



SOUTHERN DELTA UNIVERSITY, OZORO

DELTA STATE, NIGERIA

Senate Committee on Plagiarism and Artificial Intelligence Policies

PLAGIARISM AND ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY REGULATIONS

A Unified Regulatory, Investigative, and Educational Framework for Undergraduate Students, Postgraduate Scholars, Academic Staff, and University Researchers

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PREFACE AND INSTITUTIONAL ENDORSEMENT

Foreword by the Vice-Chancellor: Southern Delta University, Ozoro, was chartered upon the foundational pillars of uncompromised academic excellence, cutting-edge technological innovation, moral rectitude, and community transformation. Higher education achieves its societal justification only when scholarship is conducted under the strictest standards of honesty, original inquiry, and intellectual veracity. The integrity of degrees, diplomas, professorial elevations, and research publications awarded by Southern Delta University rests upon the absolute originality of the scholarship produced under its auspices.

Academic dishonesty and plagiarism are catastrophic intellectual malpractices. They erode the ethical fiber of the university community, devalue the authentic labour of honest researchers, defraud institutional benefactors and national research councils, and project false professional competence into the wider economy. In this contemporary era marked by the exponential development of generative artificial intelligence, ubiquitous algorithmic language processing, and instantaneous internet access, the traditional boundaries of authorship face profound and intricate challenges. This comprehensive manual has been developed through exhaustive consultative sessions spanning twenty-nine stakeholder groups, faculty assemblies, and university committees. It represents our solemn institutional covenant to eliminate intellectual theft while establishing an enlightened, scaffolded learning environment where true creativity and critical inquiry flourish.

SOUTHERN DELTA UNIVERSITY SENATE RESOLUTION ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

"A university that fails to police its intellectual integrity imperils its social license, producing credentialed graduates whose technical and moral capacity cannot withstand professional scrutiny. At Southern Delta University, Ozoro, plagiarism is totally abhorred in all its ramifications. No established infraction shall be shielded from formal investigation and proportionate sanction."

— Senate Ratification Resolution, 14th Regular Senate Session, October 2026.

Institutional Genesis and the Consultative Process

At its 13th Regular Session, the Senate of Southern Delta University constituted the Senate Committee on Artificial Intelligence and Plagiarism Policies under the chairmanship of Prof. Jonathan Tsetimi. The committee was tasked with reviewing existing academic integrity practices, harmonizing divergent faculty guidelines, and drafting a unified institutional policy manual that integrates emerging generative AI technologies with traditional plagiarism detection.

The Committee's work drew heavily upon extensive institutional consultations, incorporating the foundational experiences of Delta State University (DELSU), the position papers of the Faculty of Science, Faculty of Social Sciences, and Faculty of Environmental Sciences, the global benchmarking data of the Stanford Artificial Intelligence Index Report, and the ethical standards of the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) and UNESCO. The resulting policy manual represents a balanced, robust, and future-ready governance instrument.

Structural Guide to the Policy Manual

This policy document is divided into nineteen (19) comprehensive sections and four (4) statutory appendices:

Section 1: Legislative and Institutional Framework — Foundational vision, statutory authorities, institutional mandate, and universal scope. *Page 4*

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Section 3: Discipline-Specific Typologies and Professional Standards — Specialized criteria for Environmental Sciences, STEM, Computing, Fine Arts, and Social Sciences. *Page 7*

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SECTION 1: LEGISLATIVE AND INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

1.1 Preamble and Statutory Enabling Environment

Statutory Purview: The Southern Delta University, Ozoro, Law, duly enacted by the Delta State House of Assembly, empowers the University Senate as the supreme academic authority of the institution. Under its statutory purview, the Senate possesses the exclusive mandate to organize, control, regulate, and supervise all instruction, examinations, research activities, degree awards, and academic discipline of students and academic staff. Academic excellence cannot subsist in an environment corrupted by intellectual deceit. It is pursuant to these statutory powers that the Senate hereby promulgates this unified Plagiarism and Academic Integrity Policy Manual.

The university recognizes that in an increasingly interconnected global knowledge ecosystem, academic fraud inflicts catastrophic harm: it corrodes intellectual rigor, damages the credibility of graduates in the workplace, defrauds public research funders, and tarnishes the international reputation of the university. Therefore, Southern Delta University maintains an unequivocal posture of zero tolerance toward intellectual dishonesty, while simultaneously establishing an enlightened, scaffolded educational infrastructure to empower staff and students with advanced scholarly capabilities.

1.2 Vision, Mission, and Foundational Ethical Principles

The primary objective of this policy is to cultivate an intellectual culture guided by six inviolable core ethical principles:

Principle of Academic Honesty: Absolute dedication to truthful inquiry, data accuracy, uncompromised experimentation, and authentic reporting across all disciplines.

Principle of Transparency: Unambiguous, scrupulous, and transparent attribution of all ideas, words, empirical data, architectural designs, algorithms, and illustrations that inform current research.

Principle of Individual Responsibility: Personal, professional, and legal accountability of every student, scholar, and lecturer for the originality and integrity of the scholarly work submitted under their name.

Principle of Procedural Fairness: Equitable, consistent, and impartial enforcement of integrity standards across all faculties, supported by meticulous adherence to procedural due process.

Principle of Educational Remediation: Commitment to recognizing that academic learning is developmental; the institution must provide diagnostic training, writing support, and opportunities for moral and academic redemption.

Principle of Institutional Honor: Upholding the collective reputation and dignity of Southern Delta University, ensuring its degrees and scholarly publications command unassailable respect worldwide.

