

## Skills4Stem Student Regulations (2018/19)

### Scope of regulations

These regulations apply to all programmes offered by Skills4Stem.

### Admissions

#### 1.1 Age of entrants

- Normally must be at least 16 years old on 1<sup>st</sup> September of the year entry
- There is no upper age limit to Skills4Stem courses.
- Skills4Stem may set a higher minimum age limit for certain courses if required to do so by a Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs).

#### 1.2 Entry requirements

##### Standard entry requirements for academic programmes

- Normally must be at least 16 years old on the first day of learning
- Applicants are required to demonstrate proficiency in the English language before they are admitted to SKILLS4STEM through possession of a recognised English language qualification at IELTS 4.5 (overall band score), or equivalent.
- Complete the Skills4Stem application form
- Copies of latest/most recent academic report
- Copies of all relevant certificates
- Copy of passport
- Good educational references - including attendance (relating to previous 2 years)
- Successful interview:
  - Must be able to demonstrate vocational aptitude at an appropriate skill level
  - Must evidence high levels of motivation and commitment, as these are vital for successful completion of these courses

##### Level 3 academic programmes

For level 3 academic programmes applicants must meet all the criteria outlined in the standard entry requirements for academic programmes and have 5 GCSE at C grade or above, one of which must be mathematics, or equivalent.

##### Exceptional Entry

Applications are also welcomed from those without a full Level 2 qualification wishing to be considered under exceptional entry criteria:

- meet all the criteria outlined in the standard entry requirements for academic programmes
- Can provide evidence of relevant experience/practice in an appropriate workplace environment

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- Able to evidence their ability to fully engage with and benefit from the level 3 programme
- Agree to undertake Functional Skills Level 2 in English and Maths

### **1.3 Recognition of Prior Learning**

Skills4Stem define 'Recognition of Prior Learning' (RPL) as a method of assessment (leading to the award of credit) that considers whether a learner can demonstrate that they can meet the assessment requirements through knowledge, understanding or skills they already possess and so do not need to develop through a course of learning.

The following terms are also recognised for the purpose of recognition of prior learning

- Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL)
- Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL)
- Accreditation of Prior Achievement (APA)
- Accreditation of Prior Learning and Achievement (APLA)

RPL enables recognition of achievement from a range of activities using any appropriate assessment methodology. Provided that the assessment requirements of a given unit or qualification have been met, the use of RPL is acceptable for accrediting a unit, units or a whole qualification. Evidence of learning must meet the VACS rule:

- Valid
- Authentic
- Current
- Sufficient

RPL is a valid method of enabling individuals to claim credit for units or qualifications, irrespective of how their learning took place. There is no difference between the achievement of the learning outcomes and assessment criteria through prior learning or through a formal programme of study

RPL policies, processes, procedures, practices and decisions should be transparent, rigorous, reliable, fair and accessible to individuals and stakeholders to ensure that users can be confident of the decisions and outcomes of RPL.

RPL is a learner-centered, voluntary process. The individual should be offered advice on the nature and range of evidence considered appropriate, to support a claim for credit through RPL, and be given guidance and support to make a claim.

The process of assessment for RPL is subject to the same quality assurance and monitoring standards as any other form of assessment. The award of success through RPL will not be distinguished from any other successes.

Assessment methods for RPL must be of equal rigor to other assessment methods, be fit for purpose and relate to the evidence of learning. Credit may be claimed for any unit through RPL unless the assessment requirements of the unit do not allow this, based on a rationale consistent with the aims and regulations of the framework.

RPL is also of value to learners transferring across various learning programmes who have relevant learning but do not hold relevant credits or certificates. This may include learners transferring from NQF to QCF specifications.

The use and application of RPL is of particular value to learners without formal qualifications, who are either in employment, preparing to enter, or returning to employment. It enables them to gain all or part of a qualification without having to undertake a formal learning programme.

RPL can be used where a learner has not had their prior learning formally recognised. If a learner has certificated learning, then they should apply for exemption, not RPL. Exemption is the facility for a learner to claim exemption from some of the achievement requirements of a qualification, using evidence of certificated achievement deemed to be of equivalent value. Checks will need to be made with relevant Awarding Organisations to ensure compliance with their RPL policy and regulations.

RPL focuses on assessment and awarding of credit for prior learning which may count as evidence towards units or full qualifications.

Where units are assessed against assessment criteria or grading criteria, then all evidence must be evaluated using the stipulated criteria. In assessing a unit using RPL the assessor must be satisfied that the evidence produced by the learner meets the assessment standard established by the learning outcome and its related assessment criteria.

Most often RPL will be used for units or parts of a qualification. It is acceptable to claim for an entire qualification through RPL although this is not the norm. However, it would be unusual for a learner to be able to offer prior achievement that completely matches every aspect of a qualification's assessment requirements.

The prior achievement that would provide evidence of current knowledge, understanding and skills will vary from sector to sector. It will depend on the extent of the experience, technological changes and the nature of the outcome claimed. If the currency of any evidence is in doubt, the assessor may use questions or professional discussion to check understanding, and for competence. Note also that the assessment strategy for each qualification must be adhered to. The RPL process is **not** concerned with allowing for exceptional entry to, or exemption from, a programme of study.

To carry out RPL, Skills4Stem must ensure that:

- Learners are registered as soon as they formally start to gather evidence.
- Records of assessment are maintained, as for any other unit/qualification
- Certification and claims are made according to normal procedures
- All relevant evidence is assessed before assessment decisions are confirmed
- There are designated personnel with the appropriate expertise to support and assure the RPL process.

## **1.5 Applicants with criminal convictions**

- 1.5.1 All applicants will be required to complete an application form and those applying for academic programmes are required to supply appropriate references.
- 1.5.3 All applicants who declare a criminal conviction, warning, reprimand etc. will be required to participate in an interview with the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) or nominee to ascertain the level of risk and suitability for their chosen programme.
- 1.5.4 Decisions on offers for a place on a programme at Skills4Stem will be determined using a number of factors including, but not limited to: previous academic achievements, predicted exam grades, references, participation in compulsory elements of the admissions process and meetings with **parents/carers/support workers where necessary**.

