

Air University : Anti-Plagiarism Policy
(To be read in conjunction with HEC Anti-plagiarism policy 2023)

General

1. Air University Anti-Plagiarism Policy revolves around several segments related to anti-plagiarism principles, types of plagiarism, straightforward complaint lodging procedure, the composition of the University *Anti-Plagiarism Standing Committee*, grounds and *penalties of plagiarism*, the constitution of National Plagiarism Standing Committee at HEC, appellate process, etc. By introducing this policy, Air University firmly believes that its implementation would significantly enhance academic integrity and quality, thereby augmenting overall quality standards in academia and research.

2. Air University endeavours to prevent Plagiarism with a tolerance strategy while providing a thorough understanding of plagiarism and its repercussions on their academic career. Failure of knowledge can result in dismissal from the university, civil claims, and even undertakings. Air University always ensures individual intellectual rights, transparency of work and research within the allowable limits of the similarity index for all documentation within the university domain. This policy is prepared as an outflow from HEC's Anti-Plagiarism Policy 2023.

Aim

3. The aim of this policy is to provide procedures and guidelines for preventing, detecting, and dealing with plagiarism across the Air University faculties with appropriate punitive actions if deemed appropriate.

Scope

4. The University's anti-plagiarism policy applies to all academic and research activities conducted by FMs, Staff and Students/ Research Scholars. The focus is mainly on research work by students of undergraduate, postgraduate, and PhD scholars, as well as their assessments and publications. Air University uses Turnitin software to check for plagiarism. Standard Turnitin settings of Air University are available on the AU website.

OPI	Date	Page No	Signatures
QEC Directorate	4 December 2023	1/6	

Plagiarism

5. Plagiarism is defined as the copying of phrases, clauses, sentences, paragraphs, or more extensive excerpts from published or unpublished work, including lawful collaboration, without acknowledging the source. Guidelines for determining/avoiding unauthorised use of somebody else's copyrighted material from the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) are available at <https://publicationethics.org/guidance/Guidelines>. Supervisors and scholars are recommended to familiarise themselves with these guidelines.

Academic Integrity and Significance

6. The purpose of this policy is to ensure academic integrity and quality research among all stakeholders of the university. This will provide a vigilant monitoring system and detection of malpractices and plagiarism. There are three essential baseline aspects covered in this policy, which are: -

- (a) Raising awareness of plagiarism among research scholars, mentors/supervisors, and other staff involved in active research.
- (b) Establishing an institutional mechanism to educate and train stakeholders to avoid and monitor plagiarism.
- (c) Formulating a system to detect, prevent, and penalise plagiarism.

Responsibility of Supervisor

7. The principal responsibility of the Supervisor is to:

- (a) Teach students how to avoid plagiarism.
- (b) Techniques of using appropriate reference sources.
- (c) Check student research work before submitting the final thesis to QEC.
- (d) Suggest any required changes before submitting the final draft.
- (e) Co-relate the final report by QEC with their own report.

Responsibility of Academic Staff

8. Academic staff must also act quickly when plagiarism is found, ensuring that appropriate action is taken and that fair punishment is enforced when necessary. Plagiarism must not be presumed when a Turnitin originality report raises suspicion of plagiarism. The paper must be researched before being discussed with the student. The supervisor is expected

OPI	Date	Page No	Signatures
QEC Directorate	4 December 2023	2/6	

to run any manuscript of research work, whether his/her own or that of scholars, through the Institution's suitable detection procedures like Turnitin software, AU library and departmental thesis.

Responsibility of the Research Scholar / Student

9. The scholar should thoroughly understand how to write research, thesis, and dissertation. Students should ensure the following: -

- (a) The student should be well-versed in the effects of plagiarism and the consequences of such activities.
- (b) The research scholar is to submit manuscripts to plagiarism detection mechanisms present in the QEC department available at Air University.
- (c) Students must follow the AU criteria of similarity index, which should not exceed 17%.
- (d) It is the utmost essential duty of any scholar to see that they do not attempt any unfair means / old data in the research work either during experimental data collection or data analysis or report writing or publication of research articles, research journals or presentation of scientific findings in conferences.
- (e) Scholars/Students must make sure that the document they are submitting is in proper documenting style (i.e., IEEE, Chicago, MLA, APA, etc.) and is free of plagiarism.
- (f) Any source with a similarity index $\geq 5\%$ without citation needs to be revised.
- (g) Turnitin has added the ability to check the similarity of "AI-Assisted Content". As per Graduate Studies instructions, QEC is sending back all theses with an ASC higher than 19%.
- (h) In future, all reports shall be initially sent to the QEC Dept. However, all queries shall be forwarded to DD QEC only. All coordinators and HoDs are requested to follow this procedure strictly.

10. **Previously Published Research.** To avoid self-plagiarism, the mentor must give a certificate to the scholar if the scholar reuses previously published research data and publications. With permission and full consent of the supervisor, the QEC department shall request the Turnitin administrator to delete/exclude published data. The supervisor shall write

OPI	Date	Page No	Signatures
QEC Directorate	4 December 2023	3/6	

a formal letter/email to QEC to delete/exclude specific published research. The data must include the relevant email address and the document's ID.

