

# Plagiarism, Collusion and Cheating Policy

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This policy has been reviewed in line with the Equality Act 2010 which recognises the following categories of individual as Protected Characteristics: Age, Gender Reassignment, Marriage and Civil Partnership, Pregnancy and Maternity, Race, Religion and Belief, Sex (gender), Sexual orientation and Disability. We will continue to monitor this policy and to ensure that it has equal access and does not discriminate against anyone, especially any person/s listed under any protected characteristic.

## **Purpose**

1. The policy provides definition and examples of plagiarism, collusion and cheating that might occur in connection with the college or its students. The process for preventing, investigating and dealing with plagiarism, collusion and cheating is described along with the requirement for a formal declaration of authenticity by the student.

## **Scope**

2. This policy applies to assessments submitted for all qualifications and programmes, whether regulated or unregulated and whether assessed internally by the centre or by externally by an awarding organisation.
3. The policy also applies to examinations and online tests, as well as assignment tasks that are completed independently by the student in their own time.

## **Equality and Diversity Impact Measure**

4. The college has conducted an Equality Impact Assessment in relation to the rules and policies set out in this document and does not consider them to unduly impact upon any protected group.

## **Plagiarism Definition**

5. Plagiarism - a specific form of cheating which applies to all assessment. There are many definitions, but they all have in common the idea of taking someone else's intellectual effort and presenting it as one's own.
6. Plagiarism is the unacknowledged incorporation into a student's work of materials derived from published or unpublished work by another person and presented as if it were the student's own work. A strict interpretation could include the original ideas, as well as the actual words, produced by another.
7. Unless the candidate has submitted an extensive and unacknowledged paraphrase of another person's writings, the college will not include paraphrasing under the definition of plagiarism.
8. Published work includes books, articles and materials found on the internet. Examples of unpublished work could be course notes, a piece of work previously submitted by another student, or work about to be submitted by another student, or perhaps copied from a work colleague or family member.

9. Some assignments require students to work together at the planning stage. However, group assessment is not allowed so the resulting assignments must be submitted individually and it is essential that each submission is then ratified as being the student's own work.
10. Examples of plagiarism include:
  - Extracts from another person's work, published or unpublished, without using quotation marks and/or an acknowledgement of the source
  - Summarising the work of another or using their ideas without an acknowledgement of the source
  - Copying or using the work of another student (past or present) with or without that person's knowledge or agreement
  - Purchasing essays or downloading them from the internet to submit them as your own work.

### **Preventing Plagiarism**

11. This must start with a formal identification of the student to avoid the possibility of a substitute. This ensures that the person eventually named on the certificate is the person who did the work.
12. The college must ensure that no students can unwittingly find themselves guilty of plagiarism without knowing the implications. It is essential plagiarism is explained to students, how it is dealt with, the possible sanctions and how they should acknowledge someone else's work. The college achieves this through the obligatory programme induction and is reinforced in assignment briefings and/or in tutorial support.
13. Following up on this, every student must make a formal declaration of authenticity (i.e. the work is their own) for each assessment. Without an explanation of plagiarism and auditable declaration of authenticity, there can be no grounds for plagiarism. However, such an omission by the college *could* be grounds for malpractice.
14. The following guidelines will be helpful for students:
  - The large majority of every assessment must be the original work of the student. Substantial copying of course notes or other published or unpublished work is unacceptable as this does not demonstrate the student's knowledge, let alone his/her application. Even if acknowledged and properly referenced, excessive use of other people's work is unacceptable
  - If you use someone else's exact words in your work, they must be in quotation marks. Use quotations sparingly and only when you feel the

author has expressed something so well and so concisely that the words cannot be improved

- Even if you give your own explanation of somebody else's work without quoting word-for-word, you must reference your source
- When referencing a source, you must provide the name of the author, the date of their work that you have referred to and the page number where you got the quotation from immediately after the quotation (eg Hill, 2004, p. 42) and also provide full details of the reference in the bibliography
- You must provide a bibliography - a list of books, articles and any other sources you have quoted - at the end of your assignments
- The Harvard system for referencing sources is well-established and you can find guidance on how to use it on the internet

