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| University of South Africa Research Ethics Committees | |
| Title | Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for managing and reporting of alleged research integrity transgressions |
| SOP No | SOP 1_Research Integrity (2020) (V1) |
| Date of approval | 13 May 2021 |
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| Pages | 28 |
| Related policies/procedures | <p>UNISA Policy on Academic Integrity (Council appr. -10.06.2017)</p> <p>UNISA Policy on Research Ethics (Council approved -15.09.2016)</p> <p>Unisa Employee Disciplinary Code (Revision approved by Council on 22 November 2013)</p> <p>Policy on Scholarly Publishing (Council approved 28 April 2014)</p> <p>Student Disciplinary Code (Revision approved by Council on 25 April 2014)</p> <p>POPI Act (No and date of Act)</p> <p>Copyright Infringement and Plagiarism Policy (Council approved 25 November 2005)</p> <p>Code of Ethics and Conduct (Council approved 30 November 2007)</p> <p>Anti-Fraud Corruption and Irregularities Statement and Policy on Prevention of Fraud, Corruption and Irregularities (19 June 2019)</p> |

1 COMPILATION AND AUTHORISATION

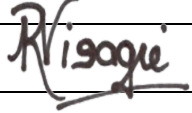
| Action | Designated person | Date | Signature |
|--------------|-------------------|------------|-----------|
| Compiled by: | Mrs. T Coetzee | 28/10/2020 | |

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| | Research Ethics and Integrity Administrator | | |
| Consulted: | <p>Prof Les Labuschagne: Executive Director: Research, Innovation and Commercialisation</p> <p>Ms Estelle Gilbert: Internal Audit</p> <p>Mr Stringy Naicker: Internal Audit</p> <p>Mr Simon Makena: Employee Relations and Wellness, Human Resources</p> <p>Mr Paul Masina, Employee Relations and Wellness, Human Resources</p> <p>Heads of Graduate Studies and Research</p> <p>URERC</p> | November 2020-April 2021 | |
| Checked by: | <p>Dr R Visagie Manager: Research Integrity</p> | 04/05/2021 |  |
| Authorised/Approved by: | <p>URERC Prof Les Labuschagne Chair</p> | 15/04/2021 |  |
| Authorised/Approved by: | <p>SCRIPCC Chair: VP: Research, Postgraduate Studies, Innovation and Commercialisation</p> | 13/05/2021 |  |

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2 DISTRIBUTION

| Department/unit | Name | Date | Signature |
|-----------------------------|---------------|-------------------|---|
| Heads of Research/ URERC | Dr RG Visagie | 23/09/21 (e-mail) |  |

3 DOCUMENT HISTORY

| Date | Version no | Reason for revision |
|------------|------------|---------------------|
| 28/10/2020 | 1 | POE |
| | | |

4 DEFINITIONS

| Definitions | Description |
|----------------------------------|--|
| Academic Integrity | Academic integrity can be defined as the meaningful and concerted effort to ensure concern for human dignity, honesty, trust, fairness, truthfulness, accuracy, respect and responsibility in teaching, research and community engagement. |
| Academic integrity transgression | Academic integrity transgression refers to conduct or omission in any teaching and learning, community engagement or research endeavour that violates the values associated with academic integrity and includes any act that is designed to give an unfair or undeserved academic advantage, also associated with academic fraud. |
| Complainant | A "Complainant" means any person making any allegations or discourses of alleged research transgressions against one or more Unisa employees (as set out in section 1 of the Protected Disclosures Act, 26 of 2000) |
| Corruption | Is a dishonest activity in which a person abuses his/her position of trust to achieve some personal gain or advantage for themselves or provide an advantage/disadvantage for another person or entity'. Anybody who accepts any gratification from anybody else or offers or gives any gratification to anybody else to influence the receiver to conduct herself |