1.3 Strategic Purpose and Institutional Objectives

The specific institutional objectives codified within this policy manual are as follows:

1. Definitional Certainty: Establish definitive legal, operational, and disciplinary definitions of plagiarism, academic deceit, and algorithmic misconduct across all academic departments.

2. Empirical Benchmarking: Institute standardized, uniform quantitative similarity index ceilings across undergraduate projects ($\leq 20\%$), postgraduate dissertations ($\leq 15\%$), and academic staff promotion dossiers ($\leq 10\%$).

3. Due Process Architecture: Codify rigorous, standardized Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) governing the detection, preliminary screening, formal investigation, adjudication, and sanctioning of academic fraud.

4. Algorithmic Governance: Delineate clear pedagogical and research boundaries governing the ethical adoption and disclosure of generative artificial intelligence tools in learning and scholarship.

5. Capacity Enhancement: Provide comprehensive instructional scaffolding, writing clinics, and diagnostic pre-submission scanning opportunities to nurture original scholarship.

6. Strategic Reputation Defense: Safeguard Southern Delta University's institutional accreditation, national standing, and international research collaboration rankings.

1.4 Scope and Universal Jurisdictional Applicability

This policy applies universally and comprehensively across Southern Delta University, Ozoro, without exception. Its jurisdiction encompasses:

Undergraduate Cadre: All enrolled undergraduate students across all faculties (Science, Social Sciences, Environmental Sciences, Engineering, Agriculture, Humanities, Management, and Computing), covering all diploma, certificate, regular degree, sandwich, and weekend programmes.

Postgraduate Cadre: All candidates registered in the College of Postgraduate Studies pursuing Postgraduate Diplomas (PGD), Professional Master's, Master of Science (M.Sc.), Master of Arts (M.A.), Master of Engineering (M.Eng.), Master of Philosophy (M.Phil.), and Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) degrees.

Academic Staff Cadre: All academic personnel, including full-time professors, readers, senior lecturers, lecturer cadres, assistant lecturers, graduate assistants, visiting scholars, sabbatical professors, adjunct lecturers, and contract research fellows.

Technical & Laboratory Cadre: All non-teaching academic support staff involved in teaching or research operations, including laboratory technologists, cartographic officers, GIS analysts, architectural draftspersons, and technical workshop instructors.

Material Scope of Academic Outputs: All forms of academic, pedagogical, and scholarly outputs: continuous assessment scripts, term papers, laboratory notebooks, studio portfolios, engineering designs, undergraduate projects, seminar presentations, postgraduate dissertations and theses, journal articles, books, book chapters, conference proceedings, technical reports, grant proposals, and promotion dossiers.

SECTION 2: COMPREHENSIVE DEFINITIONAL ARCHITECTURE

2.1 Definitive Legal and Operational Taxonomy of Plagiarism

Universal Definitional Standard: Southern Delta University defines plagiarism as the presentation, publication, distribution, or formal submission of another entity's intellectual work, ideas, words, sentences, artistic compositions, architectural schematics, computer algorithms, empirical datasets, or scientific discoveries as one's own personal or original creation without proper, explicit, unambiguous, and timely attribution and acknowledgement.

Plagiarism represents an act of intellectual property theft, academic fraud, and professional misconduct. It undermines the essential mission of higher education by projecting counterfeit competence. An act of plagiarism is legally complete upon formal submission, display, or publication of the offending work, regardless of whether the manuscript has been formally graded, accepted for publication, or publicly presented.

2.2 Comprehensive Typologies and Modes of Occurrence

To eliminate ambiguity and ensure equitable adjudication across all academic boards, the following definitive typologies of plagiarism are codified:

Direct / Verbatim Plagiarism: The exact word-for-word reproduction of sentences, paragraphs, passages, or entire sections from any source (print books, journals, internet websites, student projects) without enclosing the text in quotation marks and without providing complete, accurate in-text citations and bibliographic references.

Mosaic / Patchwork Plagiarism: The deliberate practice of weaving together sentences, phrases, clauses, and ideas lifted from multiple external sources, interspersed with occasional connecting words of the author's own, thereby constructing a composite narrative that conceals the external origin of the substantive discourse.

Improper / Inadequate Paraphrasing: The cosmetic modification of an original text by merely replacing select words with synonyms or altering sentence order while retaining the exact conceptual architecture, argument flow, and core phrasing of the source author without appropriate citation.

Idea / Conceptual Plagiarism: The unauthorized appropriation of an original theoretical model, conceptual framework, analytical proof, experimental hypothesis, or unique methodology originated by another researcher, and presenting it as one's personal intellectual discovery.

Self-Plagiarism and Text Recycling: The re-presentation, republishing, or resubmission of substantial portions of one's own previously submitted assignments, thesis chapters, or published journal articles without explicit citation of the previous publication and without securing formal authorization from the instructor or publisher.

Collusion and Unauthorized Collaboration: Secretive, unauthorized collaboration between two or more students in the preparation and submission of academic work that was explicitly assigned as an individual, independent assessment, or copying from another student's work with or without consent.

Contract Cheating and Ghostwriting: The commercial commissioning, outsourcing, purchasing, or procurement of third-party individuals, commercial writing services, 'project mercenaries,' or essay mills to draft an assignment, project, dissertation, or journal manuscript for submission under one's own name.

Source-Based Plagiarism and Phantom Referencing: The fabrication of nonexistent citations, citation of sources that were never consulted, or intentionally attributing erroneous facts to reputable publications to manufacture a false veneer of authoritative scholarship.

