VELS

INSTITUTE OF SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & ADVANCED STUDIES (VISTAS)
(Deemed to be University Estd. u/s 3 of the UGC Act, 1956)
PALLAVARAM, THALAMBUR, PERIYAPALAYAM, THIRUVANMIYUR, ADYAR - CHENNAI

Academic Integrity & Plagiarism Policy







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ACADEMIC INTEGRITY & PLAGIARISM POLICY

Policy No.: VISTAS/RESEARCH/AIP/2026
Effective Date: 26.05.2026
Approved by: Executive Council
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1. PREAMBLE

Vels Institute of Science, Technology and Advanced Studies (VISTAS), Deemed to be University, is committed to maintaining high standards of academic integrity, ethical conduct and originality in teaching, learning and research. Original academic and research work, undertaken in accordance with institutional, national and international standards, strengthens the credibility and quality of scholarly output.

In view of the extensive availability of digital information and scholarly resources, VISTAS recognises the need for effective mechanisms to promote responsible academic conduct, detect plagiarism and address academic misconduct. Accordingly, this Policy establishes the principles, procedures and institutional mechanisms to promote academic integrity and prevent plagiarism among students, research scholars, faculty, researchers and staff of VISTAS.

This Policy is framed in accordance with the UGC (Promotion of Academic Integrity and Prevention of Plagiarism in Higher Educational Institutions) Regulations, 2018, as amended from time to time, and shall be read together with the applicable VISTAS academic and Ph.D. regulations.

2. DEFINITION

"Plagiarism" means the practice of taking someone else's work or idea and passing it as one's own, including the unacknowledged use of another person's words, ideas, data, figures, tables, illustrations or other intellectual output.

Sources of Definition:

i. Green, Stuart P. (2002). "Plagiarism, Norms, and the Limits of Theft Law: Some Observations on the Use of Criminal Sanctions in Enforcing Intellectual Property Rights". Hastings Law Journal, 54(1). SSRN 315562.

ii. Wager E. Ethical Publishing: The innocent author's guide to avoiding misconduct. Menopause International. 2007; 13:98–102.

3. OBJECTIVES

a. To create awareness about responsible conduct of research and academic writing, and to promote academic integrity among students, research scholars, faculty, researchers and staff of VISTAS.

b. To establish institutional mechanisms through education and training to facilitate responsible conduct of research and to deter plagiarism and other forms of academic misconduct.
c. To develop systems for the detection of plagiarism and mechanisms for addressing cases of plagiarism in accordance with applicable regulations and principles of natural justice.

4. FORMS OF PLAGIARISM

a. Quoting another person's language, data, illustrations, tables or other material without due acknowledgement of the source.
b. Copying any part of a book, article, report, monograph, dissertation, thesis or other work without proper citation.
c. Buying, stealing, borrowing or otherwise presenting another person's assignment, experiment, result or work as one's own.
d. Paraphrasing the work of others without due acknowledgement.
e. Using another person's ideas without crediting the originator.
f. Copying, cutting and pasting material from the internet or any online source and submitting it as one's own work without proper reference or citation.
g. Presenting as new and original an idea, work or product derived from an existing source without appropriate acknowledgement.

5. DETECTION OF PLAGIARISM

a. The Research Scholar and Research Supervisor shall ensure that the thesis / dissertation / research report, as applicable, is checked using plagiarism / similarity detection software approved by VISTAS. The similarity report generated using Drillbit shall be submitted along with the required version of the work to the appropriate authority / committee as prescribed by VISTAS.
b. The final draft of the thesis shall be submitted along with the similarity report generated by the approved software. VISTAS shall verify the report and take action, wherever required, in accordance with this Policy.
c. The Research Scholar shall submit the prescribed declaration relating to originality and the similarity report (Annexure-I).

d. The Research Scholar shall submit the prescribed undertaking / affidavit relating to the originality of the Ph.D. thesis, wherever required by VISTAS (Annexure-II).

6. SIMILARITY CHECKS – EXCLUSIONS

While carrying out similarity checks, the following shall be excluded, subject to the applicable UGC Regulations and the settings prescribed by VISTAS:

i. Quoted work reproduced with necessary permission and/or attribution.
ii. References, bibliography, table of contents, preface and acknowledgements.
iii. Generic terms, laws, standard symbols and standard equations.

Note: Similarity identified by software shall be interpreted in accordance with the applicable regulatory provisions and shall not, by itself, be treated as conclusive proof of plagiarism. Academic judgement and due process shall be applied while examining a case.

7. DEPARTMENTAL ACADEMIC INTEGRITY PANEL (DAIP)

i. All Departments in VISTAS shall notify a DAIP whose composition shall be as given below:
    a. Chairperson – Head of the Department
    b. Member – Senior academician from outside the Department, to be nominated by the Head of the Institution.
    c. Member – A person well versed with anti-plagiarism tools, to be nominated by the Head of the Department.
ii. The tenure of the members referred to in clauses (b) and (c) shall be two years. The quorum for the meetings shall be two out of three members, including the Chairperson.
iii. The DAIP shall follow the principles of natural justice while deciding allegations of plagiarism against students, research scholars, faculty, researchers and staff.
iv. The DAIP shall assess the level of plagiarism and recommend the applicable penalty(ies).
v. After investigation, the DAIP shall submit its report, together with recommendations on the penalty(ies), to the IAIP within 45 days from the date of receipt of the complaint / initiation of proceedings.