## **1.6 Disabled applicants and applicants with specific learning difficulties**

- 1.6.1 All applicants will be required to complete an application form and supply appropriate references.
- 1.6.2 All applicants who disclose an additional learning need or disability will be asked to provide additional details in order that access arrangements for interview or associated admissions events can be made for applicants if required.
- 1.6.3 Decisions on offers for a place on a programme at Skills4Stem will be determined using a number of factors including, but not limited to: previous academic achievements, predicted exam grades, references, participation at compulsory elements of the admissions process and meetings with **parents/carers/support workers where necessary**.

## **1.7 Appeals**

- 1.7.1 It should be noted that there is no right for individual learners to attend a particular programme and the Skills4Stem may not allow enrolment for an individual:
- if the applicant does not meet the necessary academic standards;
  - if the applicant has previously been excluded;

- if it is persuaded that it cannot reasonably provide for the applicant within its duty of care to other learners and staff;
- in other circumstances if considered necessary.

The final decision to refuse an application lies with the CEO.

1.7.2 If an appeal is made by the applicant, or on their behalf, the Skills4Stem will, where necessary, convene a panel of senior staff to consider such applications. This panel shall comprise of the CEO, Head of Quality & Compliance other relevant staff. This panel's first consideration will be whether or not such applicants present a genuine risk to the health and safety of other members of the Skills4Stem or be otherwise prejudicial to the work of the Skills4Stem. If the panel is persuaded that an applicant is a risk and decides to reject the application then the applicant will be given written reasons for the refusal to enrol, and advised of the process for appeal.

## **2. Student conduct, rights & responsibilities**

We expect that you conduct yourself in an appropriate, respectful and considerate way in all your contacts with fellow students and staff.

### **2.1 General**

When you are on programme with Skills4Stem you agree to abide by its rules and regulations.

You should ensure that you are familiar with them.

You are also expected to take reasonable steps to prevent and report cases where other people break the rules particularly in ways that cause actual or potential harm or distress to others, for instance in terms of breaching safety rules or harassment of any kind.

As in any community it is important that Skills4Stem members behave in an appropriate manner, respect the rights of others and cooperate with other students and staff to make the best use of the facilities and opportunities provided.

Students who do not observe the behaviour code will be subject to the disciplinary action detailed in the student regulations. (see appendix 2)

If you are unclear about any aspect of the behaviour code please ask your Trainer or Review Tutor to clarify the expectations.

### **2.2 Skills4Stem behaviour code**

Students are expected to:

- Behave in a manner that is considerate and respectful to others
- Attend all classes
- Be punctual to all classes
- Complete work to the required standard and meet deadlines
- Go to lessons properly equipped to work

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- Work hard and contribute to lessons
- Follow the Skills4Stem's health and safety guidance
- Switch off mobile phones in classes and other learning environments
- Keep the environment clean and tidy and use the waste bins provided
- Smoke in designated smoking areas
- Not take part in, or ignore, harassment or bullying of other students including bullying on social networking sites such as Facebook
- Not bring onto Skills4Stem premise, hired classroom, or use, or offer to other students any controlled drug or alcohol
- Not attend Skills4Stem sessions when under the influence of any controlled drug or alcohol
- Not record, share or distribute images or videos recorded on any electronic recording device (including mobile phones and MP3s, etc.) whilst on any Skills4Stem premises or in a Skills4Stem session which may cause offence to others or bring the Skills4Stem into disrepute)
- Not use language that is offensive or abusive to others including swearing, sexist or racist remarks
- Not carry on their person a knife or other items which might be regarded as an offensive weapon, any article made or adapted for causing injury, or intended to cause injury

This is not an exhaustive list

This code should be adhered to whether learners are on Skills4Stem premises, in hired classrooms, on webinars, on site visits, etc. This code is supplemented by specific requirements for particular resources e.g. use of internet or other software, use of Learning Resource Centres. Learners will be made aware of these requirements for specific areas at the start of their course.

## **E-Bullying**

With increases in picture and video messaging, learners need to be increasingly careful about the images they share. It is very easy for inappropriate images to be shared around a number of phones, changed and even put online, where it is nearly impossible to remove from circulation.

Learners also need to be aware that they put themselves at risk of mobile bullying, or inappropriate intimate contact if they give out their mobile number to people they don't fully know or trust. This includes posting to social networking sites such as 'Myspace', 'Youtube', 'Facebook', 'Twitter' etc.

Learners should not use electronic recording equipment either at home or in Skills4Stem to bully or harass any staff or learners, which is likely to cause personal distress or embarrassment, or bring the Skills4Stem into disrepute. This includes on line identity fraud e.g. "frapping" where someone has gained access to another person's personal email or social networking page, by using another person's login details, and then sends cyberbullying messages. Any incidents of "frapping" will be seen as serious misconduct by learners.

Learners who experience E-Bullying should report this to their Trainer or Review Tutor who will take action to investigate the incident(s). Learners should take screen prints of text messages or web pages, and be careful to record the time, date and address of the site as evidence for the investigation.

All incidents of E-Bullying will be taken seriously and investigated by Trainers, Review Tutors and managers. If a learner is found guilty of E-Bullying then they will face disciplinary action.

Learners should be aware that their behaviour online can affect many areas of their life. Many employers access social networking sites before interviewing job applicants. Universities and colleges can also access social networking sites before offering potential applicants a place. Comments, content and/or images on your site may be considered and may therefore affect your future.

## **Discrimination, Harassment and Victimisation**

Skills4Stem does not tolerate any form of discrimination, harassment or victimisation. Skills4Stem will take robust action against those who have knowingly discriminated against another member of the Skills4Stem community. Learners who are found to have **deliberately** behaved in such a way as to cause offence in relation to someone's disability, race, sex/gender, age, religion or beliefs, sexual orientation or gender re-assignment will be disciplined as follows:

- 1st instance - Issued with a Final Written Warning to stay on the learner's file for the duration of the academic year and subsequent years of study.
- 2nd instance - Excluded for gross misconduct, subject to investigation.

