

Plagiarism – what do we do?

A look at Södertörn University's work regarding disciplinary cases concerning plagiarism.

29th of January 2009

therese.kruse@sh.se



We tell students by...

- Giving information at a **ceremony** at the start of the semester.
- Handing out a **folder** about assessment and cheating.
- Writing about cheating and plagiarism in our local **regulations**.
- Getting the **teachers to talk** about what is expected of the students, rather than assuming they already know.
- Getting the **teachers to write** comprehensible instructions, at all levels.
- Seminars arranged by the **library** about how to find and use information.
- Using **Urkund** throughout the University, serving as a reminder for the students.
- Posting statistics about cases on our **website**.
- Appearing in the **media**.



Still, they just don't get it!

"Really, couldn't the teacher just fail me? Surely you have better things to do with your time."

"I didn't think the rules applied, it was just a short PM."

"The text was so well written. There is no way I could find a better way of phrasing it."

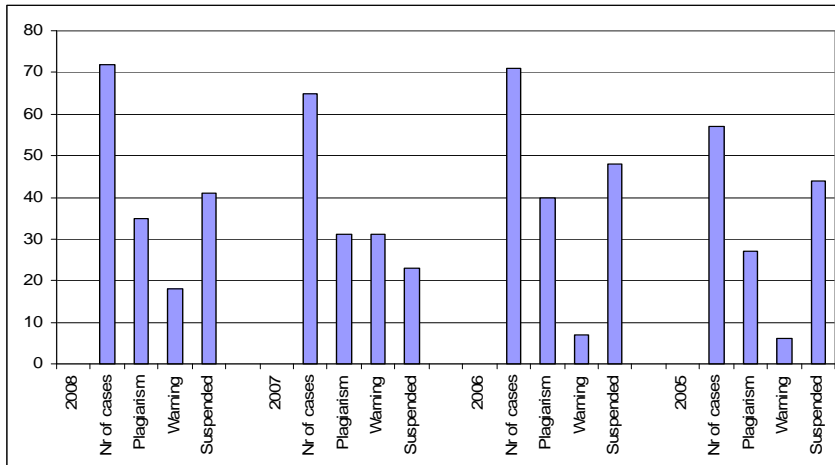
"The text is from the Internet, and nobody owns the Internet, so I didn't think I had to give any references."

"There was an accident in my family, so I was really upset. But I thought it was better to hand in something rather than nothing, so I looked at a text from last year."

So, why do students need to know?

- Quality assurance: making sure that students learn and get their credits the right way.
- Difficult transition from high school.
- They haven't learned the skills previously.
- Learning for life, rather than just one assessment at a time.
- Making students aware of consequences.

Statistics from 2005 to 2008



A brief history

- Growing number of cases around 2004.
- Formalized process, including the Disciplinary Board's meetings.
- Cases are given high priority.
- Vice-Chancellor emphasizing the quality aspect.
- Part of work for equal treatment: Urkund.
- Plagiarism etc integrated into pedagogical courses for teachers.
- Specific information for exchange students.

How do we handle cases?

- Teachers often call or e-mail before reporting a case. Then fill out the pre-set form.
- After getting the report, I arrange a meeting with student quickly.
- Send notes from the meeting to student and teacher by e-mail.
- Contact with legally trained member by phone or e-mail.
- Write a report (2-4 pages) for the Vice Chancellor's decision.
- Disciplinary Board meets about 10 times a year, for 30 minutes to 2 hours at a time, on known dates.
- The members of the board read all the paperwork before the meeting, then get a brief presentation and usually get to see the student (and sometimes the teacher or witness).
- Board members are experienced.

What are we doing right now?

- Reaching the students through the teachers.
- Helping students with poor writing skills etc.
- Trying to get all teachers to use Urkund all the time.
- Getting all teachers to act alike.

For the future

- Telling students more about *why*, rather than *how*.
- Spreading information about disciplinary cases.
- Making a workshop material for teachers to use.
- Creating an FAQ for our website for teachers and students.