

## Towards a plagiarism framework for educators

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**Abstract:**

Plagiarism has always been - and remains - one of the most ubiquitous and stubborn challenges faced in higher education. Despite regular information-drives, constantly refined policies, penalties and plagiarism-detection software, its prevalence does not seem to be declining, as shown by the extensive research done in this area. While surveys indicate that as much as 70% of students admit plagiarizing in some form during their studies, with their reasons varying from a lack of consequences to modelling others to desperation to succeed or simply a lack of academic literacy, the problem goes far deeper than that - to a worldwide 'culture of cheating' which permeates almost every aspect of society. Indeed, even many academics themselves are guilty of plagiarizing, with one study finding that almost 50% of articles published in a sample of 19 management studies journals contained some level of plagiarism according to Turnitin. Another study of over 900 academics investigated why student plagiarism often goes unreported and discovered an answer many educators might identify with... onerous bureaucracy and paperwork, as well as personal discomfort and not wanting to jeopardize their student's progression or their own teaching evaluations.

However, there is an additional barrier in dealing with this issue, especially for new academics: recognizing plagiarism in its ever-mutating forms and complexities, and knowing how to deal with it in a fair, consistent and constructive manner. This paper proposes the development of a generic framework and 'decision tree' which could assist educators in recognizing the different types of plagiarism and deciding upon a process to follow once plagiarism has been identified.

**Keywords:** Decision tree, educators, higher education, plagiarism framework.