

Key questions to help assess intertextual and formal quality of texts and suspected plagiarism

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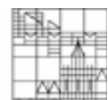
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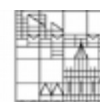
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Caution: Not every potential indication of suspected plagiarism indicates it really is plagiarism!

Aspect	Key questions
1. Theme & ideas & content	<p>Does the research question/theme of the paper match the task set?</p> <p>Does the research question/theme treated originate from the context of the respective course?</p> <p>Does the research question/theme match preliminary work (e.g. exposé)?</p> <p>Has the research question/theme already been registered in previous/parallel courses?</p> <p>Do the research question/theme and its treatment equate to the author's level of knowledge or are they very advanced/highly specific?</p> <p>Are well-known and elaborate lines of argument used which are not verified?</p> <p>Are data or is information provided which are not general knowledge in your subject and are not verified?</p>
2. Concept & structure	<p>Does the paper follow a red thread or are (sub-)chapters/paragraphs integrated which are unrelated to the research question/theme?</p> <p>Do structure/lines of argument of parts of the paper closely mirror other sources (e.g. the order in which lines of argument/illustrations/cited literature etc. are presented)?</p> <p>Do the different parts of the paper follow on logically from each other and are they related to each other or do they seem fragmented/disconnected?</p> <p>Is the numbering of the index/the individual chapters consistent?</p> <p>Do the index and the chapter headings and their numbering match?</p> <p>Are references made in the text to other parts of the paper (e.g. to chapters or sections) which do not lead anywhere?</p>
3. Writing style & stylistic inconsistencies	<p>Is the linguistic style throughout the paper the same/similar?</p> <p>Is the same vocabulary, terminology, notation etc. used for the same contents (especially for the author's own wordings)?</p> <p>Are the same technical/specialist terms used throughout?</p> <p>Can the linguistic and writing style be expected of an author with this level of experience?</p>
4. Text layout	<p>Are paragraphs formatted identically, e.g. are font and font size the same throughout?</p> <p>Are technical/specialist terms and authors' names always written in the same way?</p> <p>Are abbreviations used in the same way throughout (especially those chosen by the author himself/herself)?</p>
5. Citation style	<p>Is the citation style uniform and consistent throughout?</p> <p>Is the citation style the one you specified?</p> <p>Is the citation style one which is in common use in your field?</p> <p>Is a differentiation made between direct/indirect citations in a way which is common in your field?</p> <p>Are direct citations always indicated in the same way?</p>



6. Use of citations	Is it clear which contents originate from the author of the paper and which are from other sources, i.e. it is always clear who is speaking (“They say, I say”)? Are citations always integrated in the text in a similar way (are they elaborated upon, do they fit logically or are they disconnected)?
7. Literature & sources	Is the bibliography complete and match the literature used in the text? Are the data in the bibliography correct? Is the bibliography uniform and also formatted in a uniform way? Are there differences in the bibliographical references in the course of the text? What sources are used (e.g. pertinent/outdated/very specialized/rare and difficult to find/untypical sources, hyperlinks which are no longer accessible)? Are scale and quality of the sources appropriate for the theme (e.g. “grey literature”)? Are a particularly large number of web sources used (e.g. for no objective reason)? Are the sources related to the theme? Are they relevant/exotic? Is the bibliography adequate/too extensive/too short? Does the literature used originate from the context of the respective course? Does the index mirror closely one of the sources used (e.g. index or chapter headings have been copied) or is it even identical to that of another source?
8. Illustrations & data	Are illustrations, tables and similarly adopted material indicated sufficiently, clearly and in a uniform way? Is the data presented clearly attributable to sources or to the author’s own work?
9. Other anomalies	Did the author produce all the sub-steps required for the written task (e.g. exposé) or was only a final paper submitted? Do two papers from the same course/a course in the previous year display the same contents? Do the contents presented match your expectations of the author and his/her level of experience (sources, line of argument, language...)? Was the paper discussed with you? Has your feedback been included?
10. Suspected plagiarism? If yes: Check!	Do specific features of the paper harden the suspicion of plagiarism or it is a case merely of poor work, for example by an inexperienced author? Whom can/must you contact? What means of detection do you have at your disposal (literature comparison, web search via search engine, full-text search with KonSearch or other full-text databases (e.g. BASE), plagiarism detection software...)? What needs to be documented? How can you let the author be heard? What measures are you going to take (e.g. “teachable moment”) – what is appropriate/useful/helpful/fair?