Citation Camouflage and Clustered Plagiarism: Providing a single, vague citation at the very end of an extended section or chapter, deliberately concealing that multiple preceding paragraphs were copied verbatim or near-verbatim from an uncredited source.

Translation Plagiarism: The practice of translating foreign-language academic articles, textbooks, or online monographs into English and presenting the resulting text as an original English manuscript without citing the original author and language source.

2.3 Mens Rea Considerations: Intentional versus Unintentional Infractions

In assessing allegations of academic dishonesty, investigative committees shall evaluate the element of intent (*mens rea*) to distinguish between developmental citation errors and calculated academic deceit:

Intentional Plagiarism: Deliberate, calculated actions undertaken to fraudulently gain academic credit, degrees, or professional career advancement. This includes contract cheating, ghostwriting, systematic

cut-and-paste compilation, data fabrication, and purposeful concealment of sources. Intentional plagiarism invariably attracts severe punitive sanctions, including suspension, expulsion, or dismissal.

Unintentional Plagiarism: Infractions resulting from developmental deficiencies, lack of scholarly literacy, poor note-taking practices, or linguistic misunderstandings regarding citation mechanics (e.g., omitting quotation marks around a correctly cited block quotation, or missing page numbers). While unintentional plagiarism remains an actionable infraction, its adjudication prioritizes diagnostic training, developmental remediation, and writing support.

STATUTORY AXIOM: IGNORANCE IS NO DEFENSE

Strict Liability Legal Standard: Lack of awareness of university policies, unfamiliarity with citation conventions, or ignorance of software mechanics shall NEVER constitute an absolute legal defense against an allegation of plagiarism.

Every matriculated student and academic staff member is under an affirmative professional duty to master and comply with the scholarly conventions of their academic discipline.

SECTION 3: DISCIPLINE-SPECIFIC TYPOLOGIES AND PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

Recognizing that the modes of intellectual expression vary significantly across academic fields, Southern Delta University codifies specialized, discipline-specific definitions and standards of academic integrity across its diverse faculties.

3.1 Faculty of Environmental Sciences Standards

Scholarship within Environmental Sciences involves intensive visual, spatial, cartographic, computational, and field artifacts. Plagiarism within this faculty extends far beyond textual narrative:

Map & Cartographic Plagiarism: Direct reproduction, tracing, scanning, or digital vectorization of published cartographic outputs, topographical maps, or zoning layouts without explicit attribution of source agencies (e.g., Office of the Surveyor General of the Federation, NASRDA).

GIS Analysis & Spatial Model Plagiarism: Copying or appropriating another researcher's spatial vector layers, raster datasets, geodatabase models, spatial interpolation results, or geoprocessing workflows in ArcGIS, QGIS, or similar platforms without original source credit.

Surveying & Geodetic Data Plagiarism: Appropriating another surveyor's raw traverse observations, GNSS coordinates, leveling instrument readings, or hydrographic sounding logs and presenting them as original field observations.

Architectural & Structural Design Plagiarism: Copying architectural schematics, floor plans, elevations, 3D building renderings, landscape designs, or construction details from architectural firms, online repositories, or student folios without attribution.

Remote Sensing & Satellite Imagery Plagiarism: Utilizing another investigator's processed satellite bands, NDVI indices, or radiometric classifications without referencing the satellite platform, acquisition date, and processing author.

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Plagiarism: Lifting baseline socioeconomic surveys, environmental air quality data, toxicological reports, or mitigation action matrices from existing Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) reports.

CAD & 3D Vector Design Plagiarism: Appropriating digital 3D models or technical drawings created using AutoCAD, Revit, ArchiCAD, SketchUp, or Civil 3D without explicit authorial authorization and documentation.

3.2 Faculty of Science, Computing, and Engineering Standards

In the pure and applied sciences, mathematical proofs, engineering designs, and computational software require rigorous standards of originality:

Computer Code & Algorithm Plagiarism: Copying proprietary source code, scripts, subroutines, machine learning algorithms, or software architectures from GitHub, Stack Overflow, or commercial repositories without explicit header documentation and authorization.

Mathematical Proof Plagiarism: Appropriating an unpublished mathematical derivation, theorem proof, or optimization lemma without citing the originating mathematician or preprint.

Laboratory Data Fabrication & Splicing: Inventing baseline experimental results, altering spectrophotometric readings, splicing gel electrophoresis bands, or fabricating chromatographic peaks.

Engineering Design & CAD Plagiarism: Submitting standard computer-aided design (CAD) structural frames, piping diagrams, or electronic schematic diagrams copied from manufacturers or external engineers as personal design coursework.

3.3 Faculty of Social Sciences and Management Sciences Standards

The social and management sciences require rigorous transparency in empirical field surveys, econometric modeling, and textual discourse:

Survey Instrument Plagiarism: Appropriating survey instruments, psychometric scales, or validated questionnaires developed by other researchers without formal attribution and copyright licensing.

Econometric & Quantitative Data Theft: Reporting statistical estimations, regression tables, or factor analyses derived from unauthorized secondary datasets as original primary empirical fieldwork.

Qualitative Interview & Thematic Plagiarism: Lifting qualitative interview transcripts, thematic coding frameworks, or focus group observations from prior dissertations.

3.4 Faculty of Arts and Humanities Standards

In the humanities, the preservation of authorial voice, historical context, and critical interpretation is paramount:

Historical & Critical Interpretation Plagiarism: Presenting an original historical interpretation, archival discovery, or philosophical critique formulated by another scholar without citation.

