

**Doctoral Program in Economics**  
**Code of Conduct regarding academic honesty**

**1. Scope and goals**

This Code of Conduct aims at regulating the behavior by students of the Doctoral Program in Economics at FEP in what regards academic honesty.

The Code comprises

- (i) Definitions and examples of the most important academic malpractices; and
- (ii) The procedures, penalties and rights of appeal that apply to a student incurring in any form of academic dishonesty.

Any behavior not foreseen in the present version of the Code but considered fraudulent by the Scientific Board of the Doctoral Program will be treated appropriately, by analogy with the regulations in the Code.

The ultimate goals of this Code are

- (iii) Assuring that all academic outputs delivered within the Doctoral Program – e.g. exams, home-works, computer programs, essays and thesis – abide by the conventional rules for scientific honesty and good practices;
- (iv) Assuring that all students are properly assessed; and
- (v) Contributing to the development of the students' human back-ground and his/her ability to build a career in the scientific environment.

**2. Introductory concepts**

A crucial rule in a Program leading to the award of an academic degree is that *all work presented for assessment must have resulted from the student's effort and skills in a verifiable manner, thus allowing for an unequivocal valuation of the student's own knowledge and achievements.*

While not precluding all joint work whatsoever, this rule (i) limits such work to authorized tasks; (ii) requires a clear identification of the co-authors when collaborative work is authorized; and (iii) requires a clear statement of the student's individual contribution to the corresponding output. Students often work together in order to clarify understandings before they establish their individual answers to assignments. This is an acceptable practice and, indeed, a desirable one in a Doctoral program. However, unless indicated otherwise, the document submitted for assessment must be individual.

Given that scientific research is conducted on the basis of previous knowledge, this rule requires the acknowledgement of all sources used by the student in the work. Such acknowledgment includes: (i) a listing of *references* to the various sources used; and (ii) the thorough *citation* of references, identifying the sources used in (a) passages where a transcript has been made and (b) passages where any contents that is not the student's has been written in his/her own words and/or notation.

*Assessment* is the means by which the standards that students achieve are made publicly known. It further provides students with information on their performance and helps the Program to monitor its standards. In the course component of the Program, it consists of evaluation reports and grades ascribed to home-works, essays, exams and other outputs required for approval in each course. In the thesis part of the Program, it involves the evaluation of the student's progress by the adviser and, then, the interim defense of the thesis and the final evaluation of the thesis by the defense committee.

A *Source* consists of any material of scientific relevance previously created by another person or by the student for the purpose of another assessment or award. It includes (i) any published material – e.g. books, journal articles, theses, computer codes, internet pages or files uploaded in any website; (ii) any private material made available to the student by any person, including teachers and colleagues – e.g. texts, computer codes, analytical results, statistical analyses; and (iii) any information and opinions gained directly from other person, including colleagues and teachers.

A *Reference* is the identification of a source used in the work, employing conventional formal academic rules, so that acknowledgement of the source is visible and effective. In scientific works a list of all references must be displayed at the end, in a section named *Bibliography* or *References*. The formal system of referencing favored at FEP is the *Harvard system (author, date)*, but the *Numerical referencing system* may also be used; there are multiple online tutorials for these systems, and the inspection of theses previously approved at FEP should also be useful.

A *Citation* is the identification of the source that is used in a specific passage of the document, employing conventional formal academic rules, so that acknowledgement of the source is immediate for a typical reader. Citations are usually written along the text, but may be inserted as footnotes. Citations must be presented for (i) quotations, i.e. the transcript of any material from a source – which further requires placing the quoted part within quotation marks and citing these fully, (ii) paraphrases, i.e. the rewriting of an idea from a source in the student's own words and (iii) all other contents that originate in any source. The formal system for citing favored at FEP is the *Harvard system (author, date)*, but the *Numerical system* may also be used; the student is referred to the publicly available tutorials as well as to theses previously approved at FEP.

All citations in the text and in the footnotes should be included in the list of references; and all the references should be cited at least once in the main body of the document.

### **3. Concept and main forms of Academic fraud**

This Code of Conduct deals with academic dishonesty and malpractice, which may be referred to, in general, as academic fraud. For the purposes of this Code, *fraud comprises all the actions or inactions by a student that render the correct assessment of his/her effort, skills, knowledge and achievements, completely or partially impossible.*

There are multiple forms of academic fraud and in this section we define some, with a special emphasis on Plagiarism. The other types of fraud are, in general, equally serious and will lead overall to similar penalties.

We divide fraud into 3 categories: (i) plagiarism, (ii) cheating and (iii) fabrication; while (i) and (iii) may occur essentially in home-works and essays, (ii) may also occur in exams. Fraud in the thesis is also possible and is exceedingly serious, but is somewhat less likely given that the student must discuss his/her work regularly with the adviser.

### 3.1. Plagiarism

Plagiarism occurs when a student presents for assessment a work that includes any contents that are the work of another person or his/her own work previously presented for another assessment, without proper acknowledgement of all the sources used.

Plagiarism exists whenever the average reader is deceived as regards the authorship of the whole or parts of the work, ascribing to the student the ownership of contents that are not his/her own or have not been prepared specifically for the current work.

