

Plagiarism Policy

ACM Policy and Procedures on Plagiarism

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1. Definition and Context

Respecting intellectual property rights is a foundational principle of the ACM's Codes of Ethics^[1]. Plagiarism, in which one misrepresents ideas, words, computer codes or other creative expression as one's own, is a clear violation of such ethical principles. Plagiarism can also represent a violation of copyright law, punishable by statute. Plagiarism manifests itself in a variety of forms, including

- Verbatim copying, near-verbatim copying, or purposely paraphrasing portions of another author's paper;
- Copying elements of another author's paper, such as equations or illustrations that are not common knowledge, or copying or purposely paraphrasing sentences without citing the source; and
- Verbatim copying of portions of another author's paper with citing but not clearly differentiating what text has been copied (e.g., not applying quotation marks correctly) and/or not citing the source correctly.

Self-plagiarism is a related issue. In this document we define self-plagiarism as the verbatim or near-verbatim reuse of significant portions of one's own copyrighted work without citing the original source^[2]. Note that self-plagiarism does not apply to publications based on the author's own previously copyrighted work (e.g., appearing in a conference proceedings) where an explicit reference is made to the prior publication^[3]. Such reuse does not require quotation marks to delineate the reused text but does require that the source be cited.

All authors are deemed to be individually and collectively responsible for the content of papers published by ACM. Hence, it is the responsibility of each author to ensure that papers submitted to ACM attain the highest ethical standards with respect to plagiarism.

ACM and the ACM Publications Board place the investigation of each claim of plagiarism at the highest priority for resolution and action.

2. Notifying ACM of Alleged Plagiarism

To inform ACM of alleged plagiarism, send email to ACM Director of Publications. The following is the minimum information required for ACM to initiate a plagiarism investigation:

- The names and contacts of the person(s) making the claim and their relationship to the allegation (e.g., author of plagiarized work, reviewer or editor of plagiarizing work).
- A citation to the original paper(s) (paper title, author, publication title, date of publication).
- A citation to the alleged plagiarizing paper.
- Indication of specific pages, sections, paragraphs in each work alleged as evidence of the plagiarism.

In addition, ACM encourages the submission of the following additional information to aid in its investigation:

- Copies of all papers involved in the alleged plagiarism.

- Additional information regarding how to obtain involved papers that are unpublished (e.g., a technical report, an online posting).
- Any other information that would help ACM efficiently resolve the claim.

ACM can only process plagiarism claims involving material published under ACM Copyright or the ACM Publishing Agreement License.

3. Investigation

Upon receipt of an allegation of plagiarism, the Director of Publications will inform the appropriate ACM volunteers and Senior Headquarters Staff. The Director will then coordinate the investigation. Depending on the details of the claim, the investigation may include, but not be limited to, any or all of the following steps:

- Manual and/or automated tests of content similarity;
- Soliciting comments to the claim from the Editor-in-Chief (if a journal) or Program Chair (if a conference proceedings) and referees of either or both papers;
- Forming an ad hoc committee of experts in the field to review the claim;
- Consulting with ACM legal counsel; and/or
- Communicating with the individuals involved on both sides.

Once the investigation has been completed, the ACM Publications Board, based on a recommendation from the ACM Director of Publications, will determine the penalties to be imposed depending on the type of plagiarism.

4. Confidentiality

All aspects of an investigation will be treated with the utmost regard for confidentiality. The names and contacts of the person(s) making the claim and their relationship to the allegation (e.g., author of plagiarized work, reviewer or editor of plagiarizing work) will be kept confidential and used only for the purpose and duration of the investigation. However, in order to ensure timely and effective resolution, details of a claim will be circulated to individuals on a need-to-know basis (e.g., see Section 3 above). As part of the investigation, it may be necessary for ACM to contact current and/or past employers of the authors. Additionally, some institutions have specific requirements for their employees to disclose any pending legal/ethical matters.

ACM, at its discretion, may decide to inform the general ACM membership of the plagiarism investigation. However, during the investigation, under no circumstances will ACM disclose any individual author's name, paper titles, referees, ad hoc investigation committee members, or any other personal or specific information regarding a plagiarism claim to the general membership.

5. Results of an Investigation

Once a decision has been reached, it will be communicated to all parties immediately by the ACM Director of Publications. If plagiarism has been found, all parties will be informed of the penalties and the actions that will be taken. Upon notification, the investigative phase will be deemed to have ended, and there will be no further communication with any party by ACM unless there is an appeal to the ACM President. All appeals must be made in writing to the ACM President no more than 30 days from the date of notification. Once a determination of plagiarism has been made, there is no guarantee that the author names and paper titles will continue to be kept confidential. However, ACM will not disclose an individual author's name, the paper title, the referees, the ad hoc investigation committee members, or any other personal or specific information in a forum actively distributed to the general membership (e.g., CACM).

6. Penalties for Plagiarism

When plagiarism has been found to have occurred, ACM will take the actions listed below as determined by the type of plagiarism. Unless determined otherwise during the investigation, all authors are deemed to be individually and collectively responsible for the content of a plagiarizing paper.

a. Verbatim copying, near-verbatim copying, or purposely paraphrasing a significant portion of another author's paper without citing the source and without clearly delineating (e.g., in quotation marks) the source material.

