

# Research Ethics Compliance Manual

Waseda University, Graduate School of Social Sciences

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## Introduction

Compliance with the principles of research ethics has become increasingly important in the present day. In the first place, it should go without saying that academic research activities must be carried out through honest and appropriate means and procedures. However, as academic research expands throughout the world, it has become necessary for Japan to implement stricter measures in accordance with the global standards of research ethics. Furthermore, new ethical issues have arisen with the advent of new technologies such as generative AI. In light of the current global situation, the Graduate School of Social Sciences would like to re-emphasize the importance of research ethics to all students enrolled in the Master's and Doctoral programs.

Research activities that violate the rules of research ethics not only harm the validity of research results; they call into question the social responsibility of the researchers involved, who may end up sacrificing their careers as a consequence of such actions. Therefore, it can be said that those who do not have a proper understanding of research ethics lack the necessary qualifications to become a researcher. Students should keep this point firmly in mind as they devote themselves to their field of study. In addition, students who are writing papers should pay close attention to this manual and continuously check whether their research activities and associated results are conducted/produced in accordance with the University's research ethics standards.

Waseda University has established a code of conduct and ethical behavior that all researchers involved in academic research activities at the University must observe in the "Waseda University Academic Research Ethics Charter." Please make sure to read the full text of the charter, which is provided in the Appendix of this manual.

## 1. Research Ethics Definition

Academic research activities, whether in the natural sciences or in the social sciences/humanities, have a significant impact on human society. Research conducted through fraudulent/dishonest means, or

research that lacking in integrity or without consideration for the public interest and human rights has the potential to impact society in a negative manner, while at the same time undermining society's trust in legitimate research.

Research ethics is a code of ethical principles which must be followed in order to avoid such negative outcomes. Academic research activities are not simply tasks that must be performed in order for a researcher to obtain a degree. Their main purpose is to contribute to the advancement of our global society. Thus, strict observation of and compliance with research ethics rules is the social responsibility of everyone involved in academic research.

## **2. Research Misconduct**

What specific acts constitute violations of research ethics? With reference to the Waseda University Academic Research Ethics Charter, we will explain these violations and how they relate to students' research activities and the presentation of research results below.

Research misconduct can be classified into the following three categories.

- (1) Violations of human rights in research activities and results
- (2) Research conducted through fraudulent/dishonest means
- (3) Fraudulent/unauthorized use of research funds

### **(1) Violations of human rights in research activities and results**

Researchers must approach their work with the utmost care in order to prevent human rights violations occurring in the processes and results of their research. In particular, there must be no discrimination based on race, gender, social status, ideology/beliefs, religion, nationality, and such during the research process. Research results should also not contain any such forms of discrimination.

Furthermore, sufficient care must be taken in order to prevent the leakage of personal information. In the humanities and social sciences fields, it is common for researchers to obtain personal information that can be used to identify specific persons in their research processes. Leakages of such personal information must be prevented as they can result in the infringements of individuals' rights and interests. Researchers should take note that when conducting questionnaires or surveys that involve the disclosure of personal information for the writing of a thesis/paper, an ethical review of the research plan may be required. For more information, please refer to the section on "Ethics Review Procedures concerning Research with Human Subjects" on the web page of the Waseda University Research Ethics Office (<https://www.waseda.jp/inst/ore/en/procedures/human/>).

### **(2) Research conducted through fraudulent/dishonest means**

The presentation of research results (conference presentations, paper publications) must be made via legitimate means and procedures. In the world of academic research, the presentation of research results achieved through fraudulent/dishonest means is considered the equivalent of a crime and will be severely punished. The following five categories are considered to be the main examples of dishonest means:

A detailed description of each of these is provided below:

#### **1) Fabrication**

Fabrication refers to the creation of data and survey results that do not actually exist and presenting them as if they were real.

##### **[Example 1]**

To produce an 'official' document by yourself and claim in your paper that your hypothesis can be proven by this document.

##### **[Example 2]**

To create fictitious experimental results and describe them in your paper in order to reinforce your

own point.

[Example 3]

To claim that you conducted an interview that did not happen in reality, create the contents of a fake interview and present the contents in a paper as evidence that reinforces your own arguments.

## 2) Falsification

Falsification refers to altering actual survey results and data in order to prove the validity of your hypothesis or to justify your arguments.

[Example 1]

To change statistical data in such a way as to indicate that they prove your hypothesis and to describe them as such in a paper.

[Example 2]

To remove certain parts of official documents in order to support your own interpretation or reinforce your point and to present this interpretation or point in your paper.