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| | or himself in a way which amounts to unlawful or irregular exercise of any duties, commits corruption. ¹ |
| Employee (academic) | is any person permanently appointed to teach or to do research at UNISA and any other employee designated as such by the Council. |
| Employee (professional) | refers to a person: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) in which the primary function is to provide of academic, institutional or student support services and b) which requires an educational qualification equivalent to at least four years of higher education study. (The minimum qualification level must be approved by the Management Committee and must be stated in the job descriptions of such employees); |
| Formal investigation | Refers to the investigation conducted by the Student Disciplinary Section or the Human Resources: Employee Wellness Department according to the relevant Disciplinary Codes and the Internal Audit Investigation Directorate. |
| Fraud | The unlawful and intentional making of a misrepresentation which causes actual prejudice, or which is potentially prejudicial to another. |
| Independent assessment | Refers to the assessment done by the Academic Integrity Committee on request of the Human Resources: Employee Wellness Department concerning an alleged research integrity transgression of a Unisa employee. |
| Preliminary assessment | Refers to the assessment done on College/unit level as a first response to an alleged student or employee research integrity transgression to determine the legitimacy of a complaint. |
| Research Integrity | Research integrity is the active adherence to the values, ethical principles and professional standards essential for the responsible conduct in the practice of research. |
| Respondent | A “Respondent” refers to a person(s) against whom allegations or disclosures of transgressions have been made, and includes any person conducting research under the auspices of Unisa, irrespective of the source of his/her funding, field of study or nationality. It may include |

¹ **Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996** (Act 108 of 1996)

Criminal Procedure Act, 1977 (Act 51 of 1977)

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| | Unisa employees (temporary, contract of permanent) postgraduate students, undergraduate students, post-doctoral fellows, visiting researchers or students or any individual whose written work in any format were published under the name of Unisa. |
| Researcher | <p>(a) is a permanently appointed Unisa Employee and an employee on a contract of less than three years who has been tasked with conducting research as well as a valid, current Academic Associate (excluding an Emeritus Professor) and a postdoctoral fellow;</p> <p>(b) is a registered UNISA student conducting research for postgraduate degree purposes.</p> |
| Research transgressions | <p>Category 1 contraventions (minor ('naïve') contraventions)</p> <p>These contraventions are first-time, minor contraventions resulting from ignorance, lack of academic maturity and/or inaccuracy in working with and/or acknowledging information sources in academic outputs. Such cases are usually restricted to undergraduate students.</p> <p>Category 2 contraventions (less serious (moderate) contraventions)</p> <p>These contraventions refer to cases in which information sources have been dealt with in a consciously injudicious way. It includes:</p> <p>(a) repeated category 1 contraventions,</p> <p>(b) minor contraventions at a more senior academic level and</p> <p>(c) first-time minor contraventions perpetrated by postgraduate students;</p> <p>or</p> <p>(d) first-time minor contraventions perpetrated by employees.</p> <p>Category 3 deliberate (serious) contraventions</p> <p>These contraventions are major, serious infringements by students or employees in circumstances where they acted intentionally or negligently, or failure on their part to take reasonable steps to ensure that they comply with their obligations to prevent any form of academic</p> |

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| | misconduct as stipulated in this policy. These contraventions pose a significant legal risk to the university, its image and branding. |
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5 Abbreviations

| Abbreviation | Description |
|--------------|---|
| AIC | Academic Integrity Committee – this is a university-wide structure responsible for independent assessments of alleged research integrity transgressions by employees on request by the Human Resources: Employee Wellness Department. |
| CAIC | Unisa follows a decentralised approach and each college will establish College Academic Integrity Committees (CAICs) which will be reporting to the Senate Academic Integrity Committee. |
| REIA | Research Ethics and Integrity Advisor |
| RIO | Research Integrity Office. This office falls under the Directorate Research Support that is part of the Department of Research, Innovation and Commercialisation. |
| SAIC | Senate Academic Integrity Committee. |
| SOP | Standard Operating Procedures. |
| SRIPCC | Senate Research, Innovation, Postgraduate Studies and Commercialization Committee The SRIPCC acts on behalf of and reports to Senate. |

6 PURPOSE

The purpose of the Standard Operating Procedure (hereafter referred to as SOP) is to provide Unisa employees and students with a framework for the management, assessment and reporting of alleged student and/or employee research integrity transgression cases in a way that upholds good governance practices.

7 SCOPE

The SOP applies to Members of Executive Management, Heads of Postgraduate Studies and Research, the office bearers of the College Academic Integrity Committees, the Unisa Academic

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Integrity Committee, Unisa employees, students and relevant stakeholders involved in dealing with research integrity complaints, assessments or formal investigations. Allegations of research transgressions can be made against a very broad range of individuals, from postgraduate students to senior academic employees. The approach in dealing with alleged research transgressions are guided by, but not limited to, the Policy on Academic Integrity, Unisa Policy on Research Ethics, the Disciplinary Code of Unisa Employees, Student Disciplinary Code and the Policy on Copyright Infringement Plagiarism and Anti-Fraud, Corruption and Irregularities Statement and Policy on Prevention of Fraud, Corruption and Irregularities.