Translation Plagiarism: Translating foreign-language academic articles, books, or archival manuscripts into English and publishing them without acknowledging the original author and language source.

Creative Arts & Performance Plagiarism: Appropriating dramatic scripts, musical compositions, choreography, sculpture, or painting compositions for academic exhibition without licensing.

SECTION 4: ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE, GENERATIVE TOOLS, AND ALGORITHMIC MISCONDUCT

4.1 Context and Emerging Algorithmic Realities

Technological Imperative: The rapid proliferation of Large Language Models (LLMs) and Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) platforms—including OpenAI's ChatGPT, Anthropic's Claude, Google's Gemini, Microsoft Copilot, and open-source models—presents profound pedagogical opportunities alongside unprecedented challenges to academic integrity. Institutional assessments indicate that over 85% of tertiary students interact with GenAI tools, with institutional coursework experiencing a nearly fourfold surge in AI assistance. While generative algorithms can assist in code debugging, literature summarization, and syntax refinement, their unregulated adoption threatens to induce cognitive atrophy, eradicate critical thinking, and proliferate fraudulent synthetic scholarship.

4.2 Defining Artificial Intelligence Misconduct and Synthetic Plagiarism

Southern Delta University explicitly classifies the following acts as serious forms of academic misconduct subject to formal disciplinary action:

Direct AI Generation (Ghost Authorship): Prompting an AI engine to draft an essay, literature review, project chapter, or computer code and submitting the output as one's personal creative, analytical, or intellectual work.

Undisclosed AI Assistance: The integration of AI-generated text, figures, or code into scholarly submissions without explicit, prominent declaration of tool usage, model version, and operational prompt logs.

Fabricated AI Citations (Synthetic Hallucination): The generation of fictitious citations, phantom journal articles, invented DOIs, or fabricated empirical statistics produced by algorithmic hallucinations and incorporated into academic work.

Algorithmic Camouflage & Text Spinning: Utilizing AI tools to systematically rewrite, spin, or disguise previously plagiarized source material to defeat textual similarity algorithms.

4.3 Permissible Boundaries of AI Utilization

The university endorses the ethical, transparent adoption of AI under strictly defined pedagogical boundaries:

Permissible Editorial Assistance: Students and staff may use AI tools for syntax checking, grammar refinement, and formatting, provided the underlying arguments, structural logic, and phraseology remain authorial.

Exploratory Brainstorming: Using AI to generate broad reading lists, brainstorm exploratory angles, or summarize open-access background texts, provided all primary sources are personally reviewed and cited.

Coding & Script Debugging: Using AI to identify syntax errors, explain computational exceptions, or suggest algorithmic optimizations, provided the final code logic is fully understood and documented by the programmer.

4.4 Mandatory Disclosure Protocols

Every academic submission—from undergraduate seminar papers to academic staff journal manuscripts—that has utilized AI assistance in any capacity must include a formal AI Transparency Statement preceding the introduction or in the methodology section.

MANDATORY AI TRANSPARENCY DECLARATION TEMPLATE

"I hereby declare that in the preparation of this academic submission, I utilized [Insert AI System Name, Version/Provider, e.g., OpenAI ChatGPT-4, Google Gemini Pro] on [Dates Consulted] for the specific purpose of [e.g., debugging Python data parsing scripts / grammar polishing of Chapter 3]. I confirm that all literature citations were personally verified against original primary sources, all empirical analyses represent original fieldwork, and I accept full intellectual responsibility for the accuracy and veracity of the content."

Signature: _____ Matric/Staff No: _____

SECTION 5: QUANTITATIVE SIMILARITY CEILINGS AND BENCHMARK STANDARDS

5.1 Approved Quantitative Thresholds

Southern Delta University establishes clear, empirical similarity ceilings to guide academic evaluations, dissertation approvals, and faculty promotions. These thresholds represent the maximum allowable percentage of text matching detected by approved software after applying mandatory exclusionary filters:

Category / Level of Work	Overall Similarity Ceiling	Max Match from Single Source	Mandatory Action / Status
Undergraduate Projects / Long Essays	≤ 25.0%	≤ 3.0%	Eligible for final departmental grading and oral defense if within ceiling.
Postgraduate Dissertations (M.Sc./M.A./M.Eng.)	≤ 20.0%	≤ 2.0%	Mandatory clearance required prior to forwarding for external defense.
Doctoral Theses (Ph.D. / D.Sc.)	≤ 20.0%	≤ 2.0%	Mandatory clearance by Postgraduate Plagiarism Committee prior to oral examination.

Academic Staff Articles / Promotion Dossiers	≤ 20.0%	≤ 1.0%	Mandatory clearance by University-Base Plagiarism Committee before A&PC appraisal.
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5.2 Mandatory Exclusionary Filters in Detection Software

To guarantee fairness and prevent artificial inflation of similarity scores, all official similarity scans conducted within the university MUST apply the following standardized configuration parameters:

Exclude Bibliography: Bibliographies, reference lists, works cited, and statutory legal citation tables MUST be excluded from the match calculations.

Exclude Quoted Text: Properly formatted verbatim quotations enclosed in standard quotation marks with exact author-year-page citations MUST be excluded.

Exclude Small Matches: All matching phrase clusters smaller than five (5) consecutive words MUST be filtered out to eliminate common discipline-specific terminology.

Exclude Institutional Preliminaries: Approved institutional preliminary pages (Title page, Certification, Approval page, Dedication, Acknowledgements, and Table of Contents) MUST be excluded from the percentage numerator.