[Example 3]

To conduct an interview but omit parts of the interview that are contrary to your hypothesis in your paper.

## 3) Ghost authorship:

This refers to the act of publishing a paper as wholly your own writing, even though you had part of or all of it written by a third party. In the context of the research process, presenting your research results as if you conducted all the research by yourself despite others being involved in conducting surveys or performing analysis of the results is also considered fraud by collaboration.

[Example 1]

To ask a senior scholar/student to write your conclusion for you because you cannot meet the deadline and then submit the report as it is.

[Example 2]

To ask a junior scholar/student to conduct the necessary interviews/surveys and then prepare the thesis without any reference to him/her/them, as if you did everything by yourself.

Finally, all acts of ghost authorship are considered as research misconduct; therefore, all participants involved will be subject to strict punishment.

## 4) Plagiarism (fraudulent /unauthorized use)

All work that is submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for a degree must also meet the following two conditions:

- Everything you present as original must be written using your own expressions and words.
- Everything you present as original must be based on your own ideas and judgments/evaluations.

Plagiarism refers to the act of stealing other people's words, expressions, ideas, judgments, evaluations, etc., and presenting them as your own. Plagiarism infringes upon the value of other researchers' original work, and it is treated as a crime in the academic world. Of all the forms of misconduct, plagiarism is the most likely to occur in the writing of a thesis/ paper. Examples of plagiarism and ways to prevent it will be described in detail in the next section.

## (3) Misuse of research grants

In most cases, there are strict rules/official regulations governing the use of research grants.

Use of grants that does not comply with these regulations qualifies as misconduct. If research grants are improperly used in the research preparation for a thesis/paper, the thesis/paper itself will be considered to have been written/prepared through dishonest means. Furthermore, if such misuse of grants is discovered after a degree has been awarded, there may be severe consequences for the researcher(s) involved, including but not limited to the revocation of the degree. Sufficient care and awareness of the rules and regulations are of utmost importance in order to avoid the misuse of research grants.

### 3. Avoiding fraudulent/unauthorized use and plagiarism

As previously mentioned, plagiarism refers to the act of stealing other people's words, expressions, ideas, judgments, evaluations, etc., and presenting them as your own in papers to be published. However, in the process of writing an academic paper, it is inevitable that researchers will borrow from and refer to the knowledge gained from others' previous research, quoting their words, expressions and ideas in the process. Hence, it is necessary to state explicitly in your paper when you are using the ideas and arguments of others, while giving them credit. If you neglect to do so by citing sources improperly, you may be deemed to have plagiarized, and severe punishment may follow. Plagiarism is considered to be a crime in the academic world. It goes without saying that intentional plagiarism is totally unacceptable. However, you may commit plagiarism *unintentionally* if you do not properly understand what constitutes plagiarism and how to cite sources appropriately. Therefore, we will present some examples of plagiarism below and explain in detail what makes them acts of plagiarism, as well as how to avoid committing such acts.

#### (1) Specific examples of plagiarism

##### 1) Examples of plagiarism and appropriate citation

[Example 1]

Sentences from another person's previous research are borrowed in their original form, but neither quotation marks nor explanatory comments are given.

##### <Borrowed text>

{The factors of industrialization, urbanization, wealth, and education are so closely interrelated as to form one common factor. And the factors subsumed under economic development carry with it the political correlate of democracy.}

##### <Your text> (The underlined text is borrowed.)

{This statistical association between income and democracy is the cornerstone of the influential modernization theory. Democracy was both created and consolidated by a broad process of modernization which involved changes in the factors of industrialization, urbanization, wealth, and education [which] are so closely interrelated as to form one common factor. And the factors subsumed under economic development carry with it the political correlate of democracy.}

This is a typical example of plagiarism. Although the other person's ideas, expressions, and words are used in their original form, neither quotation marks nor explanatory comments are given. The way to write a proper reference is shown below.

{This statistical association between income and democracy is the cornerstone of the influential modernization theory. Lipset (1959) suggested that democracy was both created and consolidated by a broad process of "modernization" which involved changes in "the factors of industrialization, urbanization, wealth, and education [which] are so closely interrelated as to form one common factor. And the factors subsumed under economic development carry with it the political correlate of democracy" (80).<sup>(1)</sup>

(1) Lipset, Seymour M. 1959. "Some Social Requisites of Democracy: Economic Development and Political Legitimacy." *American Political Science Review*, 53(1): 69-105.}

In this example, the quoted sentence is marked (with quotation marks) and a note number is included. Following which, the source of the quoted text is then provided in a footnote or an endnote. This makes it a proper citation and is therefore no longer an example of plagiarism.