## **Confiscation and Search**

All learners should be aware of the actions that can follow should there be an incident of bad or dangerous behaviour. Under the Education and Inspections Act 2006, all schools and colleges have new statutory powers which include:

- the legal right to confiscate inappropriate items from learners such as mobile phones or music players;
- the removal of offensive images of staff, learners and other individuals stored on electronic recording devices;
- statutory powers to discipline learners who behave badly on the way to and from Skills4Stem, for instance when travelling on buses and trains;
- greater legal scope and flexibility in giving s detentions, which may include after-Skills4Stem and Saturday detentions;
- the right of all staff to use 'reasonable force' to prevent learners from committing a crime or causing injury, damage, or disruption;
- a legal duty on schools and Skills4Stems to make provision to tackle all forms of bullying.

**Legislation in the Violent Crime Reduction Act 2006 allows the Principal, or those acting with his or her delegated authority, to search learners if they suspect one of them is carrying a dangerous weapon. At SKILLS4STEM, this authority lies with the Facilities Manager. As well as manual search, they are also entitled to use metal-detector arches and wands to carry out random, nonintrusive searches of learners for weapons. These powers came into effect in May 2007.**

## **2.5 Learner Disciplinary Procedures**

1. A summary of the Learner Disciplinary Procedure is set out in the following table. Irrespective of the detailed procedures set out, learners are expected to behave at all times in a manner which respects the property, integrity, well-being and reputation of the Skills4Stem and of all members of the Skills4Stem community, including learners, staff and visitors to Skills4Stem.
2. Most minor infringements of the Learner Code of Behaviour will be dealt with informally by members of the Skills4Stem staff. The main aim of such informal warnings is to draw to the attention of the learner that the conduct in question is not acceptable in a Skills4Stem community environment due to the detrimental implications for the learner or others. However, if the behaviour in question is of a more serious nature or a learner's conduct or performance does not improve following informal warnings the learner will be required to account for their behaviour and if the explanation is unsatisfactory then disciplinary action will be instigated within the following framework.
3. Relevant disciplinary letters and reports for learners enrolled on Skills4Stem programmes will be sent to parents, carers and/or employers, as appropriate.

### **Stage 1 – Formal Oral Warning**

The learner will be given a Formal Oral Warning by their Trainer or Review Tutor. It will be explained why their behaviour or performance does not meet the acceptable standard and they will be made aware of what they are required to do in order to meet a standard that is acceptable. A letter confirming the oral warning will be sent to the learner and copied to parents/carers if the learner is under 18 years of age, or turns 18 during the academic year, and to sponsors if appropriate. The letter will give details of the incident or complaint against them and will detail the consequences of further offences. A copy of the letter will be kept in the learner's file for the remainder of the academic year but may also be retained on file should the learner wish to re-enrol next year.

### **Stage 2 – First Written Warning**

If the behaviour or set of behaviours recurs or if the misconduct is more serious, then the learner will be required to attend an interview with the Quality Manager where they will be issued with a First Formal Written Warning. This written warning will be sent to the learner and copied to parents/carers if the learner is under 18 years of age, or turns 18 during the academic year, and to

sponsors if appropriate. The written warning will give details of the incident or complaint against them and will detail the consequences of further offences. A copy of the written warning will be kept in the learner's file for the remainder of the academic year but may also be retained on file should the learner wish to re-enrol next year.

### **Stage 3 – Final Written Warning**

If the learner fails to comply with conditions of the First Written Warning or they engage in behaviour regarded as serious misconduct then they will receive a Final Written Warning at a formal interview with the Head of Quality & Compliance. The written warning will give details of the incident or complaint against them, any sanctions imposed as a result of the misconduct and will detail the consequences of further offences. This written warning will be copied to parents/carers of learners under 18 years of age, or turns 18 during the academic year, and to sponsors if appropriate. A copy of the written warning will be kept in the learner's file for the remainder of the for the remainder of the academic year and will also be retained on file should the learner wish to re-enrol next year. Incidents of serious misconduct may require temporary suspension of the learner to allow for a period of investigation to confirm the details of any incident and to determine the appropriate sanction to be imposed following consideration of the learner's previous conduct.

### **Stage 4 – Exclusion**

If a learner fails to comply with the conditions or reach the prescribed standard required by a final written warning or where an incident of gross misconduct occurs then the learner will be required to attend an Exclusion Panel. The Panel will review all available evidence and consider the learner's explanation of their behaviour. The Panel may decide to exclude the learner from a Skills4Stem programme permanently or for a specified period. Alternatively, depending on the circumstances the Panel may allow the learner to remain on a Skills4Stem programme subject to compliance with a behaviour contract. The length of time that the exclusion stands for is to be determined by the circumstances leading up to the exclusion and is at the discretion of the Panel. The conclusions of the Panel will be detailed in a written letter copied to agents and parents/carers of learners under 18 years of age and for those who turn 18 during the academic year. A learner may be subject to a suspension from Skills4Stem pending the formal Exclusion Panel. A learner who has been excluded from the Skills4Stem for a specified period (normally for the remainder of the academic year) may be re-enrolled subject to specified conditions and following an interview or consultation with the CEO.

4. The disciplinary procedure is based on the following principles:

- The procedure is designed to deal fairly and consistently with disciplinary matters;
- Disciplinary action will not be taken until incidents have been investigated as fully as is necessary and reasonable to establish the factual details. However, this does not preclude learners being

temporarily suspended from all Skills4Stem activities whilst an investigation is in process. Such a temporary suspension is not regarded as a disciplinary sanction;

- At every stage of the disciplinary procedure learners will be given full details of the complaint against them and given the opportunity to present their case prior to any decision;
- The procedure will be implemented at any stage dependent on the nature and seriousness of the alleged misconduct;
- The learner has a right of appeal against any formal disciplinary action;
- At the stage when a disciplinary action can lead directly to exclusion from Skills4Stem then the learner has a right to be accompanied by another person to the formal exclusion interview and any subsequent appeal.

At the discretion of the CEO an individual, deemed guilty of Gross Misconduct may be excluded without a hearing.