11. **Research Work Co-authorized.** If others co-author the study work, the supervisor must acquire a consent letter from the co-author(s).

12. **Research Work Co-supervised.** They must acquire consent if the research works co-supervised by other faculty from any other institute. Both supervisor and co-supervisor agreed to conduct research work with signatures on the consent form.

Checking of Similarity Index through Turnitin Software

13. **Air University Policy.** Though the HEC allows a similarity index $\leq 19.0\%$, it is observed that the similarity indexes change rapidly during successive checking due to continuous additions in the server of Turnitin and system limitations of showing 19.5% as 19%. It is, therefore, decided to keep the similarity index to 17% to prevent any issues for the supervisor and the student. Supervisors must ensure that before sending any report, they must give a certificate of similarity index less than 17% to QEC. **Additionally, supervisors must ensure that all single sources have a similarity index $\leq 5\%$.** These steps facilitate the students/scholars to publish their work without any inch of doubt.

14. **Procedure for Checking Plagiarism.** A checklist of actions is also attached as **Appendix B'**. Following is the procedure for checking the similarity index at Air University by QEC: -

- (a) The supervisor shall check the final document and forward the document to the program coordinator If the similarity report is $\leq 17\%$.
- (b) All program coordinators must forward the final document to QEC.
- (c) The program coordinator must ensure the presence of only the following parts in the document that will be submitted to QEC.
 - 1) Title page along with the name of the student
 - 2) Title page along with student registration ID
 - 3) Title page containing Thesis title.
 - 4) Abstract

OPI	Date	Page No	Signatures
QEC Directorate	4 December 2023	4/6	

- 5) Introduction to Conclusion
- 6) Document text shall be in MS Word only.
- (d) The program coordinator's prime responsibility is to ensure that the data shared by the student is in the correct format, i.e., thesis title, spelling, name, and registration ID.
- (e) QEC shall generate the final report per HEC advised standard form within one week and dispatch it to the respective department.
- (f) QEC has added three sub-headings, i.e. AI Contents, Total Pages and QEC remarks (if there is any issue in the report) on the plagiarism document to make it a more authentic and reliable work of the student
- (g) The report's First page shall be signed by the QEC person who has checked the report and finally signed & stamped by the Director of Quality.
- (h) No student is allowed to collect their report directly from QEC. The report shall be sent to the department program coordinator through mail.
- (j) *All final documents (thesis, research paper or article), once signed by Director QEC, will be saved in the Turnitin repository so that no changes shall be made to it in the future.*

Request for the Deletion of Submission in the Turnitin Repository

15. Articles that are mistakenly added to the repository can be deleted from Turnitin software. With permission and full consent of the supervisor, the QEC department shall request that support centre Turnitin delete the submission from the repository. Once the paper ID has been deleted, Turnitin responds to the administrator. This process will take 1- 2 weeks for the deletion of submission. However, it is requested that all supervisors ensure the correct setting of the Turnitin software as per Appendix ‘A’ before checking any document.

Request for Turnitin Account

16. If any faculty member or PhD scholar requires a Turnitin account for research purposes, he/she shall follow the formal procedure and request it through email to QEC through their HOD / Dean. The email shall contain the following credentials:

- (a) Name
- (b) Designation

OPI	Date	Page No	Signatures
QEC Directorate	4 December 2023	5/6	

- (c) Department
 - (d) University Email ID
 - (e) Consent of HOD / Dean
17. Due to the limited number of accounts, QEC only provides accounts to the research supervisors.

Format of Report

18. The Quality Enhancement Cell (QEC) recently improved the plagiarism document to strengthen its veracity and validity. There are now three different subheadings: AI Contents, Total Pages, and QEC Remarks (for any issues found in the report). These additions greatly enhance the overall calibre and legitimacy of the student's work.

- (a) **AI Contents.** A thorough examination and analysis of the document's artificial intelligence-related components may be found under the AI Contents section. This feature allows for a more in-depth material analysis in keeping with modern academic norms.
- (b) **Total Pages.** By providing information on the breadth and depth of the student's work, the Total Pages subheading helps to give a more thorough perspective of the document's length. This statistic facilitates the evaluation process by providing a nuanced knowledge of the information.
- (c) **QEC Remarks.** Any problems identified in the report can be determined and documented with the help of the QEC Remarks section's introduction. This increases the document's transparency and accountability while giving the learner insightful comments.

Timetable for Departments

19. Departments/program coordinators shall share the thesis documents, list of students, their registration ID, and title of the thesis and email to the QEC Department. It is preferred that program coordinators shall email once a week to avoid any delays. QEC shall take one week to generate a similarity report, which will be shared with respective departments.

OPI	Date	Page No	Signatures
QEC Directorate	4 December 2023	6/6	

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OPI	Date	Page No	Signatures
QEC Directorate	4 December 2023	7/6	