When making a reference to a book the Harvard format is:

- Hill, P. (2004) Concepts of coaching: a guide for managers. ILM, London

and for a reference to an article the Harvard format is:

- Grant, A.M. (2010) It takes time: a 'stages of change' perspective on the adoption of workplace coaching skills. Journal of Change Management, 10(1), pp. 61-77

## **Anti-Plagiarism Software**

15. Where appropriate, the college utilises, along with formal declarations of authenticity, an online originality checking service to ensure the work that is presented is the students. A copy of the originality report should be attached to all learner work at external Quality Assurance activity.
16. The college subscribes to Turnitin anti-plagiarism software and strongly encourages its use across all levels of study and for all written assignments. Submissions not made through Turnitin should be exceptional and only permitted in specific cases, such as tangible creative projects (e.g., textile pieces) or submissions from pre-entry students where Turnitin use is not appropriate.
17. Where Turnitin is used, it provides a percentage score for commonality. The subject specific tutor will have a tolerance level of commonality (due to quotations, etc.) but over this tolerance, a student must be challenged for plagiarism.

## **Student Authenticity**

18. As noted earlier, students must confirm the authenticity of every piece of work to be assessed. In those exceptional cases where Turnitin is not used to submit and assess the work, a signed authenticity declaration must be submitted. This can be completed by a student signing the assignment brief provided for the task they are submitting.

19. In the case of examinations and online tests, authenticity takes the form of the college ensuring that another person is not being substituted to take the test on behalf of the student. This typically necessitates a confirmation of the identity of every student, for example through their photographic ID card.
20. A student's work **must not** be accepted for assessment without a declaration of authenticity as it would be difficult to establish possible plagiarism because the student has not claimed it as his/her own work. In the absence of such a declaration, the focus would fall on the college because of negligence in establishing authenticity and a case of maladministration or malpractice may well result.

## **Collusion**

21. Collusion is a form of plagiarism that involves unauthorised co-operation between at least two people with the intent to deliberately mislead or deceive. Collusion can take the following forms:
  - two or more learners conspiring to produce a piece work together with the intention that it is submitted as his/her own, individual work. Or with the intention of at least one learner submitting it as his/her own, individual work
  - a learner submitting the work of another learner (with their consent) as his/her own, individual work. In such cases, both learners would be deemed to be guilty of collusion
  - although also an example of plagiarism, the submission of a piece of work that is not the learners own individual work that has been purchased from a third party. For example, from an essay or assignment writing service or by soliciting another individual to produce a piece or work on their behalf
  - unauthorised co-operation between a learner and a third party in the production of a piece of work that will be submitted as the learners own, this would include the misuse of Artificial Intelligence (AI).

## **Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in assessment**

22. AI use refers to the use of AI tools to obtain information and content which might be used in work produced for assessments which lead towards qualifications.
23. AI tools can generate text in response to user prompts and questions. Users can ask follow-up questions or ask an AI tool to revise the responses already provided. AI chatbots respond to prompts based upon patterns in the data sets upon which they have been trained. They generate responses which are statistically likely to be relevant and appropriate.

24. As well as this policy, the college has two other policies—Malpractice and Maladministration and the Acceptable Use of AI Policy—that support the education of students and staff in the responsible and appropriate use of AI. These policies, together with the procedures outlined in this document, provide a robust framework for preventing misuse and mitigating associated risks in assessment.
25. The college will ensure that its staff understand and follow JCQ guidance outlined [here](#) on the use and misuse of AI tools primarily where access to the internet is permitted in the preparatory, research or production stages of Non-Examined Assessment, coursework and internal assessment.
26. The College will ensure that all students receive appropriate guidance to develop an informed understanding of Artificial Intelligence (AI), including its purpose, potential benefits, associated risks, and limitations.