[Example 2]

You revised or summarized the text of an article and included it in your paper without any reference note.

<Borrowed text>

{The factors of industrialization, urbanization, wealth, and education are so closely interrelated as to form one common factor. And the factors subsumed under economic development carry with it the political correlate of democracy.}

<Your text> (The underlined text is revised.)

{This statistical association between income and democracy is the cornerstone of the influential modernization theory. Democracy was both created and consolidated by a broad process of modernization which involved changes in the factors of industrialization, urbanization, wealth, and education [which] are closely related to each other so that they form one common factor. And the factors involved with economic development carry with it the political correlate of democracy.}

This also qualifies as plagiarism. It is not necessary to use quotation marks because you have changed the text itself, but it is necessary to provide an explanatory note because you are still borrowing another author's ideas. The appropriate way to provide a reference is shown as follows:

{This statistical association between income and democracy is the cornerstone of the influential modernization theory. Lipset (1959) suggested that democracy was both created and consolidated by a broad process of "modernization" which involved changes in the factors of industrialization, urbanization, wealth, and education [which] are closely related and consequently form one common factor. And the factors comprised under economic development carry with it the political correlate of democracy.<sup>(1)</sup>

(1) Lipset, Seymour M. 1959. "Some Social Requisites of Democracy: Economic Development and Political Legitimacy." *American Political Science Review*, 53(1): 69-105.}

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<sup>1</sup> The example is taken from Acemoglu et. al (2008). Acemoglu, Daron, Simon Johnson, James A. Robinson, and Pierre Yared. 2008. "Income and Democracy." *American Economic Review* 98 (3): 808–842.

[Example 3]

You have written your text by organizing knowledge and ideas from another paper or from several other papers. These references were organized into a bibliography and included at the end of your paper.

This case is also likely to qualify as plagiarism (though no specific example is provided here). Even if you include in the reference list/bibliography all the sources from which you borrowed ideas or knowledge, you must attach a note to every part of your text where you refer to such ideas or knowledge/information from other sources, specifying what exactly you have taken from which materials.

## 2) Commonly used/invalid excuses

The excuses given below are often heard at interviews investigating cases of plagiarism. They are all desperate excuses and are not acceptable explanations for misconduct. It would be a mistake to think that such excuses will allow one to escape punishment.

### ① ["It was a coincidence!"]

You may be tempted to use the excuse that a paper you wrote just happens to resemble one written by another scholar. It is possible, of course, for two papers to share a few similar sentences, but it is highly unlikely that two papers would coincidentally share multiple sentences.

### ② ["I did it carelessly rather than on purpose."]

If only one or two instances of plagiarized text appear in a (relatively)inconsequential part of a paper, it may be seen as a careless mistake. However, if improper citations appear in multiple places, they will be considered as intentional acts of dishonesty.

### ③ ["An explanatory note is not necessary because I have the same opinion."]

Even though an opinion may be identical to yours, it was published first by another scholar. It cannot therefore be considered as your original opinion, and an explanatory note is necessary. If you did not borrow the opinion of another scholar and want to emphasize that you had already come to this conclusion before reading a preceding study, then you should specify it in a note in the following form: "XX (name of person) states a similar opinion."

### ④ ["I haven't used copy and paste. I entered it all properly by myself."]

Some may claim that they did not 'copy and paste' in the literal sense as they were told not to and typed the information out by themselves instead. Needless to say, this justification is completely invalid.

## (2) How to avoid committing acts of plagiarism/unauthorized use of materials

It goes without saying that having the self-discipline to avoid misconduct is most important to prevent acts of plagiarism. However, there seems to be an unexpectedly high number of cases in which plagiarism happens by misunderstanding. To avoid such situations, it is essential to pay close attention to your everyday research methods how you plan the writing of your thesis.

### 1) Plagiarism prevention begins with everyday research habits.

#### ① Get into the habit of distinguishing your own arguments from the arguments of other researchers

You should establish a practice of adding quotation marks and notes to ideas gained from other researchers during your seminar reports and the in-class presentations of your course work. If you develop the habit of clearly stating which parts of your reports and presentations represent your own arguments and opinions, it will carry over to your writing.

