Code of Practice for Staff on Plagiarism

1. The University of Birmingham expects all work carried out by its Staff to be conducted to the highest standards of integrity. It requires all those undertaking and/or contributing to academic work of any nature to adhere to the highest standards of performance and ethical conduct and embed good practice in all aspects of their work. Plagiarism for the purposes of this Code of Practice includes:

   - “the wrongful appropriation or purloining and publication as one’s own, of the ideas or the expression of the ideas (literary, artistic, musical, mechanical, etc) of another” (Oxford English Dictionary);

   - the exploitation of the ideas, work or research data of others without proper acknowledgement, whether intentional or not;

   - poor referencing of the work of others, whether through carelessness or negligence.

2. University Ordinance 3.18 requires Academic Staff, inter alia, to have “respect for the work and scholarship of others, by proper acknowledgement of their contribution, authorship or material contribution to any research and/or publication and by the avoidance of plagiarism”. The Research Code of Practice (www.birmingham.ac.uk/Documents/university/legal/research.pdf) sets plagiarism in the context of its approach to research carried out by University Staff.

3. University disciplinary procedures refer to breach of any obligation or duty, fraud, deceit, deception and dishonesty as examples of misconduct which may be regarded as amounting to gross misconduct for which the penalty, if proven, may be dismissal without notice or pay in lieu of notice. The University considers that plagiarism, where proven, may constitute gross misconduct and therefore, within the disciplinary procedure, it may constitute grounds for dismissal without notice or pay in lieu of notice.

4. Since the business of the University is the creation and communication of ideas through teaching, research and knowledge transfer and it is committed to the acknowledgement of their origins, the University also regards plagiarism as a serious breach of trust and confidence between it and the perpetrator of the plagiarism.

5. Staff who are charged with the duty of teaching the University’s Students have a particular responsibility both to exemplify to Students through their own practice, in compliance with normal custom and practice within their academic discipline, the highest standards of presenting teaching materials, and to encourage their Students to aspire to those high standards.

6. The University regards Academic Staff in particular as capable professionals who should be fully aware of the nature of plagiarism and the threat it poses to their reputation as well as that of the University.

7. In carrying out their duties for the University, members of Staff have an obligation to be vigilant and to report to their Head of School or Head of College any suspected plagiarism in relation to the work of Students they are teaching or supervising, or in relation to the work of colleagues in the University.

8. The University reserves the right to monitor the work of Staff for plagiarism by any appropriate means, including through plagiarism detection software.
9 Allegations of plagiarism will be investigated and, where appropriate, taken to a disciplinary hearing under the relevant disciplinary procedure for the member of Staff against whom the allegation has been made.

10 The University will regard as a disciplinary offence the victimization of a member of Staff who has made in good faith an allegation of plagiarism against another member of Staff or against a Student.

11 Where a member of Staff who is also a Student is alleged to have plagiarised the work of others in his/her student assignments, the allegation will be dealt with initially under the University’s Code of Practice on Plagiarism for Students, available at www.birmingham.ac.uk/Documents/university/legal/plagiarism.pdf before being considered, where appropriate, under the relevant staff disciplinary procedures. A finding of ‘moderate’ or ‘low level’ plagiarism under the student procedure will not preclude a finding of gross misconduct under the relevant staff disciplinary procedure (for the reason set out in paragraph 6 above).

12 Notwithstanding paragraph 11 above, where allegations of plagiarism arise in student assignments produced by a member of Staff who is also registered as a Student, the University reserves the right to deal with the allegations directly through the relevant staff disciplinary procedure, without recourse to the Code of Practice on Plagiarism for Students.

Approved by SPRC
November 2011