Students will be made aware of what constitutes AI misuse and informed that any such misuse will be treated as academic malpractice in accordance with the College's Academic Integrity and Malpractice Procedures

Guidance will be provided to students regarding the appropriate contexts in which AI may be used and the correct methods for acknowledging AI-assisted work.

The College's **Acceptable AI Use Policy** will be clearly communicated and signposted through the student tutorial programme.

The **Digital Experience Team** will deliver workshops and develop supporting resources to ensure that all staff and students maintain up-to-date knowledge and understanding of the ethical and acceptable use of AI technologies

27. Examples of misuse of AI that can occur, although not an exhaustive list, include:
- Copying or paraphrasing sections of AI-generated content so that the work is no longer the student's own
  - Copying or paraphrasing whole responses of AI-generated content
  - Using AI to complete parts of the assessment so that the work does not reflect the student's own work, analysis, evaluation or calculations
  - Failing to acknowledge use of AI tools when they have been used as a source of information
  - Incomplete or poor acknowledgement of AI tools
  - Submitting work with intentionally incomplete or misleading references or bibliographies

## Preventing Collusion

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28. It is acceptable to discuss ideas, talk about books, articles, online material and strategies for example with other learners. However, it is not acceptable to help a fellow student to produce work that will be submitted as their own and an individual piece of work.
29. Students should never lend their work to another learner under any circumstances as it may be copied or reproduced. This example would leave both students vulnerable to an accusation of collusion.
30. Students should leave themselves enough time to check their work thoroughly before submitting it for marking or evaluation. Keeping to strict deadlines will limit the temptation of colluding with another student or third party or purchasing work with the intention of submitting it as their own.
31. Students should ensure they are signed into their own Microsoft account when completing work, especially on shared or public computers. This helps prevent their work from being seen or saved by others. If a student uses a shared or public printer to print hard copy versions of work, they should ensure that any work is collected promptly from the printer and that any additional copies are securely destroyed.

## **Cheating**

32. Cheating is an attempt to deceive assessors, verifiers, examiners and/or external verifiers and includes:
  - providing or receiving information about the content of an examination before it takes place, except when allowed by the awarding organisation (e.g. case study materials issued before an examination)
  - centres giving excessive help to students in writing an assignment, or writing any of it for them
  - impersonating or trying to impersonate a student, or attempting to procure a third party to impersonate oneself
  - students using books, notes, instruments, computer files or other materials or aids that are not permitted (usually relevant only to examinations and online tests)
  - assistance or the communication of information by one student to another in an assessment where this is not permitted (usually relevant only to examinations and online tests)
  - copying or reading from the work of another student or from another student's books, notes, instruments, computer files or other materials or aids, unless expressly permitted
  - offering a bribe of any kind to an invigilator, examiner or other person connected with assessment
  - any attempt to tamper with assignment or examination scripts after they have been submitted by students

- fabricating or falsifying data or results by individual students or groups of students
- Because of the nature of cheating, this mainly applies to examinations and online tests. The college is aware that cheating may involve a member of staff (e.g. tampering with assessment or examination scripts or results after students have submitted them), which would be a case of centre malpractice (see the college's Malpractice and Maladministration policy).

### **Preventing cheating**

33. It is important that centres check the instructions awarding organisations provide for assessments, examinations or online tests and complies with them, especially regarding materials which can and cannot be used in the examination and the required arrangements for invigilation.
34. Students and others connected with the test or examination must be made aware of the consequences of cheating. The JCQ Instructions for Conducting Examinations specify announcements that must be made at the beginning of every exam or online test.
35. Exam centres are responsible for the supervision of examinations and the provision of appropriate invigilation in accord with regulations.
36. The college takes seriously all incidents of plagiarism or cheating, especially those incidents that are an attempt by the student to gain marks without having done a portion of the work themselves.
37. Plagiarism or cheating can reflect badly on both the student and the college and both can be sanctioned. Although both can be involved in a case, plagiarism or cheating is not to be confused with malpractice or maladministration. The latter only apply in cases of omission, neglect or collusion by a centre. For further guidance in this area please see the Malpractice & Maladministration Policy.