Plagiarism is a theft of intellectual property and, as such, is one of the most serious academic offences; thus, students should expect tough penalties in such circumstance.

The definition of plagiarism is independent of its

- (i) Nature – deliberate or accidental;
- (ii) Extent – complete or partial;
- (iii) Object – e.g. home-works, computer codes, essays, theses;
- (iv) Subject – e.g. ideas, words, text, data, graphs, analytical expressions, analytical proofs, methods, results, interpretations;
- (v) Style – transcription or paraphrase; maintaining or changing notation;
- (vi) Source – e.g. books, bulletins, journal articles, newspaper articles, websites, files uploaded in websites, lecture notes, slides, colleague's assignments, interviews, conversations;
- (vii) Victim – other person or the student (self-plagiarism);

And depends exclusively on the

- (i) Inclusion of contents from a source that is not referenced; and
- (ii) Deception of the standard reader.

In order to avoid plagiarism, students must

- (i) Learn the academic conventions and formal rules for referencing and citation; and
- (ii) Be thorough during research and writing – carefully distinguishing their work from that of others and their own previous work, and acknowledging the sources from which they have used or developed any contents.

The main forms of plagiarism are the following, *when not accompanied by the proper reference and citation*:

- (i) The *ipsis verbis* transcription of text without quotation marks;
- (ii) The use of words or expressions that have been suggested in a previous source and are not of general usage;
- (iii) The presentation of concepts, hypothesis, interpretations and conclusions, even if paraphrased, previously put forth in another source;
- (iv) The use of data that is not in the public domain and has been put together previously in another source;
- (v) The copy of figures, charts or any diagrams from another source;
- (vi) The use of equations or a model previously specified in another source;
- (vii) The use of analytical expressions and derivations previously suggested in another source;
- (viii) The use of an econometric/experimental/simulation method that has been suggested in another source;
- (ix) The use of computer codes created and mostly written by another person;

The following are extreme forms of plagiarism:

- (i) Resubmission of a student's own work that has already been awarded grades or credits, without permission to do so – e.g. an essay written for another course, a thesis written for another degree, even if partly rewritten;
- (ii) Submission of a work written by another person – possibly a colleague – without that person's consent, as if it had been written by the student – e.g. an essay submitted at another Program, to which the student appends his/her name as author, even if summarized and rewritten;
- (iii) Submission of the same final version of a work as another student, without the colleague's permission, in an assignment where there was authorized collaborative preparatory work.

It is sometimes argued that some situations of plagiarism should be dealt with differently because they are not deliberate but accidental.

Typical examples of supposedly accidental plagiarism are

- (i) Forgetting to place quotation marks when appropriate;
- (ii) Omitting a source for a fact/event/data/result because it has been considered unnecessary; and
- (iii) Paraphrasing or summarizing and forgetting to cite the source.

Accidental plagiarism is also an act of plagiarism. It is part of the student's own effort of academic development to learn how to avoid or minimize the probability of negligence, in all the components and tasks of his/her scientific research and academic activity. Therefore, the responsibility for understanding what is and what is not plagiarism, and for learning the proper formal rules of referencing and citation, lies absolutely with the student – the excuse of ignorance will not be accepted.

Thus, essentially the same consequences of deliberate plagiarism apply to accidental plagiarism.

When facts of public knowledge are involved, it is sometimes difficult to determine whether or not a source should be documented. In general, there is no need to display a reference and citation for common knowledge. Yet, the student must be confident that he/she is dealing with information that is unequivocally widely available and that it does not include any opinion or a particular person's discovery or theory.

In the case where the student is not sure whether he/she should cite a source and/or how that should be done, it is his/her responsibility to seek advice from the respective teacher or, exceptionally, his/her tutor.

### **3.2. Cheating**

Cheating occurs when a student seeks to obtain an unfair advantage in an exam or in other work required for assessment.

The achievement of the dishonest advantage is not a necessary condition for an action to qualify as cheating, as the mere search qualifies as cheating – e.g., the attempt at copying from a crib note in an exam, even if detected and stopped by an invigilator.

The fraudulent advantage may be sought by several means, such as

- (i) Documents or any sources prepared in advance by the own student;
- (ii) Colleagues and/or documents/sources of colleagues;
- (iii) Unauthorized collaboration from another person; and
- (iv) Acquisition of the whole or parts of assignments.

While (i) and (ii) may occur typically in exams, (iii) and (iv) may happen, usually, in home-works and essays.

The main forms of Cheating are

- (i) Possess or use, during an examination, of
  - a. crib notes or any other non-authorized documents or materials;
  - b. electronic equipment or any other device allowing access to non-authorized sources;
- (ii) Swapping answer sheets with colleagues or copying from a colleague's answer sheet during an examination;
- (iii) Communicating with anyone other than an invigilator and/or achieving any non-authorized assistance during an examination;
- (iv) Changing the answers after the exam time has expired and/or the answers have been handed in;
- (v) Assuming the identity of another person or having another person assume one's own identity during an exam;
- (vi) Have or provide to other examinees, in advance, questions or assignments from an exam;
- (vii) Submitting assignments (e.g. home-works, essays) obtained in whole or in part from others, within or outside of FEP, either free of charge or purchased;
- (viii) Submitting assignments (e.g. home-works, essays) stolen in whole or in part from other students or any other person, within or outside of FEP;
- (ix) Colluding with colleagues to split tasks and submit work (e.g. home-works, essays) that in whole or in part is not entirely individual, in an assignment in which collective work was not allowed or should be merely preparatory;
- (x) Knowingly aiding a colleague to copy your own work or the work of others.

