

'Plagiarism detection' project

Handing in plagiarized work is "a serious violation of basic academic rules (cf. the resolution of the German University Association and the principles for safeguarding good academic practice issued by the German Research Community) and sections 23 and 24 of German copyright law and constitutes a criminal offence as an act of deceit (section 263 paragraph 1 of the German Penal Code)" (quoted from the information on plagiarism provided on the website of the Faculty for Communication Studies of the University of Hohenheim). Anyone submitting plagiarized work which is published in the Internet risks disciplinary measures due to copyright violation.

Unfortunately, there have in the past been a number of students at the University of Hildesheim who handed in work relevant for examinations which they had not produced themselves or only a small part of which they had produced themselves (plagiarized work), a fact which was discovered by the examiners more or less by chance and was then penalized accordingly.

For this reason, the summer semester 2010 will see the introduction of a university-wide system allowing examiners to subject all work with relevance for examinations to an automatic prior plagiarism check using professional plagiarism detection software. This software is able to reliably detect in particular cases of serious plagiarism, but it does not replace subsequent checking by the supervising tutor.

What is written on the website of the University of Hohenheim is also true for the University of Hildesheim:

"We did not make this arrangement because we are control freaks. Neither do we wish to put you under general suspicion. We merely wish to prevent a very small few from gaining advantages over the majority of honest students through dishonest behaviour. We hope it is in your interests."

It is of course possible that a few students "accidentally" produce plagiarized work or partially plagiarized work (for example due to ignorance of the correct rules of citation) or see plagiarism as the 'last resort', for example due to a high study load. However, we would like to approach these problems in the 'correct' way by providing specific information on the correct rules of citation etc. (this is typically done in the introductory seminars of the study programs concerned) and via the corrections to the Bologna process which have now already been initiated.