ACADEMIC INTEGRITY GUIDELINES

The purpose of a research paper (the thesis and the dissertation) is to explore, to understand, and to absorb new ideas and information and then explain it within the context of the student’s own experience and judgments. Every student of the International Metaphysical Ministry’s University of Metaphysics and University of Sedona is expected to pursue his or her own academic work—specifically, the writing of the thesis and dissertation—with honesty and integrity.

Academic integrity is the expression of intellectual virtue in human beings due to the indwelling of Universal or God Spirit, and plagiarism will not be tolerated. Plagiarism is defined as a word-for-word copying of groups of words or sentences from one or more sources to the student’s paper “without the process of digestion, integration, and reordering in the writer’s mind, and without acknowledgment in the paper” (Source: “A Note on Plagiarism” from the Mansfield University Student Handbook).

To uphold the dignity and worth of all students pursuing degrees at International Metaphysical Ministry’s University of Metaphysics and University of Sedona, IMM has purchased computer software from turnitin.com to detect and report on plagiarism. Any deviations from academic integrity, even a few sentences that have been copied without quotation marks and proper citation, will involve discipline.

Depending on the severity of the violation, the discipline may include suspension or expulsion, permanent or temporary revocation of ministerial status and rights (defrocking), and permanent or temporary revocation of all metaphysical degrees. All research papers will be examined by the turnitin.com software for academic integrity.

This document outlines applicable sanctions designed to censure such activity.

VIOLATIONS OF ACADEMIC INTEGRITY: Most, but not all, violations of academic integrity involve one or both of the following two general categories of behavior.

1. Plagiarism

Plagiarism occurs when a writer copies (uses) another's ideas, research, writing, or wording without proper acknowledgement of the source or without the use of quotation marks and acknowledgement of the source.

2. Fabrication

Fabrication is the falsification or invention of information (such as sources) in the research papers or to a member of the administration or representative of the Universities.
VIOLATION LEVELS: Any violation of academic integrity is subject to an appropriate penalty and is classified into one of three levels, according to the nature of the infraction. For each level of violation, a corresponding set of sanctions is recommended.

**Level One**

A Level One violation, listed below, is likely to involve a small fraction of the total course work, namely a small number of occurrences (e.g., three or fewer) in the writing of the thesis or dissertation.

1A. Failing to footnote or give proper acknowledgment in an extremely limited section (two sentences or less) of an assignment.

1B. This includes changing some words but copying whole phrases, copying words from a source but only marking some of those words as a quotation, paraphrasing without attribution, copying the syntactical or organizational structure of another writer, using unique or apt phrases from another writer, or failure to use quotation marks to cite a passage.

The recommended sanctions for a Level One violation include the following:

a. The Thesis/Dissertation Advisor will have an email or telephone conversation with the student for instruction and a warning.

b. The results of that correspondence will be summarized by the Thesis/Dissertation Advisor and placed in the student’s permanent file, with a copy sent to the student.

c. This record will be expunged after the student successfully completes the assignment without further incidents of such plagiarism.

d. A second instance of a Level One violation after having received above instruction and email constitutes an automatic Level Two violation.

**Level Two**

A Level Two violation is characterized by dishonesty of a more serious nature or by dishonesty that affects a more significant aspect or portion of the course work. The Thesis/Dissertation Advisor reports these violations to the University president and attorney, and the student is provided an opportunity respond to the Thesis/Dissertation Advisor. Level Two violations include (but are not limited to) the following examples:

2A. The student has used significant portions (several complete sentences, phrases, clauses, tables, or charts) from outside sources without providing citation for the sources.
2B. The student has copied directly or paraphrased several segments of the thesis or dissertation, without acknowledging the source.

2C. The student has submitted the same work or major portions thereof to satisfy the requirements of the dissertation that were previously submitted in the thesis.

2D. The student has committed a second Level One violation after having received instruction and an email from the Thesis/Dissertation Advisor.

The recommended sanctions for Level Two violations are the following:

a. Placement on University and ministerial suspension for one year, such that neither ministerial status or rights (defrocking), bachelor’s degree, master’s degree, nor doctoral degree previously awarded are recognized. After one year the student may reapply for ministerial status and degree(s) and submit a new, different thesis or dissertation.

b. All written records (emails, letters, database files) about students who commit Level Two offenses will be maintained permanently in the Administrative offices.

c. A second instance of a Level Two violation constitutes an automatic Level Three violation.

Level Three

Level Three violations include dishonesty that affects a major or essential portion of work done to meet the thesis or dissertation requirements or is preceded by one or more violations at Levels One and Two. All cases involving Level Three violations are reported to the President and the attorney, and the student is provided an opportunity to respond and be heard. Level Three violations include (but are not limited to) the following examples:

3A. The student has submitted, without proper reference or citation, an entire paper or major sections of a work obtained from the Internet.

3B. The student has presented the work of another as his or her own.

3C. The student has committed another academic infraction (whether Level One or Two) after return from suspension for a previous academic integrity violation.

3D. The student has fabricated data by inventing or deliberately altering material (this includes citing "sources" that are not, in fact, sources or are not the true sources).

3E. The student has translated work from one language into English and submitted it as his or her own work.
3F. The student has lied to University members or representatives during an investigation or hearing.

The sanctions typically sought for any Level Three violation include the following:

a. Permanent expulsion of the student from the University to include revocation of ministerial status and rights (defrocking), revocation of bachelor’s degree plus any further degrees previously awarded that are in conjunction with the International Metaphysical Ministry.

b. All records (email, letter, database files) of students who commit Level Three offenses will be maintained permanently in the Administrative Office with the permanent notation of “Academic Disciplinary Expulsion” on the student’s record and transcript.

**FURTHER POSSIBLE CONSEQUENCES:** Students committing acts of academic dishonesty not only face University and IMM censure, but also face a serious risk of harming their future educational and employment opportunities if the University is ever asked for a reference for their academic work. The University would be required to give truthful and complete information, since the reference request was sent to the University with the student’s permission.