### **3.3. Fabrication**

Fabrication occurs when a student falsifies any component of a work presented for assessment, presenting untrue contents with the aim to improve the seeming extent and quality of his/her work.

Fabrication includes inventing or twisting

- (i) Data and/or facts and/or events;
- (ii) Econometric and/or simulation and/or experimental results;
- (iii) Standpoints and/or interpretations and/or conclusions of others; and
- (iv) Bibliographic references;

Falsification does not include factors intrinsic to the process of scientific research such as honest error, conflicting data and legitimate differences in the interpretation of text and/or of data and/or of experimental/econometric/simulation work.

## **4. Procedures, Penalties and Appeals**

Once an allegation of academic fraud is made, a sequence of procedures allowing for confirmation/refutation of the allegation is set off. If the allegation is confirmed, the Scientific Board of the Doctoral Program will impose one of the possible penalties. The student has rights of appeal from the decision.

#### 4.1. Procedures

The typical sequence of procedures set off in a situation of alleged academic fraud is the following: (i) allegation, (ii) preliminary analysis, (iii) hearing, and (iv) decision.

Any member of FEP may make an allegation of academic fraud to the Director of the Doctoral Program, including other students. Where an examiner intends to make an allegation, he/she should consult one internal co-examiner before contacting the Director. Allegations should be presented in writing and include the whole information considered relevant for the appraisal of the allegation.

Following the reception of an allegation, the Director calls a meeting of the Program's Scientific Board for a preliminary consideration of the allegation. If the Board considers that the allegation is unfounded, it is dismissed, in which case no further reference shall be made to it and no information about it shall be added to the student's file.

Otherwise, the Board summons the student for a hearing, to which it may also call the author of the allegation. The student may be accompanied by a friend or representative, whose professional qualifications shall be stated to the Director at least two working days before the date set for the hearing. The student will have the rights to present any forms of evidence at the hearing and to challenge evidence included in the allegation.

Given the allegation, the hearing, and other evidence that the Board may decide to seek to help it in reaching its verdict, the Board then takes a final decision. If it decides that the allegation has not been proved, it shall direct that no further action be taken, and no record of the allegation included on the student's record. If it decides that the student has committed fraud, it shall apply one of the penalties listed at sub-section 4.2, with a formal admonition to the student and a note being placed on his/her record.

The decisions of the Board shall, where practicable, be given to the student orally by the Director and will, as well, be sent him/her in writing.

#### 4.2. Penalties

A wide range of penalties may be applied to a student responsible for academic fraud. The choice of the penalty for each case depends on (i) the seriousness of the offence, (ii) any previous offences committed by the student and (iii) the need to assure the highest standards among the Program's students.

Given that the penalties are designed both to impose sanctions on offenders and to deter other students from committing fraud, students should, as a rule, expect severe penalties.

The penalties available to the Board are that the student

- I. is awarded a zero mark for the assessed script (e.g. exam, homework, essay);
- II. is awarded a zero mark for the course as a whole and is not allowed to qualify for the course in that academic year;
- III. is awarded a zero mark for the course as a whole and is not allowed to qualify for all other courses taken in that, or in the following, academic semester;
- IV. is awarded a zero mark for the course as a whole and is not allowed to qualify for all other courses taken in that, or in the following, academic year;
- V. is expelled from the Doctoral Program.

If academic fraud is discovered after the defense of the Doctoral thesis, the procedures set out in sub-section 4.1 will include the consultation of two external experts who will assist the Board in assessing the evidence of fraud. In the case of a confirmed allegation of fraud, the student's degree may be revoked, he/she may not be awarded any degree and he/she may be denied the right of re-submission and/or right of appeal.

#### 4.3. Appeals

A student considered responsible for academic fraud will have the right to appeal against that decision on the following grounds: (i) that the Scientific Board of the Program was not impartial, and/or (ii) that there has been a violation of the procedures that affected the fairness of the decision, and/or (iii) that relevant new evidence has been uncovered that might have led to a different decision, with the student showing that it was not feasible to have presented the evidence to the Board before its decision.

Appeals must be sent to the Scientific Council of FEP within five working days of the date of the letter mentioned at the end of section 4.1.

### 5. Student's signature

Upon enrolment into the Program, each student is required to read and sign a copy of this Code of Conduct.

The signed copy will be archived in the student's individual record at the Administrative Office of the Doctoral Program.

<b>Academic Year:</b> 20____ / ____
<b>Student:</b>
Name _____
Signature_____

Porto, FEP, December 2009.

*The Scientific Board of the Doctoral Program in Economics*