Circumstances resulting in this action would involve an individual behaving in such a way that is considered dangerous, or of causing harm to others, or of bringing the Skills4Stem, or its learners or staff into disrepute. In other circumstances, it may be more relevant to conduct a hearing.

## **Appeals**

Learners have the right to appeal against any disciplinary decision if they believe that they have not been treated fairly. The staff member hearing their appeal must not be any member of staff involved in the original disciplinary judgement.

An appeal against an Oral Warning should be made formally (usually in writing) to the appropriate Quality Manager, if they were not the originator of the warning) within five working days of the original warning. However, if the Quality Manager was the originator of the first written warning, the appeal should be submitted to the Head of Quality & Compliance. The learner will be interviewed within five working days of the appeal being received and be informed in writing of the appeal decision with five working days of the interview.

An appeal against a First Written Warning should be made formally (usually in writing) to the Head of Quality & Compliance within five working days of the original warning. The learner will be interviewed within five working days of the appeal being received and be informed in writing of the appeal decision with five working days of the interview.

An appeal against a Final Written Warning should be made formally (usually in writing) to the CEO or nominee within five working days of the original warning. The learner will be interviewed within five working days of the appeal being received and be informed in writing of the appeal decision within five working days of the interview.

**An appeal against Exclusion should be made formally (usually in writing) to the Deputy Principal, Teaching and Learning within ten working days of receipt of the written notice of exclusion clearly stating the grounds on which the learner will base their appeal.** The appeal will be heard by a member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and an independent member of the Skills4Stem Management Group. The appeal hearing will take place within ten working days of the appeal being received and the learner will be sent written confirmation of the final decision within five working days of the appeal hearing. The learner may be accompanied by a friend or relative to the appeal hearing but we would not normally expect the learner to be legally represented. However, if the learner does wish for legal representation he/she must give notice in writing to the Chairperson, also stating why it is believed to be necessary. In this event, the Skills4Stem may also wish to have legal representation and the hearing may have to be postponed in order to arrange this. If no appeal is made within the time allowed there will be no further opportunity for the learner's case to be heard. If the learner does not attend the appeal hearing, without good cause or reason, the case will be heard and a decision made in their absence.

The normal procedure for a disciplinary or appeal hearing will be:

1. Members of the panel will be introduced by the Chair.
2. The learner will introduce any person brought as a supporter whose name was submitted prior to the hearing.
3. The member of staff presenting the complaint will present the Skills4Stem's case, which may include presenting documentary evidence or calling witnesses.
4. The learner or his/her supporter will be given the opportunity to question the member of staff presenting the Skills4Stem's case.
5. The Panel will be given the opportunity to question the member of staff presenting the Skills4Stem's case.
6. The learner or his/her supporter will present evidence in support of the learner's position, which may include presenting documentary evidence or calling witnesses.
7. The member of staff presenting the Skills4Stem's case will be given the opportunity to question the learner or his/her supporter.
8. The Panel will be given the opportunity to question the learner or his/her supporter.
9. Summing up by the member of staff presenting the Skills4Stem's case.
10. Summing up by the learner or his/her supporter.
11. The Panel will consider what action is appropriate. Others present will withdraw to allow this process to take place.
12. The member of staff presenting the Skills4Stem's case and the learner and his/her supporter will be invited to return to hear the decision of the Panel conveyed verbally by the Chair.
13. The decision, confirmation of any action to be taken and details of the appeals procedure will be sent in writing to the learner within 5 working days.

## General Notes

Please note, authority levels as described below indicate the minimum required to carry out disciplinary actions.

- a. All disciplinary actions (including informal warnings) should be noted and kept to ensure a full record of all disciplinary action relating to a learner can be readily accessed to inform subsequent stages in the disciplinary procedures.
- b. Records of disciplinary action should be stored in the learner's individual file.
- c. All staff have the authority to issue informal oral warnings to learners in cases of minor misconduct. The staff member should make a brief note of the warning and send a copy to the Learner's Review Tutor and send a copy to the Quality Manager to ensure a copy is placed on in the student's file.
- d. Formal Oral Warnings should be issued by Trainers and Review Tutors, depending on the circumstances.
- e. First Written Warnings should be issued as a minimum by Quality Manager
- f. Head of Quality & Compliance is authorised to take any of the measures up to, and including, Final Written Warning. They will inform the CEO of any action taken.
- g. Copies of correspondence etc. will normally be sent to parents of learners under the age of 18 years and to the parent or carer of a learner who was under 18 years of age at the start of the academic year. Copies will also be forwarded to any sponsoring employer.

## Guidelines on Disciplinary Stages

### a. Minor misconduct

It is not possible to provide a comprehensive definition of what constitutes minor misconduct. Examples of minor misconduct would include: refusal to comply with instructions given by a member of staff; rowdy or inconsiderate behaviour; a minor breach of the learner Code of Behaviour. Three occurrences of minor misconduct would be regarded as repeated misconduct.

### b. Repeated misconduct

A Formal Oral Warning will be given in circumstances where it will be made clear to the learner that the formal disciplinary procedure is being used. The letter confirming the oral warning will normally be sent by the Quality Manager. In the case of learners under 18 years of age, and those who turn 18 during the academic year, a copy of the letter will be sent to the learner's parents or carer and any sponsoring employers, as appropriate. Three occurrences of the behaviour which led to the initial oral warning would be regarded as persistent or serious misconduct.

### c. Persistent or serious misconduct

As with cases of minor misconduct, a comprehensive definition of serious misconduct cannot be given. Examples of serious misconduct would include: breach of Skills4Stem safety rules; wilful damage to Skills4Stem property or other learner's work/property; plagiarism, collusion or cheating; threat to the safety of other Skills4Stem members; conduct or language which breaches the Skills4Stem policies on Equality and Diversity and Safeguarding; discrimination, harassment or victimisation of another member of the Skills4Stem community; knowingly inviting or aiding non-learners to access Skills4Stem premises. Persistent or serious misconduct would normally be dealt with by a First or Final Written Warning

### d. Gross misconduct

Gross misconduct would cover areas such as violence or a threat of violence to any Skills4Stem member; discrimination, harassment or victimisation of another member of the Skills4Stem community; possession and/or use of alcohol or illegal substances; theft; use or possession of offensive weapon; wilful and potentially significant damage to Skills4Stem property; assault on a learner or member of staff; sharing inappropriate images taken on smartphones, mobile phones, MP3s etc of learners or staff; any potentially criminal activity affecting the Skills4Stem or other members of the Skills4Stem. Please note that this list is not exhaustive. Gross misconduct would result in a final written warning or exclusion from the Skills4Stem depending on the circumstances.