8 PRINCIPLES

Unisa's attitude and procedure in dealing with allegations of research transgressions are set out in the Policy of Academic Integrity and the Policy on Research Ethics, underpinned by the values of fairness, confidentiality, human dignity and integrity.

a. Fairness

- i. The Respondent has a right to be informed of the allegations against him/her by the Executive Dean and is presumed innocent until a full investigation in accordance with the Policy on Academic Integrity and/or disciplinary codes for Unisa employees or students proves otherwise.
- ii. The Respondent has a right to be heard and to put forward his/her case in terms of the *audi et alteram partem*² principle during the preliminary assessment on College level and the formal disciplinary investigation (this does not apply to the independent assessment done by the AIC as the latter depends solely on the assessment of documents).
- iii. The Respondent will be responsible for payment of his/her own legal fees.
- iv. The Respondent has a right to due and fair processes and must be allowed to ask questions; present information/evidence in his/her defence; seek advice or representation from a permanent Unisa employee or recognised Union representative, and question or raise points about any information given by any witness.

² It is the principle that no person should be judged without a fair hearing in which each party is given the opportunity to respond to the evidence against them.

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b. Confidentiality

- i. All disclosed information of the assessment and consequent investigation must be kept confidential.
- ii. Any person working on the report and investigation must sign confidentiality agreements.
- iii. The Complainant's identity may only be disclosed if he/she has consented thereto in writing or orally during the investigation process.
- iv. The Respondent's identity must not be disclosed publicly before it has formally been established that he/she has breached any of Unisa's research norms and standards, unless the Respondent has consented thereto in writing, and *provided* that the Respondent's identity may be disclosed to all the relevant role-players involved in the assessment and investigation process.

c. Human dignity

- i. All role-players involved in the investigation must take care to protect the Respondent's dignity and prevent any prejudice against him/her.
- ii. The reputation of the Respondent/s must be protected during the assessment and investigative processes and particularly if the allegations are not confirmed.
- iii. The position and reputation of Complainants who make allegations in good faith, i.e. based on *prima facie* supporting evidence that a breach of research norms and standards has in fact occurred, must be protected.

d. Integrity

7.4.1 Anyone asked to participate in the assessment and/or investigative processes must display integrity, trust, impartiality and must be ethical in their conduct and sign the confidentiality agreements. Any interests of any role-player involved in this process which may constitute a potential conflict of interest or conflict of commitment must be declared to the chairperson of the relevant structure or individual responsible for the specific phase of the investigation.

9. RESPONSIBILITIES

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- a. Researchers have the primary responsibility to ensure that the research conducted in their respective disciplines will maintain research integrity by upholding the values and principles associated with research integrity.
- b. Postgraduate supervisors must encourage and promote responsible conduct of research.
- c. Unisa and College AIC chairpersons are responsible for aligning and maintaining research integrity practises and the assessment of cases of alleged research integrity transgressions with a view to differentiate between minor, moderate and serious transgressions.
- d. The College Executive Deans, in collaboration with the Heads of Research and Graduate Studies and the Research Integrity Office, are responsible to plan and implement research integrity awareness and training as set out in the Policy on Academic Integrity.

10. PROCEDURE FOR MANAGING AND REPORTING ALLEGED RESEARCH INTEGRITY TRANSGRESSIONS

The procedures for managing and reporting alleged research integrity transgressions are guided by three interrelated phases: (a) preliminary assessment, (b) independent assessment and (c) formal disciplinary investigation. Refer to the flow diagrams below, indicating the process to follow during the preliminary (Diagram 10.1) and independent assessment (Diagram 10.2) phases. Formal disciplinary investigations are informed by the Unisa Student and Employee Disciplinary Codes and fall outside the scope of the Unisa and College AICs.

When a research integrity transgression by an employee or student is suspected, a complaint can be lodged via e-mail or telephonic communication with the Head of Postgraduate Studies and Research in the relevant College, the College Research Ethics and Integrity Advisor (REIA) (if applicable) or the Unisa Research Integrity Office (RIO@unisa.ac.za). Reporting can also be done by walk in, hotline, or by e-mail to the Internal Audit Department.

10.1 Preliminary assessment (to be completed within 90 days from receipt of the complaint)

- i. All in-person complaints must be accompanied by a written complaint with supporting evidence.
- ii. The Executive Dean must be informed of the allegation made against a Respondent.