- ACM will inform the Department Chair, Dean, or supervisor of the authors of the finding of plagiarism.
- The authors will be asked to write a formal letter of apology to the authors of the plagiarized paper, including an admission of plagiarism.
- If the paper has appeared in press, ACM will post a Notice of Plagiarism based on the investigation on the ACM Digital Library's citation page of the plagiarizing paper and will remove access to the full text. The paper itself will be kept in the database for future research or legal purposes.
- If the paper is under submission, the paper can be automatically rejected by the Editor-in-Chief or the Program Chair without further revisions and without any further plagiarism investigation coordinated by the ACM Director of Publications. In addition, a letter of warning will be sent by the Editor-in-Chief or the Program Chair to the authors with a copy of the ACM Policy and Procedures on Plagiarism.

b. Verbatim copying, near-verbatim copying, or purposely paraphrasing sentences of another author's paper and/or, copying elements of another author's paper (such as non-common knowledge illustrations and equations) without citing the source and without clearly delineating (e.g., in quotation marks) the source material.

- The authors will be asked to write a formal letter of apology to the authors of the plagiarized paper, including an admission of the plagiarism.
- If the paper has appeared in press, ACM will post a Notice of Plagiarism based on the investigation on the ACM Digital Library's citation page of the plagiarizing paper and will remove access to the full text. The paper itself will be kept in the database in case of future legal actions.
- If the paper is under submission, the paper can be automatically rejected by the Editor-in-Chief or the Program Chair without further revisions and without any further plagiarism investigation coordinated by the ACM Director of Publications. In addition, a letter of warning will be sent by the Editor-in-Chief or the Program Chair to the authors with a copy of the ACM Policy and Procedures on Plagiarism.

c. Verbatim copying of portions of another author's paper with citing, but not clearly differentiating what text has been copied (e.g., not applying quotation marks correctly) and/or not citing the source correctly.

NB: Representing substantial portions of another's work as one's own can result in the stronger penalties of 6a even when that work is cited.

- The authors will be asked to write a formal letter of apology to the authors of the plagiarized paper, including an admission of the plagiarism.
- If the paper is under submission, at the discretion of the Editor-in-Chief or Program Chair, the paper can either be automatically rejected without future review or a revision will be required that clearly and correctly cites the previous work without any further plagiarism investigation coordinated by the ACM Director of Publications. In addition, a letter of warning will be sent by the Editor-in-Chief or the Program Chair to the authors with a copy of the ACM Policy and Procedures on Plagiarism.

d. Self plagiarism or redundant, duplicative publication (verbatim or near-verbatim reuse of significant portions of one's own copyrighted work in subsequent papers where the authors have not disclosed in the subsequent paper the previous publication).

- If the paper has appeared in press, ACM will post a Notice of Self Plagiarism or a Notice of Redundant Publication based on the investigation on the ACM Digital Library's citation page of the self plagiarizing paper.
- If the paper is under submission and at the discretion of the Editor-in-Chief or Program Chair, the paper can either be automatically rejected without future review or a revision will be required that includes a citation to and discussion of the previous

paper and without any further plagiarism investigation coordinated by the ACM Director of Publications. In addition, a letter of warning will be sent by the Editor-in-Chief or the Program Chair to the authors with a copy of the ACM Policy and Procedures on Plagiarism.

Should the authors refuse to comply with the above (e.g., if they refuse to write a formal letter of apology) or if it is determined during the plagiarism investigation that there have been multiple violations of any of the above forms of plagiarism by the same authors, ACM retains the right to impose further sanctions such as automatic rejection of all current and future submissions for some extended period of time, invoking penalties prescribed by the ACM Codes of Ethics, and possibly statutory/injunctive relief. U.S. Copyright law allows a copyright owner to seek a maximum of \$150,000 in damages upon a determination of willful infringement of copyright.

7. Third-Party Claims against ACM

Should a claim arise against ACM (i.e., that a paper published by ACM has plagiarized non-ACM copyrighted work) the ACM Director of Publications will fully cooperate with the third party during the investigative phase and will inform the ACM Publications Board of the conclusions and of the actions taken.

[1] “ACM Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct” (<http://www.acm.org/constitution/code.html>)

1.5 Honor property rights including copyrights and patent.

1.6 Give proper credit for intellectual property.

“Software Engineering Code of Ethics and Professional Practice” (<http://www.acm.org/serving/se/code.htm>)

7.03. Credit fully the work of others and refrain from taking undue credit.

[2] See Collberg and Kobourov, <http://portal.acm.org/citation.cfm?doid=1053291.1053293>.

[3] Manuscripts submitted to ACM Journals and Transactions based on the author’s own previously copyrighted work (e.g., appearing in a conference proceedings) must be disclosed at the time of submission and an explicit reference to the prior publication must be included in the submitted manuscript. The norm for ACM Journals and Transactions is that the submitted manuscript must contain at least 25% new content material (i.e., material that offers new insights, new results, etc.). For more details see http://www.acm.org/pubs/sim_submissions.html.