**The Skills4Stem does not tolerate any form of discrimination, harassment or victimisation. The Equality Act 2010 introduces the Public Sector Equality Duty.** This supports the Skills4Stem's position of taking robust action against those who have knowingly discriminated, harassed or victimised another member of the Skills4Stem community. Learners who are found to have **deliberately** behaved in such a way as to cause offence in relation to someone's disability, race, sex/gender, age, religion or beliefs, sexual orientation or gender re-assignment will be disciplined as follows:

- 1st instance - Issued with a Final Written Warning to stay on the learner's file for the duration of the academic year and subsequent years of study.
- 2nd instance - Excluded for gross misconduct, subject to investigation.

## Levels of Authority and Reporting Arrangements for Learner Disciplinary

Procedure Stage	Minimum Level of Authority	Reported to:
<b>Informal Warning:</b> For minor misconduct – the learner being advised that their behaviour is not acceptable in Skills4Stem community	Any member of Skills4Stem staff	Quality Manager
<b>Formal Oral Warning:</b> For repeated occurrences of minor misconduct	Trainers and Review Tutors	Quality Manager
<b>First Written Warning:</b> Failure to adhere to conditions of oral warning or incidents of more serious nature	Quality Manager	Head of Quality & Compliance
<b>Final Written Warning:</b> Failure to comply with conditions of first written warning or instance of serious misconduct	Head of Quality & Compliance	CEO
<b>Fixed Term or Permanent Exclusion:</b> Failure to comply with conditions of final written warning or instance of gross misconduct	CEO	Skills4Stem Board
<b>Suspension pending investigation:</b> Following allegation of serious or gross misconduct which require further investigation over period of time to confirm relevant facts	Quality Manager	Head of Quality & Compliance

<b>Appeal against Formal Oral Warning:</b>	Quality Manager	Head of Quality & Compliance
<b>Appeal against First Written Warning:</b>	Head of Quality & Compliance	CEO
<b>Appeal against Final Written Warning:</b>	CEO	Skills4Stem Board
<b>Appeal against Exclusion:</b>	CEO	Skills4Stem Board
<b>Appeal against Exclusion resulting from act of gross misconduct against CEO:</b>	Skills4Stem Board	n/a

### 3. Assessment

#### (3.1) Purpose and principles of assessment

It is the Skills4Stem's aim to ensure all learners are regularly assessed to determine their level of achievement against the prescribed standards for their programme. In so doing programme teams must:

- ensure that the assessment methodology is valid, reliable and authentic and does not advantage or disadvantage any group of learners
- ensure that the assessment procedure is open, fair and free from bias
- ensure that there are accurate and detailed records of assessment decisions

In order to do this programme teams will:

- ensure that staff are appropriately trained, and clear about their responsibilities, for assessing learners work;
- ensure that the learner is registered for the correct award within the timeframes laid down by awarding bodies;
- ensure that the learners are provided with assessments that are fit for purpose and allow them to provide the necessary evidence, taking account of prior learning or achievements where appropriate;
- provide assessment schedules and explain them to the learner, clearly highlighting the learners' responsibility for timely submission;
- where assessments are submitted late, or learners do not follow the relevant Code of Conduct for assessment, ensure that appropriate sanctions are applied.
- Learners will be informed in advance of the sanctions which will apply in particular assessment situations, and these will be informed by the recommended practice of the particular awarding body;
- ensure that learners are assessed against the current, published assessment and grading criteria, using a variety of assessment techniques;
- ensure that marked assessments are returned to students, with appropriate feedback, within **two weeks** of the assessment submission date;
- ensure that assessment decisions are impartial, valid and reliable;
- develop assessment procedures that will minimise the opportunities for malpractice;
- maintain accurate and detailed records of assessment decisions and keep these records for a period of at least three years, or longer if required for particular qualifications;
- maintain a robust and rigorous internal verification procedure as detailed in the internal verification policy;
- monitor external body External Verifier/Moderator/Examiner reports and undertake actions detailed in such reports;
- share good assessment practice between assessors within the curriculum area and beyond (where appropriate);
- provide resources to ensure that assessment can be performed accurately and appropriately.

## **3. 2 Equity and clarity in assessment**

3.2.1 Equity and clarity are key principles governing the Skills4Stem's assessment procedures (see Skills4Stem's Assessment Policy).

3.2.2 Mechanisms to ensure their fulfilment, as well as the accuracy of individual marks, include:

- the systematic use of published assessment criteria and marking standards;
- marking schemes.

3.2.2 Faculties are responsible for ensuring that no individual student or group of students is disadvantaged by the nature of an assessment task or the marking system used.

## **3.3 Objectivity and independence in assessment**

3.3.1 Mechanisms to ensure their achievement include:

- double marking in certain circumstances;
- a uniform system of internal and external verification/moderation.

## **3.4 Language of assessment**

The language of assessment for all pathways taught at Cambridge Melchior Skills4Stem is English unless otherwise approved by the CEO. Examples of such exemptions include:

- appropriate assessment methods in modern foreign languages
- appropriate stages of dual awards
- Students transferring certificated prior learning in certain circumstances.

## **3.5 Grading**

All non-accredited programmes will be assessed as pass/fail.

For accredited programmes the Skills4Stem will follow Awarding Bodies grading criteria.

## **3.6 Submission of work for assessment for accredited programmes**

The submission of work for assessment is the responsibility of the student alone.