- iii. The Respondent has a right to be informed of the allegations against him/her by the Executive Dean and is presumed innocent until a full investigation in accordance with the Policy on Academic Integrity and/or disciplinary codes for Unisa employees or students proves otherwise.
- iv. The allegation needs to be referred to the Chairperson of the CAIC for a preliminary assessment by the Committee and the Executive Dean must be informed.
- v. The Policy on Academic Integrity states that corrective measures for contravening the Policy: a) should be appropriate b) relate to the degree of the contravention, and c) the relevant level of academic maturity of the person committing the contravention.
- vi. The CAIC needs to manage the process according to the principles set out in section eight above.
- vii. The CAIC assigns three (3) independent assessors that can gather and evaluate facts and information and assess whether the complaint, if proven, would constitute a breach of the Unisa Policy of Academic Integrity and related policies.
- viii. The three independent assessors and any person involved in the assessment need to sign the confidentiality agreement (see Attachment B) and their identity should be protected.
- ix. The Chairperson of the CAIC compiles a final report based on the individual assessor reports and the final resolution reached by the CAIC.
- x. The Chairperson submits the CAIC report to the Executive Dean to advise on further actions.
- xi. The possible actions that can be taken by the Executive Dean depends on the response, evidence and complexity of the case:

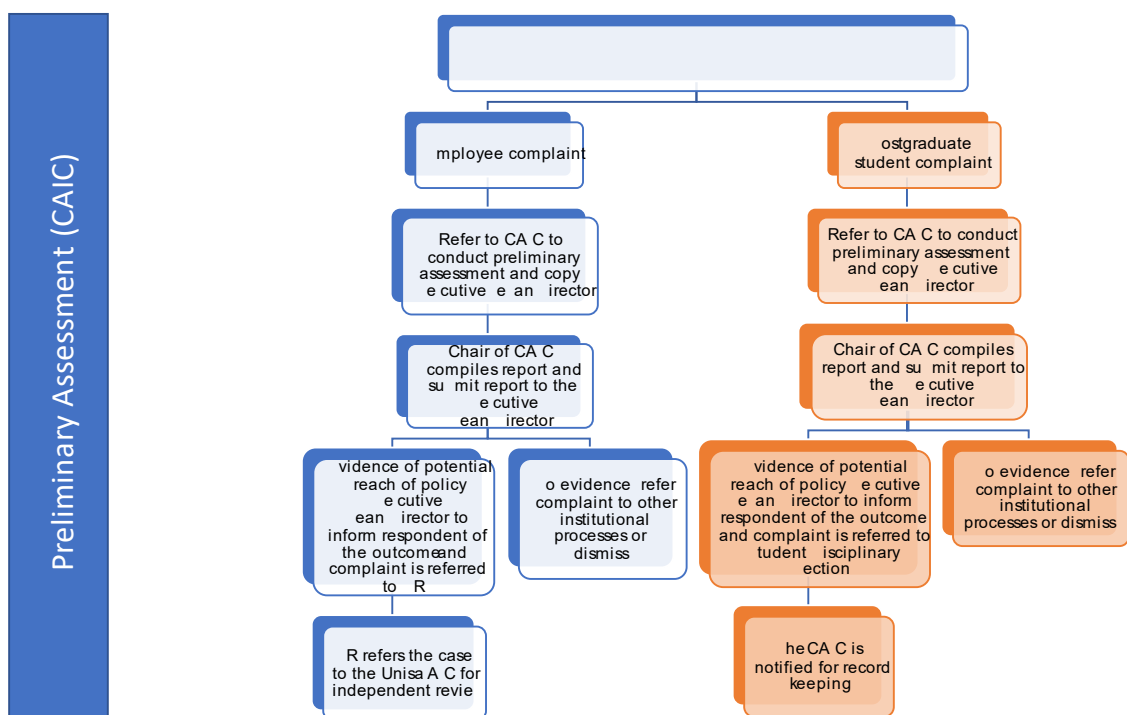
(a) Employee complaints:

- If there is evidence of a breach of policy, the Executive Dean informs the Respondent of the outcome and refers the case for a formal disciplinary investigation to the Human Resources: Employee Wellness Department (See Attachment A).
- The Human Resources: Employee Wellness Department refers the case for an independent review/assessment by the AIC.
- In the absence of evidence and depending on the nature and seriousness of the complaint, the case may either be referred, or the complaint may be dismissed.
- The CAIC and the Manager: Research Integrity of the RIO is notified for record keeping.