### **Investigation Process**

38. If plagiarism, collusion or cheating is suspected, your Quality Manager should be notified at the earliest opportunity.
39. Your Quality Manager will log the incident and establish fact prior to informing the awarding organisation, usually before instructing a formal investigation.
40. Quality will appoint a tutor, assessor or other appropriate person to investigate any detected or alleged incidents of plagiarism or cheating. This person must be independent. They must not have been involved in the assessment in which the suspected plagiarism or cheating took place and preferably should have had no involvement in the programme for the suspected student(s).

41. Early in the process, the student is to be informed that plagiarism, collusion or cheating is suspected, and they are to be subsequently updated on progress regarding the investigation. At the conclusion of the investigation, the student must be informed of the outcome and their right to appeal explained.
42. Depending on the circumstances, the investigator should interview all involved and anybody who might be able to contribute to the investigation. As a minimum, this should include: the suspected student, the assessor or invigilator and whoever detected or reported the alleged plagiarism or cheating. It is often necessary to speak to others, such as the person whose work was copied and other students. Throughout the process, these interviews must be recorded, especially where they reveal key information.
43. If it is found through the investigation that plagiarism or cheating did occur, Quality must seek awarding organisation guidance on process.
44. Quality will inform the awarding organisation at the earliest opportunity and before any sanctions are implemented.
45. If the college has found serious or widespread plagiarism or cheating, or is otherwise unsure how to proceed, it must seek guidance from the awarding organisation before taking action.
46. The department must retain all records of investigation and sanction in preparation for subsequent audits as part of the EQA's routine centre review.

### **Plagiarism, collusion or cheating detected by others**

47. If plagiarism, collusion or cheating is reported by somebody other than the centre (e.g. an employer, student or a 'whistle blower'), then it will generally be transferred to the awarding organisation.
48. The awarding organisation will usually appoint a lead investigator to coordinate the investigation. As part of this, the college may be asked to carry out parts of the investigation.
49. Relevant parties will be consulted, e.g. the student, centre staff, invigilators, assessors, EQA, Quality Manager. Other people associated with the incident may be asked for additional information.
50. As above, all relevant evidence will be reviewed and a report written on the findings. A decision on the sanction(s) to be imposed will be made, if any. The centre will be informed of the outcome.
51. Sanctions for the student may include:

- adjusting the marks given for the test or examination
- requiring the student to redo one or more assignments and re-submit for assessment
- the award of a minimum mark in the event of pass, or higher
- requiring the student to re-sit the test or examination
- withholding full or unit certification
- withdrawal of any form of membership
- withholding certification and withdrawal of any membership
- disqualification from the qualification and refusing to accept further test or examination entries
- debarred from further certification and/or registration

52. The result of the applied penalties identified within, but not limited to, section 45 may require the college to ask the student to leave their programme of study with immediate effect.

53. If it is found that the college has been negligent (e.g. inadequate invigilation or failing to advise students about plagiarism in the induction/assessment briefing) or complicit (e.g. providing exam answers or writing any part of the assignment for the student) then sanctions may be imposed on the centre. These include:

- a warning
- an action plan
- removal of Direct Claim Status
- a change of risk rating to provide increased monitoring and quality assurance
- an appointment, at the centre's expense, of independent invigilators
- a suspension of registration and/or certification
- the withdrawal of qualification approval for the qualification in question
- the withdrawal of centre approval or provider recognition.

54. The college will be able to appeal against the sanctions imposed for plagiarism or cheating by following the awarding organisations appeals policy.

### **Continuous Improvement**

55. The college reviews the outcomes of all incidents of plagiarism or cheating to identify improvements to its processes, procedures, training and development. Where any failures in the assessment process are uncovered, the college is also responsible for investigating whether other students could be affected and any remedial action required.

56. The college aims to improve the quality of its delivery in the light of learning from the feedback that it receives.

57. This policy shall be the subject of a three-year review cycle or as necessary.