

Skills4Stem Plagiarism Policy

1. Purpose of this policy

- To set out definitions/interpretations of cheating, malpractice and plagiarism in relation to assessment.
- To set out the rights and responsibilities of learners, trainers, assessors, internal verifiers and course organisers/administrators in relation to cheating, malpractice and plagiarism in relation to assessment.
- To set out procedures for handling suspected cheating, malpractice and plagiarism in relation to assessment.

2. Values

- Every effort should be made to ensure learners, trainers and assessors are informed about appropriate assessment approaches to prevent incidences of cheating, malpractice and plagiarism in assessment.
- Information about appropriate assessment approaches and cheating, malpractice and plagiarism in assessment should be expressed and explained in language appropriate to each individual learner.
- There is a difference between unintentional plagiarism, and deliberate, malicious or sustained plagiarism. Vulnerable and inexperienced learners should be given time and relevant resources to ensure they fully understand this policy and its implications.
- Any suspected incidence of cheating, malpractice and plagiarism in assessment should be investigated in a manner that supports the individual to understand and account for the incident without prejudgement.

3. What constitutes Plagiarism, Cheating, Malpractice or Maladministration?

3.1 Plagiarism

If candidates submit an assignment that contains work that is not their own, without indicating this to the assessor/marker (acknowledging sources), they are committing 'plagiarism' and this is an offence.

This might occur in an assignment when:

- Using a choice phrase or sentence that you have come across
- Copying word-for-word directly from a text
- Paraphrasing the words from a text very closely
- Using text downloaded from the internet
- Borrowing statistics or assembled facts from another person or source
- Copying or downloading figures, photographs, pictures or diagrams without acknowledging your sources
- Copying from your own notes, on a text, tutorial, video or lecture that contain direct quotations.
- Extracts from another person's work, published or unpublished, without using quotation marks and/or an acknowledgement of the source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 learner (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.

Although candidates are encouraged to show the results of their reading by referring to and quoting from works on their subject, copying from such sources without acknowledgement is deemed to be plagiarism and will not be accepted by Skills4Stem or Awarding Organisations. Candidates must make it clear which words and ideas are theirs and which have come from elsewhere, through the use of quotation marks as well as in-text citations.

3.2 Cheating

Cheating is an attempt to deceive assessors, examiners and/or external verifiers and constitutes any action whereby a candidate deliberately seeks to gain advantage by:

- Taking unauthorised information or equipment into a test or examination
- Submitting work for assessment done by a third party as one's own (including using IT to do so and/or paying for work from another source)
- Providing or receiving information about the content of an examination before it takes place, except when allowed by the relevant awarding organisation (e.g. case study materials issued before an examination)
- Centres giving excessive help to a candidates in writing an assignment, or writing any of it for them
- Impersonating or trying to impersonate a candidate, or attempting to procure a third party to impersonate oneself
- Learners 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 candidate 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 candidate or from another candidate'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 candidates
- Fabricating or falsifying data or results by individual candidates or groups of candidates

3.3 Malpractice

Malpractice constitutes any action that deliberately disrupts fair and equal opportunity for assessment or examination by:

Candidates:

- Interfering with or gaining unauthorised access to assessment/test/examination papers prior to the designated time
- Destroying the work of another candidate (paper/electronic/video etc)
- Acting in a disruptive manner in the context of assessment/qualifications/test
- Repeated maladministration (normally three consecutive incidents)
- Cheating of any nature, including plagiarism

Tutors/Trainers/Assessors:

- Breaking the assessment/examination regulations of an Awarding Organisation
- Acting in a manner that undermines the integrity of assessment/test/examination - assisting learners with the production of answers - this would include providing the work of another candidate taking the same assessment to use as a model for submission
- Failing to keep candidates' work safe (paper/computer/audio etc.)

Course Organiser/Centre Administrator

- Breaking the assessment/examination regulations of an Awarding Organisation
- Failing to keep assessment/test/examination papers secure prior to assessment
- Failing to keep candidates' work safe (paper/computer/audio etc.)
- Deliberate misuse of the ILM logo by the centre/provider
- Falsification of documents.

3.4 Maladministration

Maladministration is an activity or practice which results in non-compliance with regulations, but it's normally the result of a genuine mistake rather than any deliberate plan to gain an unfair advantage.