(b) Student complaints:

- If there is evidence of a breach of policy, the Executive Dean informs the Respondent of the outcome and refers the case for formal disciplinary investigation to the Student Disciplinary Section.
- In the absence of evidence and depending on the nature and seriousness of the complaint, the case may either be referred, or the complaint may be dismissed.
- The CAIC is notified for record keeping.

10.1 Flow diagram: Steps to follow during a preliminary assessment by the CAIC



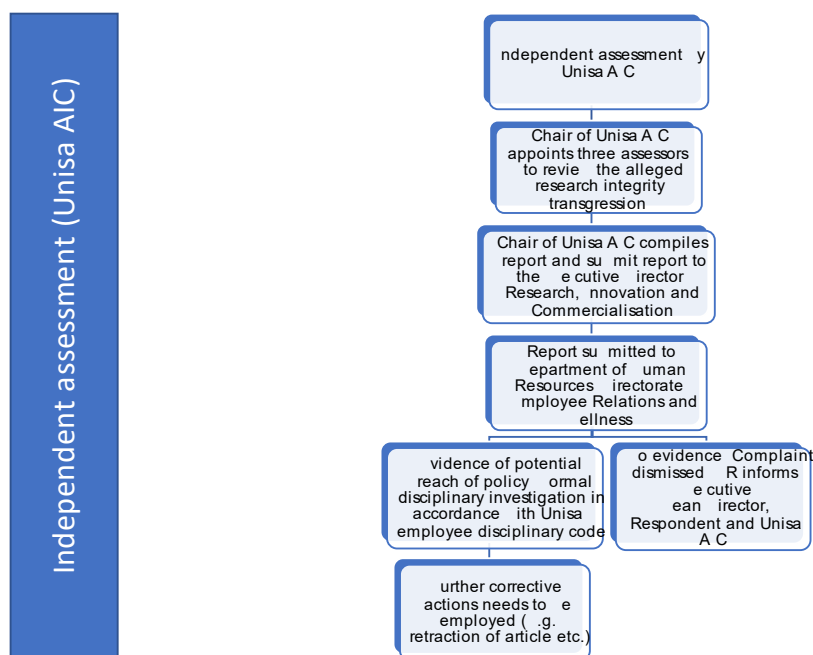
10.2 Independent assessment (to be completed within 90 days from receipt of the Complaint from HR: Department of Wellness)

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- i. If there is evidence of a breach of policy the Human Resources: Employee Wellness Department requests the AIC to conduct an independent assessment.
- ii. The chairperson of the AIC appoints three assessors to review the alleged research integrity transgression.
- iii. The appointed assessors, and all other persons involved in the assessment, need to sign confidentiality agreements and their identity need to be protected.
- iv. On receipt of the assessor's reports, the chairperson of the AIC compiles a consolidated report signed off by the Chairperson of the AIC and the Executive Director: Research, Innovation and Commercialisation.
- v. The final signed report is submitted to the Human Resources: Employee Wellness Department.
- vi. Further corrective actions should be employed by the Human Resources: Employee Wellness Department in collaboration with the RIO e.g., retracting to correct the public record after the disciplinary process has been concluded.

10.2 Flow diagram of the independent assessment by the Unisa AIC



11 ASSESSMENT TOOL AND SAFEKEEPING OF RECORDS

To report and manage the assessment of research integrity transgression/contraventions the College will receive the complaint form required by the Human Resources: Employee Wellness

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Department (Attachment A), a proposed confidentiality agreement to complete (Attachment B) and a reporting template (Attachment C). A formal complaint form needs to be completed when there is a breach of the policy (Addendum C).

All information will be stored digitally by the RIO and documents and/or recordings must be kept for at least five (5) years based on the final decision made by the relevant Disciplinary Committee.

The documents are confidential and will not be made available to any parties unless a written request for release of such documents is approved by the Vice Principle (Research, Postgraduate Studies, Innovation and Commercialization).

