Information and declaration on the use of plagiarism detection software

The University of Trento has acquired appropriate software (Compilatio.net), with a view to preventing the plagiarism of texts. This software assists teaching staff to check that citations and bibliographical references are inserted correctly in theses and texts and that the definitive written work produced by students intending to graduate, as well as masters’ and doctoral students, are authentic and the product of their own intellectual creative effort.

Ethical practice prohibits the partial or complete self-attribution of words, ideas, research, discoveries and visual images made by others, in whatever language these are officially presented, or the failure to cite sources.

The Code of conduct and ethics for students of the University of Trento provides, in addition to other specific forms of conduct, for the prohibition of plagiarism of the work of others.

The University of Trento Code of ethics expressly provides that “All research activity is based on the correct recognition and attribution of intellectual achievements. University members must therefore avoid every form of plagiarism or the improper use of the intellectual activity of others. […] With particular regard to the writing up of theses and texts, including the undertaking of examinations, it is the specific responsibility of individuals to uphold these rules, avoiding all forms of plagiarism and dishonest conduct. It is furthermore the duty of all university staff to flag every case of plagiarism or the improper use of the intellectual activity of others of which they may become aware”.

Under the Code of conduct, “plagiarism consists in the improper reproduction of the intellectual activity of others in the elaboration of a written text of any kind, where such intellectual activity is not cited in the sources of the written text, or the unacknowledged appropriation of ideas, concepts, presentation, data or any other information reproduced in written work (including digital versions), or the oral expressions of others, without having expressly and correctly indicated the sources or having obtained the express consent of the author or inventor”.

The law on copyright (law no. 633 of 22 April 1941 and subsequent amendments) protects intellectual property of the creative kind. Theses are intellectual works and as such are protected by the same law, which confers a range of exclusive economic and capital rights in the work (distribution, communication, reproduction, translation, etc.) as well as moral rights (rights to authorship and integrity of the work, etc.).

Article 70 of law no. 633/41 provides as follows: “1. The summary, citation or reproduction of extracts or parts of works and their communication to the public are free to use for the purposes of criticism or discussion, within the limits justified by these purposes and so long as they do not constitute competition in the economic exploitation of the work; if used for educational purposes or scientific research, such use must occur for the purposes of illustration and not for commercial ends. […] 3. The summary, citation or reproduction must always be accompanied by a mention of the title of the work, the author(s) name, that of the editor and, if the work is a translation, that of the translator, where these are indicated in the copied work.”

In addition, law no. 475 of 19 April 1925 as subsequently amended, on the prohibition of the false attribution of the work of others by prospective graduates and those wishing to obtain diplomas, offices, appointments and public positions provides under art 1.1 that “whosoever, in the course of examinations or selection procedures prescribed or required
by authorities or public administrations for the conferral of degrees or any other rank or
scholastic or academic title, for recognition of qualifications to teach and the exercise of
professions, for the issue of diplomas or licenses, presents as their own work
dissertations, studies, publications, technical projects and in general, work that has been
produced by others, shall be liable to a term of imprisonment of three to twelve months
[...]”.

Those writing theses, likewise any other work produced in order to complete academic
examinations, should be aware of their own and others’ rights but also of the obligations
imposed by ethical considerations and the law. This means that in the course of academic
examinations, in theses for graduation in first degrees, masters’ degrees and doctorates,
attention must be paid to the methodology of structuring and drafting of the text, including
the use of citations, data and images and their insertion into the text, so as to avoid the
risk of incurring the civil sanctions and criminal penalties that are provided for by law.
Theses must consist of original work and be the product of personal endeavour.
The software supplier warrants that the work uploaded on its platform is not visible to third
parties, but only to the teaching staff with responsibility for academic examinations and
theses, thus protecting the privacy of the information. The files are stored in a Compilatio.net
data bank with the sole purpose of permiting University teaching staff to make a
comparison with texts already in the data base, in order to verify potential analogous
material and thus prevent plagiarism. Any resulting indication of similarity does not
constitute conclusive proof of plagiarism. Such an evaluation is for the teaching staff to
make. Since the service is offered via the internet, the software supplier and the University
of Trento are not liable for any cases of online piracy which may arise through
unauthorized access to and improper use of material uploaded into the data base.

For these purposes and acknowledging the information set out above, I the undersigned
(name and surname)__________________________________________________________________
Enrolled on the following Degree/Doctoral Degree/Master’s Course in
______________________________________________________________________________
University registration number ________________________________________________________
Title of Thesis
______________________________________________________________________________

Thesis supervisor:
Professor______________________________________________________

undertake to produce my written undergraduate/master’s/doctoral thesis as an original
piece of work and in conformity with the guidelines provided by my thesis supervisor, fully
respecting the current laws and regulations governing plagiarism.
I confirm that I am aware of the use of Compilatio.net software and the possibility of
incurring the penalties provided for in cases of ascertained plagiarism.
I further confirm that I absolve the Department, the University of Trento and the staff employed by it from any liability whatsoever which may arise from any claims and/or claims by third parties for violation of copyright regarding the content of my thesis. Within the meaning of Legislative Decree 196/2003 (Code governing data protection), the personal data supplied will be used by the University of Trento solely for the institutional purposes set out above, in accordance with the principles of fairness, lawfulness and transparency.

Trento, __________________________

Signed_____________________________