3.6.1 Students are required to ensure that:

- all written assignments (including reports associated with practice or workplace assessments) are uploaded to Moodle by the published deadline (on or before the due date)

- the assignment cover sheet is signed to declare that all work submitted for assessment is solely their own. If the sheet is not signed it will not be accepted for assessment.
- they retain a copy of all written work submitted for assessment or re-assessment
- they retain all marked written assignments, together with cover sheets and tutor comments, until the unit has been considered by the Skills4Stem Assessment Board and the period of appeal has expired (see Section 6 of these Academic Regulations)
- they resubmit marked work if required by Skills4Stem for moderation by an External Verifier/Moderator/Examiner or for any other reason considered valid by the Skills4Stem.

3.6.2 Students are also required to ensure that all non-written work for assessment (e.g. an artefact, preparation of electronic data) is presented in the required format, by the published deadline and at the prescribed location.

3.6.3 Students should ensure that, where practicable, they retain a copy of the non-written work submitted.

3.6.9 Students should also ensure that such work is retained with trainer comments for moderation by an External Examiner or for any other reason considered valid by the Skills4Stem.

3.6.10 **Late assignments are not accepted and a mark of fail is awarded unless an extension to the deadline has been approved for an individual student in advance of the deadline (see the Regulations governing short and long term extensions for details).**

### 3.7 Submission of work for assessment for non-accredited programmes

The submission of work for assessment is the responsibility of the student alone.

3.7.1 Students are required to ensure that:

- all written assignments are handed to the relevant class teacher/uploaded to software
- they retain a copy of all written work submitted for assessment or re-assessment
- they retain all marked written assignments, together with cover sheets and tutor comments, until the unit has been considered by the Skills4Stem Assessment Board and the period of appeal has expired (see Section 6 of these Academic Regulations)
- they resubmit marked work if required by Skills4Stem for moderation by an External Verifier/Moderator/Examiner or for any other reason considered valid by the Skills4Stem.

## 3.8 Extensions

### 3.8.1 Short Term Extensions for accredited programmes

3.8.1.1 A student may request an extension to a submission deadline when circumstances outside the student's control have arisen which prevents submission or are likely to result in significant underperformance if the original deadline is enforced.

3.8.1.2 Students must submit their request to a Quality Manager **before** the submission deadline.

3.8.1.3 The Quality Manager has delegated authority to approve extensions of up to five, and exceptionally up to ten, working days.

3.8.1.4 The following are acceptable reasons for such a request:

- short-term illness
- a short-term illness of any person for whom the student has a responsibility for care
- authorised absence from the Skills4Stem during teaching weeks
- an enforced change in employment circumstances for which only short term notice was given
- other reasons considered acceptable by the Quality Manager

3.8.1.5 The following are **not** acceptable reasons for such a request:

- academic workload
- misreading the instructions on submission deadlines in the assignment brief
- computer, disc, printer or any other technical failure for which the student is responsible (students should ensure that they keep a back-up copy of their work)
- unauthorised absence from Skills4Stem (e.g. holiday taken during teaching weeks).

3.8.1.6 If approved, a copy of the form approving any extension must be attached by the student to the submitted assignment.

### 3.8.2 Long Term Extensions

3.8.2.1 Long term extensions of up to one year are considered and approved if, in the view of the Head of Quality & Compliance (or nominee), the student is experiencing personal or professional difficulties and use of other measures would:

- result in significant disadvantage to the student's academic performance and/or ability to complete his/her studies
- exacerbate an existing health problem or result in additional stress related problems
- fail to address the underlying problem or issue which is unpredictable in nature.

3.8.2.2 A long term extension may also be considered and approved where there are practice related issues which can be resolved only through additional time for completion.

3.8.2.3 Long term extensions are viewed as exceptional solutions and are used only in circumstances where officers are confident that the individual case merits such action.

3.8.2.4 All long term extensions are considered on a confidential basis.

### **3.9 Word limits**

Course teams are advised to set indicative word limits on their assignment briefs. This is to give students an indication of level of work associated with that assessment activity. It is also a recognition that students may progress on to a degree programme and find a more rigorous word limit regime in place.

Note that when considering word limits it is usual to exclude the following items from any considerations:

- Abstracts
- Tables
- Figures
- Diagrams
- Footnotes/endnotes used for reference purposes and kept within reasonable limits
- List of references and/or bibliography
- Appendices

### **3.10 Marking of drafts**

A unit/module teacher or Project supervisor can provide comment on a maximum of 20% of any one piece of work

#### **3.11 Submission of late work and referrals for non-accredited programmes**

Submission of late work

To encourage good academic practice and the vocationally related skill of meeting deadlines and submitting work to deadlines all merit and distinction grade descriptors will require evidence of:

- Meeting agreed timelines
- The ability to plan/organise time effectively
- The ability to work to industrial/commercial practices that include implicit timelines.

Course teams will accept work that has been submitted late. However, failure to meet the agreed deadlines will mean that assignments submitted late, without mitigation, will be capped at a maximum of a pass.

## Resubmission of assessed work

Students are permitted to retake a completed assignment after a summative grade has been given. The resubmission assessment needs to meet the following conditions:

- The student requesting the resubmission must have met the initial deadline date.
- Students with agreed mitigation will be eligible for resubmission.
- The student requesting the resubmission must have taken full advantage of the formative assessment process
- The student will need to complete an alternative assessment
- The new assessment will need to be approved by the Head of Quality & Compliance.

Note: If a student has not submitted work by the deadline and does not have any agreed mitigation then a resubmission assessment will not include Merit or Distinction criteria.

In designing the new assessment the course team need to consider how the further assessment opportunity ensures that the assessment remains fit for purpose and in line with the original requirements. Course teams are permitted to opt for assessments to be conducted under supervised conditions, even if this was not necessary for the original assessment.

Re-submissions should be included in any sample reviewed by the External Verifier/Moderator/Examiner

### 3.11 Mitigation

#### Mitigation: Procedure in the Event of Illness or Other Valid Cause

3.11.1 Mitigation is the process by which Skills4Stem makes allowance for any matter or circumstance which may have seriously affected a student's performance in an assessment element(s) (including an element submitted for re-assessment).