12 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND DOCUMENTS CONSULTED

- UNISA Policy on Academic Integrity Council (10.06.2017)
- UNISA Policy on Research Ethics (Council approved -15.09.2016)
- Singapore Statement of Research Integrity (2013)
- UCT Policy and procedures for breach of research ethics codes and allegation of misconduct in research (2014)
- Stellenbosch University's (SU) procedure for the investigation of allegations of breach of research norms and standards, 9 May 2014
- Australia Government NHMRC and ARC (2018): Guide to Managing and Investigating Potential Breaches of the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research

Attachment A

Complaint form required by the HR: Wellness Department

Form 1

COMPLAINT FORM

(NOTE: WITH THIS FORM YOU INSTITUTE A DISCIPLINARY INVESTIGATION AND POSSIBLE DISCIPLINARY ACTION AGAINST THE RESPONDENT(S) IN TERMS OF THE EMPLOYEE DISCIPLINARY CODE, AVAILABLE ON THE STAFF WEBSITE UNDER POLICIES OF HUMAN RESOURCES. IF YOU WISH TO RATHER LODGE A GRIEVANCE, KINDLY CONSULT UNISA'S GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE ON the UNISA WEBSITE <http://staff.unisa.ac.za/>)

***FURTHERMORE NOTE:** IF YOU ARE NOT CONVERSANT IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE, KINDLY REQUEST A FELLOW EMPLOYEE OR YOUR UNION TO ASSIST YOU WITH COMPLETING THE FORM. BE ADVISED THAT THE LEGAL SERVICES OFFICES **CANNOT** COMPLETE THE FORM ON YOUR BEHALF AS THIS WOULD BE IRREGULAR)*

A. DETAILS OF THE COMPLAINANT

(the person(s) complaining)

Name: _____

Surname: _____

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Title: Prof/Dr/Mr/Ms/Adv/Rev (please encircle the correct title)

Sex: M F

Department: _____

Position: _____

Line Manager: _____

Race (for statistical purposes): Black White Coloured Indian Asian Other (Please Specify)

Contact Details: Office Number: _____

Building: _____

Campus: _____

Tel Number: Office (0__) _____

Cellular _____

Email Address: _____

B. DETAILS OF THE RESPONDENT

(the employee(s) complained against)

Name: _____

Surname: _____

Title: Prof/Dr/Mr/Ms/Adv/Rev (please encircle the correct title)

Sex: M F

Department: _____

Personnel Number: _____

Position: _____

Line Manager: _____

Race (for statistical purposes): Black White Coloured Indian Asian Other (Please Specify)

Contact Details: Office Number: _____

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Building: _____
 Campus: _____
 Tel Number: Office (0__) _____
 Cell: _____
 Email Address: _____

C. DETAILS OF THE COMPLAINT

Date of Incident: _____

Place: _____

Campus: _____

Office (if applicable): _____

WHAT WAS THE ALLEGED MISCONDUCT ? (you may tick more than one):

1. Absence from work
 State Date(s) and time: _____
2. Reporting Late for duty
 State Date(s) and Time _____
3. Absconsion
 State Dates and Time: _____
4. Abusive/Offensive Language
5. Assault
6. Fighting
7. Intimidation
8. Competing with the Employer
9. Damage to Property
10. Disclosing Confidential Information
11. Dishonesty

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Did the Respondent(s) lay a grievance against you? No Yes (If yes, shortly describe the nature of the grievance):

How would you like this matter to be dealt with by the Legal Services Offices: Disciplinary and Incapacity Enforcement?

Declaration by Complainant:

I, _____, declare that the information reflected in this Complaint is to the best of my knowledge true unless stated otherwise and that I am fully aware of the consequences of laying false charges and/or making false allegations when knowing that the allegations are false.

THUS SIGNED ON THIS _____ DAY OF _____ 20____ AT _____

COMPLAINANT

TAKE NOTE: YOU ALSO NEED THE SIGNATURE OF YOUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR BEFORE SUBMITTING YOUR COMPLAINT (UNLESS YOUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR IS THE RESPONDENT IN YOUR COMPLAINT)

Declaration by Executive Director:

I, _____, the Executive Director of _____ declare that all internal procedures in order to resolve this complaint have been exhausted and therefore I give permission that this Complaint may be forwarded to the Legal Services Offices for further investigation.

THUS SIGNED ON THIS _____ DAY OF _____ 20____ AT _____

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

PLEASE NOTE:

*Kindly scan the Complaint Form along with all supporting documents and forward same to sididtc@unisa.ac.za entering in the subject line of your email the words **'New Complaint'** or hand deliver same to **Mr Tshifhiwa Sididzha** at Office nr 11-6, Legal Services Office, 11th Floor, OR Tambo Building, Muckleneuk Campus, Telephone Number (012) 429 3670 for the attention of **Mr Martin Labuschagne, Manager: Disciplinary and Incapacity Enforcement.***

Be advised that all consultations or interviews are by appointment only.