5.3 Qualitative Evaluation versus Raw Similarity Metrics

Primacy of Academic Judgment: A similarity index score is merely an investigative screening tool, NOT conclusive forensic proof of plagiarism. A document exhibiting an 8% similarity score may contain a fatal instance of uncredited theorem theft or data fabrication. Conversely, a technical dissertation with a 19% score may consist entirely of necessary statutory definitions, chemical nomenclatures, and standard experimental protocols.

Under no circumstances shall a student or academic staff member be convicted of plagiarism based solely upon an automated percentage readout. Qualified subject specialists on the Departmental or Faculty Plagiarism Committee must review the full contextual similarity report, assessing authorial intent, quotation accuracy, and originality of intellectual contribution.

SECTION 6: TECHNOLOGICAL DETECTION INFRASTRUCTURE AND TOOL VALIDATION

6.1 Enterprise Software Portfolio

To ensure comprehensive, reliable, and cost-effective plagiarism screening, Southern Delta University licenses and deploys an enterprise suite of digital detection tools:

Turnitin Feedback Studio: The globally recognized standard for deep cross-database comparison against global scientific publishers, internet archives, and institutional repositories.

Drillbit Plagiarism Software: A highly cost-effective, high-throughput plagiarism detection platform integrated into departmental workflows for undergraduate project screening and continuous assessment checks.

Checker X: Specialized screening software deployed across postgraduate units for rapid document inspection and comparative text alignment.

TETFUND Enterprise Integration: Direct application through the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFUND) National Research Fund access window to secure institutional subscriptions to international research indexing and detection databases.

6.2 Data Privacy, Student Work Rights, and Nigerian Regulations

The deployment of digital detection platforms must strictly comply with the Nigeria Data Protection Act (NDPA) 2023 and the university's intellectual property policies. When uploading student manuscripts, theses, or staff publications to external cloud-based detection platforms:

Repository Storage Limitations: Administrators must select 'Do Not Store in Standard Repository' or institutional private repository settings to prevent external third-party commercial exploitation of student intellectual property.

Personal Data Anonymization: All personal identifying data (telephone numbers, residential addresses, bank account numbers) must be redacted from uploaded files.

6.3 Inaccuracies, Hallucinations, and Software Limitations

Plagiarism detection algorithms frequently generate false positives when assessing mathematical equations, standardized chemical equations, legal citations, and localized idiomatic expressions. Furthermore, automated AI detectors have proven prone to significant error rates and linguistic bias against non-native English writers. Consequently, algorithmic AI probability scores shall NEVER be used as the sole ground for disciplinary indictment; they merely serve as an initial trigger for rigorous faculty peer inquiry.

SECTION 7: HISTORICAL PUBLICATIONS, LEGACY SCHOLARSHIP, AND NON-RETROACTIVITY

7.1 Non-Retroactive Principle (Lex Retro Non Agit)

Prospective Enforcement: In accordance with fundamental principles of natural justice and Nigerian constitutional law, this policy manual shall operate prospectively from the date of its formal ratification by the University Senate (October 2026). No staff member or alumnus shall be penalized retrospectively for academic works published prior to the inception of this policy, provided such works satisfied the institutional guidelines and prevailing academic standards in effect at the date of their presentation or publication.

7.2 Transitional Guidelines for Pre-Existing Publications

For publications, dissertations, and research monographs executed prior to October 2026 that become subject to assessment for promotion, conversion, or public inquiry:

Historical Benchmark Context: The university recognizes that legacy scholarly outputs were produced prior to modern digital word-matching databases and digitized journal archives. Where older print works exhibit similarity due to lack of digital search facilities, committees must evaluate the works under the historical standards of their era.

Archival Verification Registry: Academic staff submitting older print publications for promotional appraisals must submit physical or scanned archival copies. The university library shall maintain a legacy verification registry to confirm physical publication dates.

7.3 Carve-Out for Gross Fraud and Criminal Intellectual Theft

Egregious Piracy Exception: The non-retroactive protection DOES NOT extend to deliberate, egregious, and wholesale piracy, total book reproduction, or blatant theft of another living or deceased author's entire dissertation. Flagrant criminal intellectual theft remains actionable under university statutory disciplinary powers regardless of publication date.

SECTION 8: RIGHTS, OBLIGATIONS, AND EDUCATIONAL SCAFFOLDING FOR STUDENTS

8.1 Affirmative Student Responsibilities

Every undergraduate and postgraduate student admitted into Southern Delta University bears personal responsibility for maintaining impeccable academic honesty. Students are obligated to:

Originality Certification: Ensure that every submitted assignment, seminar paper, laboratory report, and project is an original product of their own intellectual labour.

Referencing Competence: Master and rigorously apply the approved referencing style of their faculty (e.g., APA 7th Edition for Social & Environmental Sciences, IEEE for Engineering, Vancouver for Health Sciences).

Mandatory Declaration: Sign and attach the standard Southern Delta University Declaration of Academic Originality to every major academic submission.

8.2 Formative Scaffolding and Diagnostic Pre-Submission Screening

The university rejects an exclusively punitive approach to academic integrity, recognizing that learning ethical scholarship is an evolutionary developmental process. Southern Delta University institutes the following supportive scaffolding:

Diagnostic Scanning Privilege: Every final-year undergraduate and postgraduate candidate is granted the institutional privilege of up to three (3) formative diagnostic software scans prior to final submission.

Remedial Iteration: Formative scans are non-punitive, enabling candidates to review originality reports with supervisors, identify inadvertent patch-writing, and correct improper citations.

