

Now, teachers, students to face penalty for plagiarism

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NEW DELHI: Student researchers who plagiarise may lose their registration and teachers who do could lose their jobs with the University Grants Commission (UGC) approving a draft regulation on plagiarism which will be notified after approval by the Human Resource Development Ministry.

Plagiarism in higher academia is a huge problem in India and UGC, the apex body of higher education institutions, has been threatening to come out with a plagiarism law for several years now. It finally approved the UGC (Promotion of Academic Integrity and Prevention of Plagiarism in Higher Education Institutions) regulations 2018 in its meeting held on March 20. Hindustan Times has seen the minutes of the meeting.

The law prescribes graded punishment for plagiarism.

The draft rules for students states that in non-core areas, plagiarism of up to 10% would not invite any penalty while that of between 10% and 40% would

GRADED PUNISHMENT

- Plagiarism between 10% and 40% would mean the students will have to submit a revised research paper within six months.
- In case the similarities are between 40% and 60%, students will be debarred from submitting a revised paper for one year
- A student's registration for a programme will be cancelled if the similarities are above 60%.

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Teachers whose academic and research papers have similarities ranging from 10% to 40% with other papers will be asked to

withdraw the manuscript. In case the similarities are between 40% and 60%, they will not be allowed to supervise new Masters/ MPhil/ PhD students for two years and will also be denied the right to one annual increment.

In case of repeat plagiarism of over 60% similarity, the faculty members will be suspended, even dismissed.

"I am all for checking plagiarism which is indeed a problem in India within academia. We have very lax standards on this count and that is what seems to have prompted government to propose such a law. It would have been better if universities had strong internal mechanisms as in so many other countries," said Dinesh Singh, former vice-chancellor of Delhi University.

India has been witness to several plagiarism charges against central university vice-chancellors and teachers in the past few years. Pondicherry University V-C Chandra Krishnamurthy quit in 2016 after a prolonged stand-off with the HRD ministry, following allegations that she plagiarized large parts of a book

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mentioned in her resume. The most celebrated case is that of BS Rajput, the VC of Kuamun University, who was a serial plagiarist; eventually, seven Stanford University professors wrote to then President APJ Abdul Kalam about him.

According to UGC, all higher educational institutions will have to develop a policy on plagiarism and get it approved by relevant statutory bodies and display it on their websites. In September last year, UGC formed a committee and sought public feedback on a proposed plagiarism policy in September. "Meantime, a communication was received from the MHRD on implementation of the reforms proposed in a meeting taken by the Principal secretary to the Prime Minister on 16 September 2017 regarding reform in higher education. One of the action points mentioned in the

meeting was related to the regulation on plagiarism wherein it was desired that UGC should also consult with IITs and IIMs for uniformity in regulation on anti-plagiarism," reads the minutes of the meeting.

Land conversion

development can take place in an orderly manner, he said. Panchayats will also have the right to stop private projects breaching codes, or those that are unauthorised.

"The land use change, which was earlier with the government, has now been decentralised and given to the panchayats. Now people can set up guest-houses, hotels, dhabas, godowns, multiplexes, petrol pumps, workshops as there are specific rules," the minister said.

The mutation of land too can be done in favour of legal heirs of a dead landowner. Rathore said PRIs had been authorised to renew and revalidate land pat-tas.