#### Eligibility

3.11.2 Mitigating circumstances must have had a seriously adverse effect on the student's performance **and** have been unanticipated and beyond the student's control.

3.11.3 The following reasons are considered as acceptable grounds for mitigation:

- a serious personal illness which is not a permanent condition
- the death, or serious illness, of a close family member, a friend or person for whom the student has a responsibility of care
- sudden or unforeseen circumstances beyond the reasonable control of the student.

3.11.4 The following reasons are **not** considered acceptable as grounds for mitigation:

- family, work, financial or other general problems which lie outside of the circumstances identified in Regulation
- poor awareness of Skills4Stem's Regulations
- being unaware of, or misunderstanding, a submission deadline or the date of an examination
- computer, disc, printer or any other technical failure for which the student is responsible (students should ensure that they keep a back-up copy of their work).

3.11.5 A disability which emerges during a student's studies may be considered under the mitigation process at the first assessment point after it emerges. Following diagnosis and assessment of the effects of the condition Skills4Stem makes allowance and in doing so enables the student to be assessed on the same basis as other students.

3.11.6 Mitigation is considered only in sudden or unexpected circumstances. Students are strongly encouraged to disclose recurrent problems affecting their performance in assessment so that Skills4Stem can provide appropriate help and/or make allowance with regard to the assessment process. Such recurrent problems, if disclosed by a student, are considered on a strictly confidential basis.

3.11.7 Applications for mitigation must be submitted by the student or in exceptional circumstances (e.g. when a student has been incapacitated) by a Tutor or Review Tutor on behalf of the student **no later than five working days** after the submission date of assessed work or the date (on which an examination has been sat) exceptionally, if the documentary evidence in support of a claim cannot be provided by the submission deadline, the claim is submitted within the deadline but without the documentary evidence. In such circumstances the evidence must be submitted within a further 10 working days. In exceptional cases a student may request when submitting a claim for mitigation that the detail of the claim is not disclosed to the Skills4Stem Mitigation Panel which considers the claim (see Regulation 3.14 for details of the process for considering claims). In such cases only the Chair of the Skills4Stem Mitigation Panel has access to the detail of the claim and submits a recommendation to the Panel for consideration. In the case of public examinations the Awarding organisation rules apply.

3.11.8 In all cases an application, once formally submitted, **cannot** be withdrawn.

### **Consideration**

3.11.9 Applications for mitigation are considered against two criteria:

- the basis of the application is an acceptable ground for mitigation **and**
- the application is supported by documentary evidence (a contact telephone number in the case of close family bereavement) which must accompany the claim wherever practicable.

3.11.10 Applications for mitigation are considered only if both the above criteria are satisfied.

3.11.11 Applications for mitigation are submitted to the Head of Quality & Compliance for an initial check whether both criteria have been satisfied before the claim is formally considered.

3.11.12 Applications for mitigation are considered by the Skills4Stem Mitigation Panel without knowledge (whether by staff or students) of any mark attained by students and, within the context of the Skills4Stem Mitigation Panel, in confidence.

The constitution and terms of reference of the Skills4Stem Mitigation Panel set out in Section 3.11.14 and 3.12 of these Regulations.

### Consequences

3.11.14 The outcome of a successful mitigation claim is that:

- any mark achieved for the relevant element(s) is annulled
- the student is required to take either the assessment or the re-assessment in the mitigated element(s) at a time determined by Skills4Stem. In certain circumstances the student may be required to retake the piece of work as a first attempt in order to be assessed in the mitigated element *[NB To ensure that the formal decision on a student's performance for the first and final attempts at a piece of work is made using the appropriate grades for each assessment element and at the appropriate point, the various assessment elements for an individual piece of work must remain synchronised. For this reason assessment in a mitigated assessment element must be completed by the student, and considered by the programme team.*
- *Assessment Panel, before any re-assessment in another non-mitigated element(s) of the piece of work can be undertaken]*
- the result will not be capped unless it is a further attempt at re-assessment following a previous failure.

A student may **not** submit an academic appeal on any ground which has already been considered and rejected by the Skills4Stem Mitigation Panel unless additional evidence in support of the original mitigation claim is provided for the purpose of the appeal **and** there is a valid reason (supported by evidence) why the additional evidence was not submitted with the original mitigation claim.

#### For a request to work off site mitigation

- a return date is clearly established and agreed with the student
- the student will be allocated a named member of staff to support them with their studies whilst off site
- the member of staff will log all contact in respect of, but not limited to, telephone calls, emails, time, physical resources, skype / facetime

- the member of staff will ensure that the student keeps pace with their learning to ensure they can effectively return and minimise the impact of the absence to meet all urgent deadlines
- a minimum of one phone call, or skype / facetime tutorials will be held with the student each week by the member of staff
- a minimum visit by the member of staff to the student of at least once per fortnight

### **3.12 The Skills4Stem Mitigation Panel**

3.12.1 The Skills4Stem Mitigation Panel is a subcommittee of the Skills4Stem Academic Board with delegated responsibility to consider all claims for mitigation.

3.12.2 The Skills4Stem Mitigation Panel's term of reference is to consider all applications for mitigation and to determine the outcome in all cases in accordance with the Regulations governing mitigation

3.12.3 The constitution for the Cambridge Melchior Skills4Stem Mitigation Panel consists of 3 members drawn from:

- CEO
- CTO
- Head of Quality & Compliance
- Quality Manager

3.11.15 Applications to consider mitigating circumstances should be sent to the Head of Quality & Compliance, who will convene the Mitigation Panel. The Chair will be either the CEO or the CTO

3.11.16 The quorum for the meeting is three members who must include the Head of Quality & Compliance and the Quality Manager

3.11.17 The Head of Quality & Compliance provides an Executive Secretary to the Skills4Stem Mitigation Panel

3.11.18 The Skills4Stem Panel meets before the Assessment Boards

## 4. Assessment Boards

4.1 It is intended that each programme will hold its own Assessment Board

4.3 The terms of reference for the Assessment Boards are to make recommendations on:

- The grades achieved by students on the individual modules or units
- Extenuating circumstances
- Cases of cheating and plagiarism
- Progression of students onto the next stage of the programme
- The awards to be made to students
- Referrals and deferrals

4.4 The constitution for the Skills4Stem Assessment Board is:

- Head of Quality & Compliance
  - Quality Manager
  - **Programme team**
- The quorum for the meeting is three members who must include the Head of Quality & Compliance, Quality Manager and course team members.