Academic Writing Centre Support: Establishment of the University Academic Writing Centre (UAWC) within the University Library, offering free, individualized tutorial clinics on paraphrasing, literature synthesis, and reference manager software (Zotero, Mendeley, EndNote).

SECTION 9: PEDAGOGICAL, SUPERVISORY, AND ETHICAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF ACADEMIC STAFF

9.1 Exemplary Professional Conduct

Academic staff serve as the ethical guardians of the university. They must demonstrate unassailable integrity in all lecture presentations, published research papers, monographs, and public

engagements. Staff must scrupulously acknowledge all sources, collaborative contributors, and funding agencies in their scholarly publications.

9.2 Supervisory Obligations and Audit Trails

Supervisors of undergraduate projects and postgraduate theses bear affirmative supervisory duties:

Early Instruction: Supervisors must actively instruct supervisees on research ethics, data collection integrity, and citation standards during the earliest conceptual stages of research.

Progressive Verification: Supervisors must review and vet intermediate drafts, maintaining a signed supervisory log book recording chapter-by-chapter progression.

Endorsement Requirement: No project or thesis shall be cleared for oral defense until the supervisor personally inspects and endorses the official software originality report.

9.3 Co-Authorship Ethics and Protection of Student Intellectual Property

The university vehemently prohibits predatory co-authorship practices. Academic staff are strictly forbidden from appropriating the undergraduate projects or postgraduate theses of their students for publication under their own sole names. Legitimate co-authorship between staff and students requires substantial intellectual contribution to the research design, data interpretation, and manuscript drafting. In all cases, student lead authors must be duly recognized and give written informed consent.

SECTION 10: INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE UNIVERSITY

To ensure a holistic, sustainable academic integrity ecosystem, Southern Delta University undertakes the following institutional commitments:

Continuous Sensitization: Conducting mandatory academic integrity, anti-plagiarism, and AI ethics seminars at every new student orientation and annual staff development retreat.

Technological Logistics: Budgeting annual capital resources and securing TETFUND grants to license cutting-edge detection platforms, ensuring uninterrupted software access for all academic departments.

Institutional Repository (SDU-IR): Establishing a centralized, searchable digital repository for all approved undergraduate projects, postgraduate theses, and faculty publications to establish definitive copyright records.

Universal Policy Accessibility: Ensuring full transparent publication and distribution of this policy manual across all university websites, faculty handbooks, and orientation packages.

SECTION 11: INSTITUTIONAL GOVERNANCE AND COMMITTEE ARCHITECTURE

A decentralized, three-tier administrative committee structure is hereby established to oversee plagiarism prevention, screening, and investigation across the university:

11.1 Departmental Plagiarism Committee (DPC)

Membership: Composition: Head of Department (Chairperson), Departmental Examination Officer, two senior academic staff members nominated by Departmental Board, and Departmental Administrative Secretary.

Functions: Mandate: Screen all undergraduate final-year research projects prior to oral examination; conduct preliminary reviews of reported student infractions; organize departmental seminars on citation conventions; forward verified cases to Faculty Committee.

11.2 Faculty Plagiarism Committee (FPC)

Membership: Composition: Dean of Faculty (Chairperson), Faculty Representative to University AI/Plagiarism Board, all Heads of Department, and Faculty Examination Officer.

Functions: Mandate: Investigate contested student plagiarism cases forwarded by DPCs; screen all faculty conference papers and journal manuscripts submitted for upload to the university portal; forward prima facie staff infractions to the University-Base Committee.

11.3 College of Postgraduate Studies Plagiarism Committee (CPGSPC)

Membership: Composition: Provost of College of Postgraduate Studies (Chairperson), Representative of University Senate, Postgraduate Examination Officers, and two Professors nominated by Postgraduate Board.

Functions: Mandate: Conduct mandatory centralized plagiarism screening on all Master's dissertations and Ph.D. theses prior to external defense clearance; issue official Similarity Clearance Certificates; investigate alleged plagiarism in defended theses.

11.4 University-Base Plagiarism & Research Integrity Committee (UPRIC)

Membership: Composition: Senior Professor appointed by the Vice-Chancellor (Chairperson), Director of Academic Planning, University Librarian, Dean of Student Affairs, Chairman of Senate AI Committee, and Legal Officer (Secretary).

Functions: Mandate: Ultimate institutional technical screening authority; screen all academic staff publication dossiers submitted for annual promotion and appraisal; advise the Vice-Chancellor on complex, high-level plagiarism allegations.

SECTION 12: STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES FOR INVESTIGATION AND DUE PROCESS

To ensure uniformity, impartiality, and legal defensibility, all allegations of plagiarism must proceed through a four-stage standard operating procedure:

12.1 Stage 1: Formal Notification, Receipt, and Prima Facie Review

Any academic staff member, external publisher, student, or whistle-blower may lodge a formal written petition alleging plagiarism to the Head of Department or Dean of Faculty. The petition must include the questioned document, the identified target original source, and an highlighted comparative matching text. The relevant DPC or FPC must convene within five (5) working days to conduct a preliminary prima facie assessment. If the complaint is deemed frivolous, malicious, or devoid of substance, it shall be dismissed in writing.

12.2 Stage 2: Technical Software Audit and Forensic Comparison

Where a prima facie case exists, the committee shall subject the questioned document to a multi-engine technical scan (Turnitin, Drillbit, Checker X), generating a certified similarity report. A designated subject matter specialist shall perform side-by-side textual and conceptual analysis, documenting verbatim overlaps, paraphrasing structures, and citation anomalies.