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Attachment B

CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

I, _____ the undersigned Assessor agree to assist with the assessment of an alleged research integrity transgression of an Unisa employee.

I will, in the course of my duties as aforementioned, come into possession of certain confidential information.

This agreement will certify that, in the execution of my functions to assist in the assessment of the alleged research integrity transgression case:

1. I will treat all information contained in the alleged case presented to me in the strictest of confidence and will not reveal that information to any third party not involved in the assessment process.
2. I will not do or allow anything to be done which might deliberately compromise the interest or reputation of the University of South Africa and the alleged respondent.
3. I will not use the information contained in the alleged case documents for any reason other than for the purpose of providing assessment of the alleged case to determine if there is any legitimate case that might guarantee further investigation.
4. I will not participate in an assessment where a conflict of interest exists. Should there be doubt about an apparent conflict of interest, I will advise the requestor, who will then indicate whether participation in the assessment is permissible or not.

THIS DONE AND SIGNED AT _____ on _____

Name:

SIGNATURE

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Attachment C

Academic Integrity Transgression Assessment Report

Date:

To:

From: Academic Integrity Committee of [College]

Reference number: 2017_AIC_College XXX _ 000

Full name of student/employee:

Student/employee number:

Full name of supervisor(s) (if applicable):

REPORT ON ALLEGED ACADEMIC TRANSGRESSION:

[Identify the alleged academic transgression]

1. CASE BACKGROUND

On [stipulate date] the, Academic Integrity Committee (AIC) of the [College], received an alleged academic transgression complaint relating to XXX. [Refer to the emails or other communication received and provide a background to the case]. The AIC of the [College] acts on behalf of the College to assess alleged academic integrity transgressions in accordance with the Unisa Policy on Academic Integrity and the Unisa Student Disciplinary Code.

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The Committee consists of academic employees that are knowledgeable in the standards of academic integrity and consists of [identify the members of the AISC that engaged in the assessment].

The purpose of this report is to provide the registrar with an academic transgression opinion whether a formal disciplinary investigation can be made against XXX.

2. DOCUMENTS AND TIME LINE RELEVANT TO THE CASE

The bundle of documents relevant to the case substantiates this report³:

| Annexure No. | Document | Dated | Turnitin Match No (if applicable) | Comments |
|--------------|---|-------|-----------------------------------|----------|
| #1 | Original work | | | |
| #2 | Work that allegedly plagiarized the original work | | | |
| #3 | Any additional information relevant to the case | | | |

[List the source documents and time lines]

3. RESPONSE BY THE STUDENT/SUPERVISOR(S)/EMPLOYEE [if you discussed this with the person and/or supervisors involved, provide a summary of their response(s)]

4. ACADEMIC TRANSGRESSION ASSESSMENT

³ Provide evidence of all the source documents and the time line relevant to the case.

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The Assessment was done within the parameters of the **UNISA POLICY ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY** and the **UNISA STUDENT DISCIPLINARY CODE**. This section provides relevant information pertaining to these two documents.

4.1 RELEVANT POLICIES

4.1.1 UNISA POLICY ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

U ’ P m I dated 10 June 2017, defines an academic transgression as (p 3):

“... conduct or omission in any teaching and learning, community engagement or research endeavour that violates the values associated with academic integrity and includes any act that is designed to give an unfair or undeserved academic advantage”.

Paragraph 1 of the Addendum to the Policy on Academic Integrity notes that all *“academic activities including output, written or otherwise, submitted by employees, research associates or students are expected to be the result of the application of their own skill and labour”*. Conduct that may lead to the contravention of the Academic Integrity Policy is set out in clause 1 of the Addendum to the Policy on Academic Integrity.

The Policy defines plagiarism as (p3):

“... the appropriation of another’s work, whether intentionally or unintentionally without proper acknowledgement”.

Clause 1.4 of the Policy refers to *“wrongfulness”* and state that *“only wrongful misrepresentations will be regarded as plagiarism”*. It further provides factors that could determine wrongfulness of a misrepresentation (see Addendum to the Policy on Academic Integrity, Clause 1.4). These factors should be taken into consideration by the AICs during the assessment of alleged plagiarism cases.

4.1.2 UNISA STUDENT DISCIPLINARY CODE (ONLY APPLICABLE TO STUDENT CASES)

Plagiarism is listed as a category of misconduct in clause 1.23 of the Code. The Code set out the Disciplinary procedure.