4.5 The Head of Quality & Compliance will provide an administrative support to the Cambridge Melchior Skills4Stem Boards.

4.6 The relevant External Verifiers/Moderators/Examiners will always be invited to attend the meeting. If he/she is not able to attend then copies of the minutes will be forwarded to them.

4.7 The main boards are normally held at the end of the programme or academic year.

4.9 A standard agenda for all Assessment Boards will be used.

4.10 All course teams should hold a Pre-meeting where it has discussed results prior to the Assessment Board meeting. These discussions must remain strictly confidential.

## 5. Student progression

### Progression - From one stage to next

- To progress from one stage to the next learners will need to successfully complete the original stage.
- Progression to the next award is conditional on group sizes being educational and/or economic viable.

## 6. Academic appeals

### Academic Appeals

Academic appeals against marks or grades are permitted only where the learner believes one of the following three circumstances have occurred:

- a) where there is evidence that the assessment was not conducted in accordance with the regulations of the Skills4Stem or with awarding body rules
- b) where there is evidence that the assessment criteria relating to the specific assessment in question were incorrectly applied in arriving at the grade or mark awarded (only where an assessment has not been second marked or internally verified)
- c) where the learner believes that his/her performance was affected by circumstances beyond his/her control e.g. illness

Should any of the above circumstances arise, appeals must be submitted in writing (or by suitable alternative means) by the learner within 10 days of receipt of marked work.

Learners may not appeal on the grounds of academic judgement (that is, disagreement with the academic decision of assessors or examiners).

To protect the interests of the learners and the integrity of the qualification, the Skills4Stem will:

1. Inform learners about academic appeals process at induction;
2. Discuss informally with learners the grounds for their appeal, in an attempt to reach agreement between the learner and the assessor at the earliest opportunity (stage 1 – informal)
3. Convene an academic appeals panel to hear the appeal at a mutually convenient time, if informal resolution is not achieved, within 10 working days of receipt of the appeal, which must be submitted in writing (or by alternative media), with appropriate evidence (stage 2 – formal internal);
4. In the event of continued non-resolution, follow the relevant awarding body's guidance on academic appeals which cannot be locally resolved (stage 3 – formal external);
5. Take appropriate action to protect the interests of other learners and the integrity of the qualification if the outcome of any appeal warrants such action;
6. Retain records of appeals in line with relevant awarding body guidance;
7. Monitor the content of appeals to inform quality improvement.

## Appeals against Internal Assessment of Work

Skills4Stem is committed to ensuring that whenever staff assess learners; work for external qualification, this is done fairly, consistently and in accordance with the specification for the qualification concerned. Assessments are conducted by staff who have appropriate knowledge, understanding and skills, and who have been trained in this activity. Skills4Stem is committed to ensuring that assessment evidence provided by candidates is produced and authenticated according to the requirements of the relevant specifications for each subject. Where a set of work is divided between staff, internal moderation and standardisation will ensure consistency.

If a learner feels that this may not have happened in relation to his/her work, s/he may make use of this appeals procedure. Note that appeals may only be made against the process that led to the assessment and not against the mark or grade submitted by Skills4Stem for moderation by the awarding body.

**This procedure is available from the Administration Office and is posted on the Moodle site.**

1. **Appeals should be made as early as possible and at least two weeks before the end of the last externally assessed paper in the examination series (e.g. the last CIOB written paper in the June CIOB exam series).**
2. Appeals should be made formally (usually in writing) to Head of Quality & Compliance who will investigate the appeal with at least two other members of staff who have not been involved in the internal assessment decision. The purpose of the appeal will be to decide whether the process used for the internal assessment conformed to the published requirements of the awarding body and the examinations code of practice of the QCA.
3. The candidate will be informed in writing of the outcome of the appeal, including any relevant correspondence with the awarding body and any changes made to the procedure relating to internal assessment.
4. The outcomes of the appeal will be made known to the CEO and will be logged as a complaint. A written record will be kept and made available to the awarding body upon request/ Should the appeal bring any significant irregularity to light, the awarding body will be informed.
5. After work has been assessed internally, it is moderated by the awarding body to ensure consistency between centres. Such moderation can change the marks awarded for internally assessed work. That is outside the control of Skills4Stem and is not covered by this procedure. If learners have a concern about it, they should ask the Head of Quality & Compliance for a copy of the appeals procedure of the relevant awarding body.

## 7. Assessment offences

### Submission of Work and Academic Misconduct

1. Learners must make every effort to complete all the academic requirements of their course. This includes prompt submission of course work, including essays, assignments and projects, and participation in any other activities such as field trips, visits and other educational activities essential to the completion of the course.
2. Learners who fall behind with their course work may, in the first instance, be referred to the Quality Manager for an assessment of additional support required. Should additional learning support not be required or not taken-up and concerns relating to work progress continue then disciplinary action may be initiated.
3. All course work submitted for assessment must be the learner's own. Any assistance from sources other than those permitted by the teacher setting the work should be acknowledged on the piece of work concerned. This includes taking someone else's work, images or ideas and passing it off as the learner's own. This is called plagiarism and is dishonest and therefore unacceptable and not allowed by Skills4Stem. Plagiarism also includes using electronic information, either the internet or information stored on hard drives or portable media such as a USB Memory Device or floppy disks, which belong to someone else.
4. Knowingly allowing another learner to copy work is regarded as an act of collusion to gain unfair academic advantage, and is regarded as unacceptable behaviour by Skills4Stem, as is any other attempt to obtain unfair academic advantage such as the fabrication of experimental or research results.
5. Plagiarism, collusion or cheating are all forms of academic misconduct and as such will be subject to disciplinary action under these regulations.
6. You are reminded that external validating and examining bodies have their own stringent rules, which must be complied with absolutely.