8. INSTITUTIONAL ACADEMIC INTEGRITY PANEL (IAIP)

i. VISTAS shall notify an IAIP whose composition shall be as given below:
   a. Chairperson – Pro-Vice-Chancellor / Dean / Senior Academician of VISTAS.
   b. Member – Senior Academician other than the Chairperson, to be nominated by the Head of the Institution.
   c. Member – One member from outside VISTAS, to be nominated by the Head of the Institution.
   d. Member – A person well versed with anti-plagiarism tools, to be nominated by the Head of the Institution.

   The Chairperson of DAIP and IAIP shall not be the same. The tenure of the IAIP members, including the Chairperson, shall be three years. The quorum for the meetings shall be three out of four members, including the Chairperson.

ii. The IAIP shall consider the recommendations of the DAIP.

iii. The IAIP shall also investigate cases of plagiarism in accordance with the applicable regulations.

iv. The IAIP shall follow the principles of natural justice while deciding allegations of plagiarism against students, research scholars, faculty, researchers and staff of VISTAS.

v. The IAIP shall have the power to review the recommendations of the DAIP, including the recommended penalties, with due justification.

vi. The IAIP shall submit its investigation report and recommendations on the penalty(ies), where applicable, to the Head of the Institution within 45 days from the date of receipt of the recommendation of the DAIP / complaint / initiation of proceedings.

vii. The IAIP shall provide a copy of its report to the person(s) against whom the inquiry report is submitted.

9. PROCEDURE FOR EXAMINATION OF PLAGIARISM REPORTS

Where a thesis, dissertation or research report is suspected of plagiarism, the matter shall be examined through the DAIP and IAIP mechanism prescribed in Sections 1.6 and 1.7 of this Policy. The person concerned shall be given an opportunity to present his / her case, and the principles of natural justice shall be followed.

9.1. Penalties in Case of Plagiarism in Submission of Thesis and Dissertations

The Institutional Academic Integrity Panel (IAIP) shall recommend / impose penalties, as applicable, considering the severity and level of plagiarism in accordance with the applicable UGC Regulations:

1. Level 0: Similarities up to 10% – Minor similarities; no penalty.
2. Level 1: Similarities above 10% to 40% – The student / research scholar shall be asked to submit a revised script within a stipulated period not exceeding six months.
3. Level 2: Similarities above 40% to 60% – The student / research scholar shall be debarred from submitting a revised script for a period of one year.
4. Level 3: Similarities above 60% – The registration of the student / research scholar for the programme shall be cancelled.

Note 1: In the case of repeated plagiarism, the penalty shall be imposed in accordance with the applicable UGC Regulations.

Note 2: Where plagiarism is established after the award of a degree or credit, action shall be taken in accordance with the applicable UGC Regulations and VISTAS regulations.

9.2. Penalties in Case of Plagiarism in Academic and Research Publications

a. Level 0: Similarities up to 10% – Minor similarities; no penalty.
b. Level 1: Similarities above 10% to 40%
    i. The manuscript shall be withdrawn.
c. Level 2: Similarities above 40% to 60%
    i. The manuscript shall be withdrawn.
    ii. The supervisor concerned shall be denied the right to one annual increment.
    iii. The supervisor concerned shall not be allowed to be a supervisor to any new Master's / Ph.D. student or Research Scholar for a period of two years.
d. Level 3: Similarities above 60%
    i. The manuscript shall be withdrawn.
    ii. The supervisor concerned shall be denied the right to two successive annual increments.

iii. The supervisor concerned shall not be allowed to be a supervisor to any new Master's / Ph.D. student or Research Scholar for a period of three years.

10. RESUBMISSION AFTER CORRECTION

Where revision and resubmission are permitted, the revised thesis / dissertation / research report shall be subjected to a fresh similarity check and placed before the appropriate academic authority, wherever required, after compliance with the directions of the DAIP / IAIP. Further processing shall be undertaken only after the prescribed requirements have been satisfied.

11. PLAGIARISM REPORTED AFTER THE AWARD OF DEGREE

Where plagiarism is reported after the award of a Ph.D. degree, the matter shall be dealt with in accordance with the applicable UGC Regulations and VISTAS regulations. The Vice-Chancellor may constitute an Expert Committee, wherever required, to inquire into the allegation and submit its report with recommendations.

The person concerned shall be given an opportunity of being heard in accordance with the principles of natural justice.

The report and recommendations shall be placed before the appropriate statutory / competent authority of VISTAS for consideration and action in accordance with the applicable regulations.

12. POLICY ADMINISTRATION, REVIEW AND AMENDMENT

This Policy shall be administered by VISTAS through the appropriate academic and research authorities. Matters not specifically covered under this Policy shall be referred to the competent authority of VISTAS for decision in accordance with applicable statutory and regulatory provisions.

The Policy shall be reviewed at least once every three years, or earlier whenever required, to ensure alignment with UGC Regulations, other applicable statutory requirements, VISTAS regulations and institutional requirements. Any amendment shall take effect upon approval by the competent authority of VISTAS.

Prepared by: Dean – Academic Research
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5/6/2026

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