

Bundesministerium für Bildung,
Wissenschaft und Forschung
Minoritenplatz 5
1010 Wien

Die Central European University Private University nimmt zur schriftlichen parlamentarischen Anfrage Nr. 4903/J1 von 2 vom 14.01.2021 (XXVII. GP) zur Weiterleitung an das Parlament wie folgt Stellung:

Question 13: Wie viele Plagiatsvorwürfe gab es in den letzten zehn Jahren in Österreich insgesamt? Es wird um detaillierte Auflistung nach Jahr, Universität, Institut, Fachbereich und betreuender Professor/in ersucht.

The Central European University Private University (CEU PU) fully operates in Austria since the academic year 2020/21, and this is the period for which we are providing information. The University has an elaborate policy and regulations on plagiarism („CEU PU’s Policy on Plagiarism“), which differentiates between serious and less serious cases of plagiarism as well as cases of poor scholarship. Please see the definitions of these 3 categories with examples as an attachment to this answer sheet. CEU PU subscribes to anti-plagiarism software and available tools, which are regularly used by faculty and departments not only at the level of Master’s or Doctoral theses, but also at the level of individual course assignments. CEU PU students receive training on academic honesty during the orientation program before commencing their studies. The University’s Center for Academic Writing also regularly trains and guides students in this area.

Please note that all cases reported in this questionnaire pertain to the level of individual course assignments, and NOT to the level of Master’s or Doctoral theses. The reported offenses typically occurred unintentionally, due to incorrect referencing practices.

Since September 2020, on the graduate level, there has been one reported case of serious plagiarism recorded at Central European University Private University (CEU PU). The offense was at the level of a course assignment. The student who committed the plagiarism left the academic program and the University for a different reason, therefore, no disciplinary proceedings could take place.

On the graduate level, a total of three less serious plagiarism cases were reported since September 2020. These cases were at the level of a course assignment. In line with the provisions of the University's Policy on Plagiarism, these two students received oral or written reprimands, and they were required to re-do and re-submit their assignments for a lowered grade.

In the third case of less serious plagiarism case, which also happened at the level of a course assignment, the student received a written reprimand. The student eventually decided not to complete the course. Therefore, they were not required to re-write the assignment in question. However, the student was warned about the more serious consequences of any subsequent plagiarism offenses.

On the undergraduate (BA) level, a total of three less serious plagiarism cases were reported since September 2020. These cases were at the level of a course assignment. In line with the provisions of the University's Policy on Plagiarism, these students received oral or written reprimands, and they were required to re-write their assignments for a lowered grade.

CEU PU continues to focus on the principles of academic honesty through implementation of the Policy and by providing students, who come from over 100 countries and different higher education backgrounds, with training and guidance in this area.

Question 14: Wie oft waren davon politische Funktionäre betroffen?

There have been no reported cases of serious plagiarism committed by politicians studying at the Central European University Private University (CEU PU) since the beginning of the current academic year in September, 2020, when the University began its operations in Vienna as an Austrian accredited private higher education institution.

Question 15: Welche Konsequenzen hatten diese Vorwürfe jeweils für die Betroffenen?

Not applicable as per response to question 14.

Question 16: Wie wird derzeit beim Aufkommen solcher Vorwürfe konkret vorgegangen?

Cases of plagiarism are handled according to the stipulations of the Central European University's Policy on Plagiarism and the University's Code of Ethics. Student cases of plagiarism are dealt with per the University's Policy on Plagiarism, whereas faculty cases are regulated by the University's Code of Ethics.

1) Student cases of plagiarism

The University utilizes certain preventive measures to avoid plagiarism offenses. Per the University's Policy on Plagiarism, these measures include the following:

- Academic units and teaching staff are responsible for informing students of what constitutes plagiarism and how it can be avoided. This information is usually included in the academic units' Student Handbooks.
- Mandatory academic writing courses are part of the curriculum of most programs, which serve to provide students with the necessary skills training.
- Academic units are expected to ensure that students are fully aware of the University's Policy on Plagiarism and the consequences if they fail to comply.
- Teaching staff uses online similarity detection devices (software) to reveal cases of plagiarism.

In case possibly plagiarism is detected in a student's work, the faculty member teaching the course and the Head of the academic unit assess the gravity of the offense. In case of a first or relatively mild offense, the faculty member may handle the case per the Guidelines to the University's Policy on Plagiarism or they might refer the case to the academic unit's Committee on Academic Dishonesty. If the offense is serious or repeated it is handled by the Committee on Academic Dishonesty.

The Policy on Plagiarism requires that in all cases the evidence for plagiarism be carefully documented and retained by the respective academic unit for 5 years. Plagiarism allegation cases are handled confidentially.

