State law which provides appropriate safeguards for the rights and freedoms of data subjects. Any register of criminal convictions must only be kept under the direction of the relevant public authority".



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The presence of similarities between texts does not constitute conclusive proof of the existence of plagiarism. This decision is the teacher's responsibility.

Since this service is offered through the Internet, the service provider and Trento University are not liable in the event of computer piracy involving unauthorized access and improper use of the material uploaded to the database.