**University of Kelaniya**

**Policy on Plagiarism and AI Detection**

## 1. Introduction

The University of Kelaniya is committed to upholding the highest standards of academic integrity and intellectual honesty. Plagiarism and the unauthorized use of artificial intelligence are serious academic offenses that undermine the principles of scholarship and original research. This policy outlines the university's framework for identifying, evaluating, and addressing these issues in academic submissions, with a particular focus on final year dissertations and postgraduate theses. The university utilizes the **Turnitin** software to aid in detecting plagiarism and AI-generated content, ensuring the originality of student work.

## 2. Definition of Plagiarism and Academic Misconduct

Plagiarism is the act of presenting another person's ideas, words, creations, or data as one's own without proper acknowledgement. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Copying text verbatim without quotation marks and citation.

- Paraphrasing someone else's work without attribution.

- Submitting work done by another individual.

- Using images, data, or research findings without citing the source.

- Failing to acknowledge collaborators in a group project.

- Submitting work generated by artificial intelligence (AI) tools without explicit permission and proper declaration.

## 3. Scope

This policy applies to all academic work submitted by undergraduate and postgraduate students at the University of Kelaniya. The procedures and thresholds detailed herein are specifically applicable to **Undergraduate Final Year Dissertations** and **Postgraduate Theses (MSc, MSSc, MA, MBA, DBA, MPhil, PhD)**.

## 4. Turnitin Similarity Report Configuration

To ensure consistency and fairness, all similarity reports must be generated using the following standard settings in Turnitin:

- **Minimum Word Count for Matching:** 12 words.

- **Exclusions:** The following sections must be excluded from the similarity check:

  o Bibliography / Reference List

  o Table of Contents

  o Acknowledgements

o Quoted material (if properly formatted with quotation marks)

## 5. Similarity Index Thresholds and Actions

The originality of all dissertations and theses will be evaluated based on the similarity index generated by Turnitin. The following table details the acceptable thresholds and the corresponding actions to be taken.

| Level of Study | Document Type | Maximum Acceptable Similarity Index | Action for Similarity Index | Action for Similarity Index Above 40% |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | **21% - 40% (Undergraduate)** | |
| **Undergraduate** | Final Year Dissertation | **20%** | The student must revise and resubmit the dissertation after consulting with their supervisor. The revised work must meet the acceptable threshold. | The dissertation will be rejected, resulting in a failing grade for the component. The case will be forwarded to the Faculty Board and may be referred for disciplinary action. |
| | | | **16% - 40% (Postgraduate)** | |
| **Postgraduate** | Thesis/Assignments (MSc, MSSc, MA, MBA, DBA) | **15%** | The supervisor must provide a strong formal justification using the university's "Justification for Higher Similarity Index" form. The justification must account for acceptable similarities (e.g., student's own prior publications, standard terminology). The | The thesis will be rejected. Resubmission is not permitted except under exceptional circumstances, which require a compelling justification from the supervisor and is subject to final approval by the University |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | thesis, similarity report, and justification will be sent to examiners for review, with the final decision resting with the University Senate. | Senate on a case-by-case basis. |
| | | **16% - 25% (Postgraduate MPhil, PhD).)** | | |
| **Postgraduate** | Thesis MPhil, PhD).) | **15%** | The supervisor must provide a strong formal justification using the university's "Justification for Higher Similarity Index" form. The justification must account for acceptable similarities (e.g., student's own prior publications, standard terminology). The thesis, similarity report, and justification will be sent to examiners for review, with the final decision resting with the University Senate. | The thesis will be rejected. Resubmission is not permitted except under exceptional circumstances, which require a compelling justification from the supervisor and is subject to final approval by the University Senate on a case-by-case basis. |

## 6. AI Content Detection Thresholds and Actions

The use of AI-generated content is strictly monitored. The following table details the acceptable threshold for AI detection and the corresponding actions.

| Level of Study | Document Type | Maximum Acceptable AI Detection Rate | Action for AI Detection Rate 21% - 50% | Action for AI Detection Rate 50% - 100% |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | |

| Undergraduate | Final Year Dissertation | 20% | The dissertation must be revised and resubmitted after consulting with the supervisor. The revised work must meet the acceptable threshold. | The dissertation will be rejected, resulting in a failing grade for the component. The case will be forwarded to the Faculty Board for disciplinary action. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Postgraduate | Thesis/Assignments (MSc, MSSc, MA, MBA, DBA, MPhil, PhD) | 20% | The thesis/assignment must be revised and resubmitted after consulting with the supervisor. The revised work must meet the acceptable threshold. | The thesis/assignment will be rejected. The case will be forwarded to the Faculty Board for disciplinary action. |

## 7. Procedure for Handling Plagiarism and AI Content

1. **Students' Responsibility:** Students are responsible for ensuring the originality of their work. They must run their dissertation/thesis through the university-provided Turnitin account and discuss the similarity and AI detection reports with their supervisor before final submission.

2. **Supervisor's Responsibility:** The supervisor is responsible for guiding the student in maintaining academic integrity and for verifying the originality of the student's work. The supervisor must review the Turnitin similarity and AI detection reports. If the similarity index exceeds the acceptable limit, the supervisor must determine if a justification is warranted (for postgraduates only).

3. **Submission:** The final submission of any dissertation or thesis must be accompanied by the first page of the Turnitin similarity report and the AI detection report, signed by both the student and the supervisor.

4. **Justification:** For postgraduate theses with a similarity index between 16% and 40%, the supervisor must complete and submit the "Justification for Higher Similarity Index" form. This form should detail reasons for the higher index, such as similarities from the student's own published work (with consent from co-authors) or necessary

technical language. No justification is permitted for exceeding the AI detection threshold.

5. **Role of the Subject Liaison Librarian:** The role of the Subject Liaison Librarian is to generate final plagiarism reports and AI-generated content reports for the verification process of the examiner.

6. Copies of the similarity and AI detection reports (and justification form for similarity, if applicable) will be sent by the Subject Liaison Librarian to the examiners for their consideration during the evaluation process.

## 8. Disciplinary Action

Cases of severe plagiarism (typically >40% similarity), high AI detection rates (51% or more), or repeated offences will be treated as academic misconduct and will be subject to disciplinary action as per the code of conduct of the university. This may include suspension or expulsion from the university.


**The Library**
**University of Kelaniya**

**Appendix A: Justification for Higher Similarity Index Form**
*(For Postgraduate Use Only)*

1. **A. Name of the candidate:**

   _____

   **b. Registration Number:** [ _____ ]

2. **Degree registered for:**  MPhil [ ]  PhD [ ]

3. **Department of study (if any) :**

   _____

4. **Board of Study:** _____

5. **Date of first registration:**  [ ][ ][ ][ ][ ][ ][ ][ ]

6. **Title of the research project:**

   _____
   _____
   _____

7. **Similarity Index Reported:** _____ %

**SUPERVISOR'S DECLARATION**

Though the similarity index is beyond the acceptable limit of 15%, it is justifiable because it includes the following:

| Category | Sources (Indicate numbers as per the similarity report) | Total Percentage Similarity (of the relevant sources) |
|---|---|---|
| **1. Student's own publications** *(Published or submitted for publication during the study period relevant to the degree sought. Written consent from all co-authors, if any, must be attached.)* | | |
| **2. Properly cited quotations** | | |
| **3. Common technical language / Standard terminology** | | |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **4. Others (please specify)** | | |
| **TOTAL JUSTIFIED PERCENTAGE** | | |

**Any other comments:** (Use additional sheets if necessary)

_____
_____
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_____

**Name of the supervisor:**

_____

**Signature:** _____

**Date:** _____