#### ② Be careful with the notes you take when reading books and papers

You may be taking notes while reading research papers. When copying any sentences from such sources, make sure to always add quotation marks and to write down the source in your notes immediately. This will help you avoid confusing your own ideas with ideas and text from previous research papers at the time of writing your thesis. Even if you are in a hurry to complete your paper by the deadline, you will be able to add the appropriate citation/quotation simply by looking at the notes you made. There may be situations in which you write a summary of another researcher's writing instead of copying the whole text as it is. Even in such cases, make sure to record the exact source of this summary text. Please be particularly careful when you are summarizing another researcher's writing in your own words, as it can be difficult to distinguish the knowledge and opinions of the authors from those of

your own when reviewing your notes.

③ Make a more flexible writing plan for your paper.

Despite it being difficult to achieve in practice, it is important to make a writing plan with the goal of completing the first draft of your paper as early as possible. For instance, the writing process will be smoother if you complete the first draft one month before the deadline, so that you can take your time checking whether your citations have been made appropriately. This will also give adequate time for your academic supervisor to check your work.

④ Clearly state the relationship of the current paper to your own previously published work.

If you are writing a new paper based on a paper or part of a paper that you have already previously published (including papers that you plan to publish), you must include any relevant

Description of previously published papers and research grants

Examples of previously published papers

- Chapter X is based on the following paper. BBAA (2020) "The Concept of Rights in International Politics" *International Relations*, 36 (2): 168-181.
- This chapter is a translation of BBAA's (forthcoming) 「英国におけるイデオロギー的過激主義と政治参加」『実証的政治学ジャーナル』 into English, with modifications.
- This paper is a revised and expanded version of the following article: BBAA (2020) "Issues Concerning the Measurement of Ideology in International Relations," *Leviathan*, 5(1): 58-81.

Example of Research Grant Description

- This work was supported by Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research (Grant-in-Aid for JSPS Research Fellows) XXXXXXXX.

information. An example is provided below.

If you have received a research grant, please also include information about the grant as follows.

2) Other points

① If you are not confident in expressing yourself in Japanese (especially for international students)

International students who are not confident in using Japanese tend to copy expressions from texts they have read. In such cases, please revise your Japanese writing as soon as possible by seeking guidance from the Writing Center (<https://www.waseda.jp/inst/aw/en/about/using>). Please bear in mind that poorly expressed Japanese language is not "misconduct"—but plagiarism is.

② Do not aim to be original for originality's sake (for Master's programs students).

Students are encouraged to aim for originality and uniqueness in their papers in order to make new contributions to their field. However, as a result of being too focused on trying to make such original contributions, they often end up committing acts of plagiarism in order to bring a false sense of uniqueness and originality. While striving to make original contributions to academia is very important and should be encouraged, it should not be done at the expense of committing academic fraud/misconduct.

③ Add an explanatory note if you are unsure.

By now, you should have a concrete image about what constitutes plagiarism. Nevertheless, in the process of writing your thesis/paper/dissertation, there may be cases in which you feel unsure about whether an explanatory note is needed or not. In such cases, it is always better to add a note.

④ Handling of generative AI use

Regarding the use of generative AI, please be sure to check the following guidelines: "About the Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence: Faculty of Social Sciences, Graduate School of Social Sciences." Failure to comply with these instructions may result in disciplinary action being taken. <https://www.waseda.jp/fsss/sss/assets/uploads/2023/12/2ffb7170d4ccb848464dcbea1555a17a.pdf>

#### 4. Handling cases of misconduct at the University

(1) Severe punishment

Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty will be punished severely by the Graduate School of Social Sciences. The following punishments may be imposed:

1) With regard to a Master's thesis

① If misconduct is discovered prior to conferment of the degree

Depending on the severity of misconduct, potential punishments include invalidation of grades for the whole academic year and the rejection of the Master's thesis at the final examination, in addition to other disciplinary actions such as a warning, suspension, or expulsion.

② If misconduct is discovered after conferment of the degree

If it has been determined that degree in question was obtained through academic fraud/misconduct, the degree will be revoked, and the details of the revocation will be announced to the public in accordance with Article 23 of the University's "Degree Regulations."

2) With regard to a doctoral dissertation

① If misconduct is discovered prior to conferment of the degree

Depending on the severity of misconduct, potential punishments include invalidation of grades for the whole academic year and the failure of the doctoral dissertation, in addition to other disciplinary actions such as a warning, suspension, or expulsion.

② If misconduct is discovered after conferment of the degree

If it has been determined that degree in question was obtained through academic fraud/misconduct, the degree will be revoked and the details of the revocation will be announced to the public in accordance with Article 23 of the University's "Degree Regulations."

(2) Establishment of a system to detect and investigate acts of academic misconduct.

