



SNSF policy on plagiarism, self-plagiarism and recycling of text in research proposals

Extract of the presentation at the workshop „Avoiding Plagiarism“

PSI, June 11 2012

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Background

- Several cases of plagiarism or scientific misconduct detected in the last few years.
- Implementation of specific regulations in 2009.
- Implementation of systematic controls of applications using a software, elaboration of standards and procedures in case of suspected scientific misconduct.
- October 2010: start of a 2-year trial phase

First year report (including case descriptions):

www.snf.ch/SiteCollectionDocuments/Web-News/news_111209_plagiat_e.pdf

SNSF regulations on scientific misconduct

Regulations of the National Research Council on the treatment of **scientific misconduct** by **applicants** and **grantees**

http://www.snf.ch/SiteCollectionDocuments/ueb_org_fehlverh_gesuchstellende_e.pdf

Principles:

- Deal with scientific misconduct, and not only with plagiarism;
- Apply to frauds during the application procedure as well as to misconduct during a grant;
- Leave the primary responsibility over the proceedings in case of suspected misconduct to the concerned research institution;
- Cite the publication “Scientific Integrity” by the Swiss Academies of Arts and Sciences as reference document

SNSF regulations on scientific misconduct

Definitions

- **Scientific misconduct** is a breach of the rules of **good scientific practice**, and in particular
 - **the appropriation of another person's results or findings as one's own (plagiarism),**
 - deliberate or grossly negligent **falsification of facts,**
 - deliberate or grossly negligent violation of **another person's intellectual property rights,** or
 - interference in some other way with another person's research activity.

SNSF regulations on scientific misconduct

Definitions

- **Scientific misconduct** is also committed by persons who are **complicit in such misconduct**.
 - Complicity is constituted by willful or grossly **negligent cooperation in another person's violation**,
 - **knowledge of** another person's **falsifications**,
 - **co-authorship** of a publication affected by scientific misconduct,
 - **concealment** of scientific misconduct, or
 - **gross negligence in** carrying out a duty of **supervision**.



SNSF regulations

SNSF Definition of plagiarism

- Plagiarism is defined as **the appropriation of another person's results and findings as one's own**. Furthermore, if another person's **formulation of scientific knowledge is reproduced**, but not adequately cited, this also constitutes plagiarism. The use of texts written by other people must be clearly indicated for the reader: this requires a reference to the source document and **for example** the use of quotation marks.

SNSF regulations

mySNF

- The last step of the submission process of an application on mySNF, all applicants confirm the following conditions:

*"The main applicant hereby confirms that the information given in all parts of this proposal including the attachments is correct. Documents were prepared in agreement with the persons involved and according to the standards of good scientific conduct. All information relevant to the proposal is presented unambiguously and completely. **Earlier work of the applicants and third parties is declared as such and publications of the applicant(s) and of third parties are correctly cited.**"*



The messages of the regulations

- **The standards for applications are the same as for publications.**
- **To be guilty of scientific misconduct does not depend on whether the act has been committed deliberately or grossly negligent .**
- **Co-authors and Co-applicant have a co-responsibility.**
- **The formulation of scientific knowledge is considered as integral part of scientific work. Formulations therefore must be cited.**
- **There is no formalism on how foreign text must be indicated.**
- **Own results and own previously used formulations must be indicated and cited.**



The same standards in research plans and in publications

In science, already published work is cited in order to...

- avoid theft of the intellectual property of others
- give credit to the work of others
- avoid that the reader falsely assumes that the material is new, original and accurate to the best of the author's abilities

All aspects apply also for research plans. Violations of the last point are of a particular importance in an evaluation process.



Procedures in case of suspected misconduct

1. Comparison of research plans with WWW using a software (spot controls and/or based on comments by experts on suspect passages).
2. In depth analysis of the results of the comparison (Is the copied text cited? Who are the original authors?...)
3. If the suspicion is confirmed: Informing the applicant on the allegation and invite him/her to comment on it.
4. Decision by the responsible evaluation body, eventually also on a sanction. (with a right to appeal at the Federal Administrative Court)



Decision

- The severity of scientific misconduct is assessed based on different factors.
 - The uncited use of texts of a general nature on the state of research in the field or on methods is regarded as less severe than the uncited use of results and new ideas that are unequivocally attributable to a particular person.
 - The larger the scope of the uncited passages, the more severe the case.
 - Depending on the context, the SNSF may also consider other extenuating or aggravating circumstances.



Measures

- In case of minor inaccuracies and omissions that are NOT judged as scientific misconduct, the applicant is reminded of the principles of scientific integrity.
- If the investigation reveals a case of scientific misconduct, the evaluation of the application is stopped.
- In addition, the responsible applicant(s) may be reprimanded, warned or prohibited from submitting further applications