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Advice Education Committee Research Masters

Cover sheet

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Topic

Standardized tool to scan MSc theses for plagiarism

Submitted by ECRM members

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Date final advice

23-01-2019

Date ECRM meeting

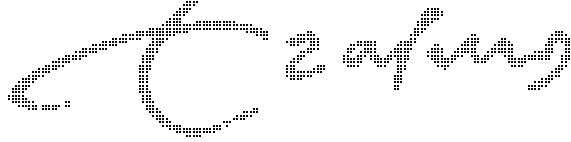
17-01-2019

Topic area

- New policy or new educational component
- Revision of policy or educational component
- Topic of annual planning ECRM from PDCA cycle
- Topic of annual planning ECRM put on the agenda by ECRM member
- Other: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Contact (study coordinator or advisor)

not applicable



Advice Education Committee Research Masters

Standardized tool to scan MSc theses for plagiarism

Contents of advice

1. Question/issue leading up to the advice

It is important to educate students about plagiarism and make them aware that original ideas, figures, results etc. are considered an intellectual property protected by copyright laws. At this moment there is no clear approach of scanning master's theses for the following Research Masters: Health Sciences, Infection and Immunity, Clinical Research, and Molecular Medicine. Neuroscience has developed a pipeline where they use 'Turn-it-in' software as a scanning tool, however it is still unclear how it works.

2. Reason for advice

Although many students are aware of the consequences of plagiarism, unfortunately some of them are failing to put quotations in a correct way. From previous discussions of the ECRM (e.g. meeting on 2017-10-26), it became clear that in research reports students use figures without referring and naming the source. It is thus important to consistently check all research master theses in the same way and educate students about plagiarism. Currently there is no standardized method to check master's theses for plagiarism, although there are methods developed for PhD programs and BSc in Medicine at Erasmus University.

3. Advice

Intellectual integrity is central for the academia and damaging it by plagiarisms should be avoided. Because of that all research masters should use a plagiarism scanner as a tool to avoid academic fraud. There is still some discussion about which software should be implemented. Erasmus University has a license for the 'Turn-it-in' plagiarism detection software. This might become an option that can be adopted by all five Research Masters. However there needs to come more clarity about its terms and conditions before using it since there is some discussion and confusion about the rights of the 'Turn-it-in'-provider to claim the results of manuscript as their own copyright/IP. Another important issue it to use the same standardize pipeline agreed by all Master programs for the interpretation of the scan results. In order to do so, there is a need for a training for all software users (teachers/ supervisors). It should also become clear how many times a student can alter and re-enter a document.

4. Conclusion – core of advice.

1. All research masters should adopt the same thesis plagiarism checking program.'Turn-it-in' is one option, however there is still some discussion and confusion about the rights of the 'Turn-it-in' provider.
2. Users of 'Turn-it-in' or similar plagiarism checking software should be trained in its use and in the correct interpretation of the results obtained.
3. Standard pass/fail criteria for all plagiarism checking software need to be agreed for all Master programs.