1) Use of similarity-detecting software

At the Graduate School of Social Sciences, similarity-detecting software is used at the time of submission to check whether there are any inappropriate quotations or instances of plagiarism in a Master's thesis or a doctoral dissertation. A further detailed investigation will be conducted if the likelihood of inappropriate quotation or plagiarism is identified. Please bear in mind that any misconduct such as plagiarism is bound to be discovered eventually.

#### Conclusion

Finally, please take to heart the following four principles when thinking about research ethics:

(1) Violations of research ethics will be discovered eventually.

Regardless of where they occur (be it in a master's thesis, doctoral dissertation or journal article, all forms of academic misconduct will eventually come to light. Never fall into the trap of thinking that "it is acceptable if it is to a certain extent."



(2) Violations of research ethics will leave permanent records.

Attempting to acquire a degree through academic dishonesty/misconduct is subject to severe punishment and will remain on record permanently. If any misconduct is discovered after a degree has been awarded, it will be revoked, and the University will publicly announce the revocation as the result of an act of academic dishonesty/misconduct. Should this happen, you can consider the path to a career in academia closed for the rest of your life.

(3) “I did not know” is not a valid explanation.

Staff/students involved in academic research are obliged to understand and comply with research ethics rules. Anyone who claims that “I did not know” or “I did not understand” are not qualified to be involved in academic research.

(4) Remember when you first started your journey as a researcher.

When you began your studies at the Graduate School of Social Sciences and were developing your research plan, you must have had a goal that you wanted to achieve through your research. Was that goal something you wanted to achieve even if it meant resorting to academic fraud? Probably not. Please give full consideration to the importance of research ethics on your journey as a researcher, so that you can look back and say with pride: “I earned my degree by doing the research I believed in, and I did it with honesty and integrity.”

We sincerely hope that you have gained a thorough understanding of research ethics, and that you will continue to conduct your research in an ethical and productive way.

## **Appendix**

### **1. Waseda University Academic Research Ethics Charter**

The mission of Waseda University is to achieve a high ideal of academic research that conforms with its founding principles of Academic Independence and Enterprising Spirit. Specifically, the University wishes to promote contributions to human welfare and world peace through academic research. As such, academic researchers associated with the University shall make efforts to maintain its good tradition and constantly strive to improve themselves in accordance with good conscience. Researchers will courageously challenge the problems of modern society while considering that academic research has a great influence on humanity, society, and the natural environment. The University guarantees that academic research will be reliable and fair, but also free from unnecessary constraints. With regard to its assurances and social responsibility, this University declares that all researchers and those concerned with research activities shall conduct themselves by abiding by the following manners and principles so that society will trust and respect the establishment and its academic research.

1. Through academic research, all members of the University will contribute to the solution of common problems that individuals face in society, such as human welfare and world peace.
2. All members of the University will preserve human dignity, respect life, strive for harmony among human beings, society and nature, protect the socially vulnerable, maintain the global environment, and positively influence the public interest.
3. All members of the University will comply with international rules, domestic and foreign laws and regulations, school rules, the spirit of such rules, and social good sense. In addition, researchers will report their results timely and appropriately so that they can positively meet the demands of society.
4. During cooperative academic research activities, all members of the University will respect human rights, protect personal information, make efforts to prevent any kind of harassment and discrimination based on nationality, sex, age or any other reason, and consistently cooperate with others to prevent such behavior.
5. All members of the University will support cooperation in society and will appropriately manage all academic research.
6. The University will strive to improve and maintain proper education and training in research ethics and the research environment while safely managing researchers so that no illegal activity occurs.

2. [Waseda University degree rules] Article 23

When the fact of having been conferred a degree (doctoral or Master's) by misconduct being identified, after discussion with the Graduate School's Steering Committee and the Graduate School's Dean, the President of the University shall cancel this degree. (Diploma is to be returned). Moreover, an official announcement of this issue will be released.

3. [Waseda University Graduate School Regulations] Article 38 and Article 39.  
(Disciplinary action)

Article 38. Disciplinary action is undertaken when a student violates the university rules or its own duty as a student.

2. The disciplinary action is of three types: warning, suspension from school, and expulsion from school.

3. Matters related to student's disciplinary procedures, shall be determined separately with (2012 Code 12-22 No. 1) rules concerning disciplinary procedures for students.

(Disciplinary expulsion)

Article 39. Those who disturb the order of the university or significantly violate the student's duty will be punished by expulsion from the school.

**Note**

This manual has been created for the Graduate School of Social Sciences based on the Research Ethics Compliance Manual developed by the Graduate Schools of Political Science and Economics at Waseda University, with the permission of both graduate schools.