According to the University's Policy on Plagiarism (p.7), the following measures are to be taken if plagiarism is confirmed:

“(1) In the case of a first offense classified as less serious plagiarism, the student should normally:

- a. receive an oral or written reprimand,
- b. rewrite the assignment and receive a lowered grade

(2) In the case of a second, subsequent minor offense, or in the case of a first offense that in the

department's opinion is more serious, the student should normally:

- a. receive a written reprimand (not reflected on the transcript)
- b. rewrite the assignment, receive a lowered grade or receive the lowest passing grade, with or without being given a fail grade

(3) In the case of continuing offences, or of a serious offence, students should normally receive a

- a. written reprimand (that will usually appear on the student's transcript)

b. fail grade, with or without the possibility of retake (often depends on whether the course is compulsory or elective).

(4) In very serious cases such as plagiarizing a major part of an assignment, or persistent plagiarism despite written warnings and other sanctions described above, the department should consider initiating formal procedures towards expelling the student from the University in accordance with the applicable policies.

In the case of multiple simultaneous minor offences, the department should decide whether these repetitions stem from ignorance (in which case they may be treated as a single offence) or the intent either to deceive or to avoid work, either of which may justify more severe action.

The offenses in the last category (Poor Scholarship) may often be attributable to poor ability, unclear thinking or carelessness. If so, they should not be considered academic dishonesty as such but should be penalized in the same way as other poor quality work, namely by a decrease in the final grade commensurate with the negative impact they have on the assignment as a whole. If such offenses are considered to be a deliberate attempt to achieve a higher grade, more serious action should be considered."

2) Faculty cases of plagiarism

Faculty cases of plagiarism are handled according to the provisions of the University's Code of Ethics and the University's Disciplinary Committee.

3) Alumni/graduates' cases of plagiarism

The current version of the Code of Ethics makes a special provision applicable to the graduates/alumni of the University. Specifically „alumni may be subject to the provisions of the Code where academic dishonesty as provided for in Annex 4, 1 (a) – (b), (e) – (f), (h), (k) comes to light after leaving CEU where it impacts the integrity of the awarding of a CEU degree" (page 3). A possible sanction as indicated in Annex 7 would be a proposal to the Rector that a Degree be rescinded in cases of alumni found to have committed serious academic misconduct in obtaining their degree.

Question 17: Wie wird derzeit beim Aufkommen solcher Vorwürfe betreffend eines im Ausland erworbenen akademischen Titels konkret vorgegangen? While no such cases have occurred, allegations of plagiarism regarding an academic title obtained abroad would be dealt with by the following University bodies:

1) The Dean of Students or the Provost would handle cases of Students,
2) Faculty cases would be dealt with by the Disciplinary Committee on the basis of, inter alia, the following provisions of the University's Code of Ethics (pp. 20-21):

"c) Academic deception, including falsification of letters of recommendation and misrepresentation of a person's academic accomplishments;

q) Other misconduct that in the judgment of the Disciplinary Committee seriously deviates from standards of the academic community.”

Question 19: Gibt es an österreichischen Universitäten Personen, die dem akademischen (Lehr)personal angehören und gegen die ein Verfahren wegen Verstoßes gegen die gute wissenschaftliche Praxis bzw. wegen Plagiatsvorwürfen war, bzw. anhängig ist?

There have been no reported cases of serious plagiarism committed by academic (teaching) staff members at the Central European University Private University (CEU PU) since the beginning of the current academic year in September, 2020, when University began its operations in Vienna as an Austrian accredited private higher education institution.

Question 20: Wenn ja, an welcher Universität und an welcher Fakultät und um welche Personen handelt es sich?

Not applicable as per response to question 19.

Wien, am 12.februar 2021

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'A. R. Biedner', is written in a cursive style.

Table 1: Offending Strategies in Writing –CEU’s policy on Plagiarism, Feb 2021

Severity of Offense	Example
Serious plagiarism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submitting as one’s own work a text largely or wholly written by another person or persons. • Copying or paraphrasing substantial sections¹ from one or more works of other authors into one’s own text, without attribution, that is, omitting any reference to the work(s) either in the body of the text, in footnotes, or in the bibliography/reference list. • Submitting a thesis as part of masters or doctoral requirements which has been previously submitted to another institution in English or in another language.
Less serious plagiarism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paraphrase of a substantial section or several smaller sections of another text or texts without any reference in the body text, but the work is included in the bibliography/reference list. • Copying verbatim two or three not necessarily consecutive phrases, or one or two not necessarily consecutive sentences, from the work of others without attribution. • Copying verbatim one substantial or several smaller sections from another text without quotation marks but with reference provided within the student’s text. • Submitting without permission one's own work that has been largely or wholly submitted for credit to another course.
Poor Scholarship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Copying verbatim one substantial or several smaller sections from another text without quotation marks but with reference provided within the student’s text. • Summarizing an author’s ideas at length but only mentioning the author or the source at the end of the paragraph. • Mentioning an author with appropriate citation in an early sentence but no attribution in subsequent sentences, so that it is unclear whether the author's ideas are continuing or the writer’s own comments being offered. • Including a correctly referenced short fragment from another text but without quotation marks. • Using an author’s work with incomplete reference (e.g. page number is missing, or the work appears only in a footnote/parenthesis and is missing from the reference list.

¹ The word ‘section’ is understood here to mean more than one consecutive sentence. A copied section that has had a small number of extra words inserted by the student may still be considered as copied.