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4.1.3 UNISA POLICY ON RESEARCH ETHICS

Paragraph 1.3 of the policy on Research ethics reflects Unisa's commitment to research integrity as follows:

“Unisa promotes high standards of scientific work and strives for excellence in research that is open to public scrutiny. Therefore, Unisa endorses the internationally accepted Singapore Statement on Research Integrity.”

The Singapore Statement underscores the link between the value or benefits of research and integrity as follows:

The value and benefits of research are vitally dependent on the integrity of research; therefore the following principles are endorsed:

- Honesty in all aspects of research
- Accountability in the conduct of research
- Professional courtesy and fairness in working with others
- Good stewardship of research on behalf of others

Academic dishonesty is defined on page 2 as the

“conduct or omission in any academic endeavour that violates the values associated with academic integrity and includes any act that is designed to give an unfair or undeserved academic advantage.”

4.1.4 UNISA RESEARCH AND INNOVATION POLICY

Paragraph 5 states:

All researchers and research associates form part of both the national and international community of researchers and, as such, adherence to certain standards of relevance and responsibility. Research is therefore carried out in accordance with relevant professional codes and internationally accepted ethical guidelines (p 8).

The importance of appropriate credits is emphasised in paragraph 6.8:

Appropriate credits should be given where data and/or information obtained from other sources, studies or publications are included. Researchers ... must refrain from engaging in plagiarism, piracy or falsification of research results. Committing any of these actions is regarded as a serious disciplinary offence.

4.1.5 UNISA EMPLOYEE DISCIPLINARY CODE

Unisa employee disciplinary code identifies the “ intentional or negligent breach of existing University policies and or procedures” as a category of misconduct in clause 3.20 of the Code.

According to Paragraph 1.4,

UNISA employees ought to conduct themselves with the highest degree of integrity and honesty in all of their dealings. This is a responsibility that is shared equally by all members of the UNISA community, namely members of the UNISA Council, Executive Management, academic and administrative employees, students and appointed contractors.

5. ACADEMIC TRANSGRESSION ASSESSMENT PROCESS

[Give a brief description of how the assessment was done, who was involved and the timeline – refer to the TOR of the AIC and consider the approach below]

The assessment was done in three phases

- a) The **first phase** of the assessment entailed a preliminary review of the case by the XXX. The aim of this phase was to confirm the criteria and parameters for the plagiarism assessment [the working definition of plagiarism, which evidence will be considered, who will engage in the preliminary assessment, how will the assessment be conducted and what the nature of the reporting will be]. Concern was given to eliminate perceived or real conflicts of interest in the selection of the members of the AIC involved in the assessment of this case.
- b) During **phase two – Independent and Peer Review by the AIC followed.**

The following criteria deduced from the policies guided the assessment:

- To what *extent does the article contain an unauthorised reproduction of the original report or fail to acknowledge the author of the original report?*
 - *What is the frequency of the duplicated passages and the nature of the source material in hand?*
- c) The **third phase** entailed **quality assurance** through another level of peer review to finalise the report. The Chairperson of the AIC engaged in a final scrutiny of the evidence

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(including a visual inspection of the source documents to ensure the accuracy of the report) in order to compile the final report.

6. FINDINGS

- The iThenticate report indicates that XXXX has a similarity index of x% with similarities from the original works of XXX

These similarities are both verbatim with similar arguments made and the evidence offered to support these arguments. There is no acknowledgement of xxx work.

7. ACADEMIC TRANSGRESSION OPINION

XXX wrongfully **misrepresented the skill and labour** that went into his research output by submitting for publication academic research output **without giving appropriate credit to information of the original sources**, thereby committing **plagiarism**.

8. CONCLUSION

[Conclude the report with a recommendation whether a formal disciplinary investigation is recommended or not]

The Academic Integrity Committee of the CHS recommends that Internal Audit submits the report to the Unisa Academic Integrity Committee for an independent assessment whether the matter should be referred to the Disciplinary and Incapacity Enforcement Section, Directorate: Employee Relations and Wellness, Department: Human Resources for further investigation guided by the Policies stipulated in section 4 of this report.

Signatures:

Head of Research and Graduate Studies

Approved by URERC on 15 April 2021

Approved by SCRIPCC on 13 May 2021

Executive Dean

Approved by UERC on 15 April 2021
Approved by SCRIPCC on 13 May 2021