12.3 Stage 3: Hearing, Right to Representation, and Deliberation

The respondent shall be issued a formal written Notice of Allegation accompanied by the full technical evidence packet. The respondent shall be granted a minimum of ten (10) working days to submit a written defense and appear in person before the committee. Hearings must be conducted strictly under the tenets of natural justice.

12.4 Stage 4: Reporting and Transmittal of Findings

Upon concluding its deliberations, the committee shall compile a comprehensive Investigative Report detailing the methodology, factual findings, similarity indices, qualitative evaluation, and recommended sanctions. For students, reports are transmitted through the Dean to the Senate Examination Malpractice Panel; for staff, reports are submitted directly to the Vice-Chancellor for onward transmittal to the Senior Staff Disciplinary Committee.

SECTION 13: PROCEDURAL FAIRNESS, RIGHTS TO FAIR HEARING, AND DEFENSE PROTOCOLS

In alignment with Section 36 of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 (as amended), every respondent is guaranteed inviolable procedural protections:

Presumption of Good Faith: The respondent shall be presumed innocent of academic fraud until the evidence conclusively establishes the infraction.

Adequate Written Notice: Written notice must clearly articulate the specific charges, sections of the policy allegedly breached, and the potential range of penalties.

Full Disclosure of Evidence: The respondent has an unhindered right to inspect all digital similarity reports, highlighted source texts, and written witness statements.

Right to be Heard & Present Defense: The respondent is entitled to appear in person, present oral and written arguments, tender original research notes, laboratory logs, or digital file drafts, and call witnesses.

Rule Against Bias (Nemo Judex In Causa Sua): Any member of an investigative panel with a known personal dispute, supervisory conflict, or professional bias against the respondent MUST recuse themselves immediately.

SECTION 14: TIERED PENALTY MATRIX AND PROGRESSIVE SANCTION SCHEDULE

Southern Delta University adopts a progressive, proportional penalty schedule calibrated to the severity of the offense, intent, and academic standing of the violator. The statutory sanctions are classified into four distinct severity tiers:

Severity Tier	Undergraduate Sanctions	Postgraduate Sanctions	Academic Staff Sanctions
Tier 1: Low / Minor (21% – 25% text match; technical citation errors; first instance)	• Mandatory revision under supervisor. • Grade cap (Max 'C' grade). • Formal written counseling note.	• Resubmission of thesis chapter. • Remedial academic writing clinic. • Written caution on departmental file.	• Formal written advice from Dean. • Resubmission of publication draft. • Exclusion from website upload.
Tier 2: Moderate (26% – 40% text match; systematic patch-writing; uncredited data)	• Rejection of project draft. • Mandatory re-registration of topic. • Official Dean's warning letter.	• Before Defense: Complete redo of thesis. • After Defense: Grade withdrawn; mandatory re-defense at candidate's expense. • 1-year graduation deferral.	• Formal Senate Warning Letter. • Immediate denial of promotion for two (2) academic sessions. • Stripping of university travel grants.
Tier 3: High / Severe (> 40% copied text; complete section theft; undisclosed AI generation)	• Total project cancellation. • Immediate referral to Malpractice Panel. • Academic suspension for 1 - 2 semesters.	• Total thesis cancellation. • Candidate required to begin afresh with new topic/supervisor. • Minimum 1-year suspension; if degree awarded, revocation.	• Demotion by one (1) or two (2) academic ranks. • Total disqualification of publication dossier. • Removal from headship/deanship.
Tier 4: Egregious / Repeated (Contract cheating; repeated Tier 3; wholesale dissertation piracy)	• Summary expulsion from the University. • Permanent transcript notation of academic misconduct.	• Summary expulsion from Postgraduate College. • Permanent revocation of any conferred higher degrees.	• Immediate dismissal / termination of appointment from University service. • Reporting to professional councils (e.g., COREN, SURCON, TRCN).

SECTION 15: MITIGATING, AGGRAVATING, AND CONTEXTUAL CIRCUMSTANCES

To avoid rigid, mechanized injustice, disciplinary panels must weigh aggravating and mitigating factors when deliberating upon proportional sanctions:

15.1 Aggravating Factors

The presence of one or more of the following factors shall warrant the imposition of maximum penalties within a given tier:

Calculated Deception: Premeditated, sophisticated concealment techniques, such as using white-font characters, hidden zero-width spaces, or foreign character substitutions to bypass detection algorithms.

Commercial Engagement: Commissioning commercial third-party writing bureaus, essay mills, or paying other individuals to author projects or publications.

Recidivism / Prior Infractions: Prior documented integrity cautions, warnings, or convictions for academic dishonesty.

High Seniority of Offender: Infractions committed in doctoral dissertations, published peer-reviewed journals, or professorial promotion dossiers where maximum scholarly mastery is legally presumed.

15.2 Mitigating Factors

The presence of the following circumstances may justify a reduction in statutory penalties or an emphasis on developmental remediation:

Voluntary Admission & Cooperation: Prompt, voluntary admission of error, genuine remorse, and active cooperation with the investigative committee.

Academic Inexperience: Novice academic standing (e.g., 100- or 200-level undergraduate students still acquiring research literacy).

Documented Hardship: Severe, verified personal, medical, or psychological trauma that severely impaired judgment during the submission period.

SECTION 16: COMPREHENSIVE APPELLATE ARCHITECTURE AND JUDICIAL REVIEW

16.1 Right of Appeal and Constitutional Jurisprudence

Every student or academic staff member penalized under this policy manual possesses an absolute constitutional right to appeal against the verdict or the severity of the sanction to the University Senate and the Governing Council.

16.2 Constitution of the Senate Plagiarism Appellate Board

Board Membership: Composition: Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) as Chairperson, two Provosts/Deans from uninvolved faculties, two external Professors appointed by Senate, President of the Student Union Government (observer status for student appeals), and Registrar as Secretary.

16.3 Valid Grounds for Entertaining an Appeal

Appeals shall be entertained exclusively on one or more of the following three legal grounds:

Procedural Irregularity: Failure of the investigative committee to follow statutory standard operating procedures, denial of adequate notice, or denial of right to present a defense.

Fresh / New Evidence: Availability of material, credible evidence (e.g., date-stamped laboratory logs, original field recordings) that could not have been reasonably produced during the initial hearing.

Gross Disproportionality: The penalty imposed significantly exceeds the approved statutory matrix or demonstrates blatant bias.

16.4 Appellate Timelines and Finality

An appellant must file a written notice of appeal within twenty-one (21) calendar days of receiving formal notification of sanction. The Appellate Board must convene, conduct hearings, and render its final appellate determination to Senate within thirty (30) calendar days. The decision of Senate, subject to ultimate Council confirmation for staff dismissals, is final.

SECTION 17: POST-INVESTIGATION PROTOCOLS, RECORDS MANAGEMENT, AND REHABILITATION

17.1 Confidential Academic Integrity Registry (SDU-AIR)

The Academic Affairs Division shall maintain a secure, confidential Academic Integrity Registry. Details of all formal investigations, findings, and imposed sanctions shall be securely logged to monitor repeat offenders across departments and degrees.

17.2 Expungement Protocols for Minor First-Time Infractions

To encourage moral rehabilitation and career redemption, a student who received a Tier 1 or Tier 2 warning for a first-time unintentional infraction may petition the Dean for record expungement following two consecutive semesters of exemplary academic conduct and successful completion of the Advanced Citation Workshop.

SECTION 18: MANDATORY REVIEW, POLICY AUDITING, AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

To ensure that Southern Delta University remains agile and responsive to rapid technological advancements in generative AI and digital research tools, this policy manual shall undergo mandatory comprehensive review every two (2) years. The Senate Committee on AI and Plagiarism Policies shall present an annual Academic Integrity Audit Report to Senate, highlighting software detection efficacy, statistical infraction trends, and emergent technological developments.

SECTION 19: APPENDICES, STATUTORY SCHEDULES, AND MODEL DECLARATION FORMS

19.1 Appendix A: Model Student Declaration of Originality

FORM A: STUDENT ACADEMIC INTEGRITY COVENANT

SOUTHERN DELTA UNIVERSITY, OZORO — PLAGIARISM DECLARATION FORM

Name of Student: _____

Matriculation Number: _____ Department: _____

Faculty: _____ Degree / Programme: _____

Title of Academic Work: _____

1. I solemnly certify that this submitted academic work is the product of my own intellectual endeavor, except where due citation and acknowledgement have been made.
2. I affirm that no portion of this work has been previously submitted for a degree, diploma, or qualification at this or any other higher educational institution.
3. I confirm that where generative artificial intelligence (AI) was utilized, it has been disclosed in the attached AI Transparency Statement in full compliance with university guidelines.
4. I understand that any false declaration will lead to severe disciplinary penalties, including project

cancellation, suspension, or expulsion.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

19.2 Appendix B: Model Supervisor Plagiarism Clearance Certificate

FORM B: SUPERVISORY CLEARANCE CERTIFICATION

SOUTHERN DELTA UNIVERSITY, OZORO — SUPERVISOR CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

I, [Insert Full Name & Academic Rank], having supervised the undergraduate project / postgraduate thesis entitled: "[Insert Title of Work]", authored by [Insert Student Name, Matric No.], certify that:

1. I have progressively monitored the candidate's research and writing progression through regular consultations.
2. The manuscript has been subjected to official plagiarism detection software [Specify: Turnitin / Drillbit / Checker X] on [Date of Scan].
3. The verified similarity index of the manuscript is _____%, which complies with the approved university ceiling of $\leq 20\%$ (Undergraduate) / $\leq 15\%$ (Postgraduate).
4. I have examined the detailed matching report and confirmed that the similarity is legitimate and devoid of intellectual theft.
5. I hereby clear this work for final external examination and oral defense.

Supervisor's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Head of Department's Endorsement: _____ Date: _____

19.3 Appendix C: Model Investigative Reporting Template

FORM C: INVESTIGATIVE PANEL DOSSIER TEMPLATE

STANDARDIZED PLAGIARISM INVESTIGATION REPORT FORMAT

1. Case Reference Number & Date of Inception.
2. Identity & Academic Status of Complainant and Respondent.
3. Nature of Allegation & Disciplinary Classification (Direct, Paraphrasing, Data, Map, AI Misconduct).
4. Technological Evidence: Comparative Software Similarity Index, Highlighted Side-by-Side Excerpts.
5. Qualitative Analysis of Academic Originality & Intent Assessment.
6. Summary of Hearing Proceedings & Respondent's Written/Oral Defense.
7. Mitigating and Aggravating Factors Evaluated.
8. Conclusive Findings of Fact & Recommended Sanction Tier.
9. Names, Signatures, and Designations of All Committee Members.

19.4 Appendix D: Statutory Scholarly References and Benchmarking Authorities

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