Where a centre or provider repeatedly makes mistakes then this would eventually constitute Malpractice (see Definition of Malpractice at 3.3)

Examples of maladministration:

- Late registration of learners with an Awarding Organisation
- Claiming certification for units which have not been delivered and assessed appropriately
- Centres, providers and candidates should take all reasonable steps to prevent malpractice and/or maladministration from occurring throughout the development, delivery and assessment of ILM qualifications and programmes.

4. Statement of confirmation of authenticity

Candidates are encouraged to collaborate with others in studying, but submitted work copied from or written jointly with others is not acceptable, unless collaboration is required in the particular assignment. Therefore, all learners will be asked to acknowledge a statement for each assignment to confirm that all assessment work submitted is their own and that they have not cheated.

5. Plagiarism Policy - Operational Process

Stage 1

Prevention

- All relevant candidates should receive appropriate guidance through their tutor at induction concerning the preparation of work and the correct use and referencing of sources.
- All relevant trainers/tutors, candidates and course organisers/administrators should receive appropriate guidance on assessment/test/examination conditions.
- All relevant trainers/tutors and candidates should be informed about Skills4Stem Policy on Plagiarism, Cheating and Malpractice and the consequences of such behaviour.

Stage 2

Formal Proceedings

- Cheating, malpractice and deliberate plagiarism should be reported immediately to Skills4Stem of a suspected plagiarism incident being detected
- Skills4Stem will begin **formal proceedings within 5 days of being informed of a suspected plagiarism incident.** Formal proceedings will be initiated by informing the candidate/s, in writing, that they are under investigation in a case of suspected plagiarism that has been brought to the attention of Skills4Stem staff.
- Skills4Stem will appoint an independent party to conduct an investigation into the allegations. The investigator must not have been involved in the assessment in which the suspected plagiarism or cheating took place and preferably should have had no assessment involvement in the programme for the suspected candidate.
- 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 candidate, 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 candidates or the internal verifier. Throughout the process, these interviews should be recorded, especially where they reveal key information

- Any person suspected of cheating, malpractice or deliberate plagiarism shall be presented with all evidence against them and shall be given the opportunity to respond – personally, and/or in writing **within 10 days of the start of formal proceedings.**
- Relevant persons in the suspected case of plagiarism will be invited to a meeting (which could be remote) with Skills4Stem where the evidence will be presented. The person under investigation must have the opportunity to explain and defend his or her actions. This meeting will take place **within 15 days of the start of formal proceedings** of a suspected plagiarism incident
- Learners with impairments must be given appropriate support for any meeting, e.g. electronic note takers or BSL interpreters.
- At the conclusion of the investigation, the candidate must be informed of the outcome and their right to appeal explained.
- The disciplinary process may be conducted by email or in writing and all records kept for scrutiny by the relevant Awarding Organisation and if appropriate Employer.
- Where behaviour is clearly not deliberate, the candidate will receive support and have an opportunity to re-submit work as. If improvements are not then made, the candidate should be advised that formal disciplinary proceedings will commence.

Stage 3

Outcomes

- A written report of the investigation and recommended actions and sanctions will be sent to all relevant parties **within 18 days of the start of formal proceedings.**
- The person at the centre of the investigation will be informed of the Appeals Procedure should the judgement be found against him/her.
- Allegations of cheating, malpractice and/or deliberate plagiarism will be reported to the Awarding Organisation (where appropriate) in writing.
- Where necessary, Skills4Stem will inform the relevant Awarding Organisation that their regulations have been contravened. The Awarding Organisation may wish to appoint a representative to be involved in the investigation
- Where Awarding Organisation Regulations have been contravened, then the Awarding Organisation may wish to impose sanctions on the future involvement of that person in assessments/test/examinations.
- Where a candidate is employed and as necessary at the earliest opportunity, Skills4Stem will inform a relevant Employer and keep them updated during the investigative period

Stage 4

Sanctions in the event of cheating, malpractice or deliberate plagiarism

Candidate

Sanctions will be applied proportionate to the seriousness of the behaviour

Sanctions for the candidate may include:

- Adjusting the marks given for the assessment, test or examination

- Requiring the learner to redo one or more assignments and re-submit for assessment, with the award of a maximum mark of Pass for that assessment to an agreed timescale and deadline.
- Requiring the candidate to re-sit the test or examination
- Withholding full or unit certification
- Withdrawing the candidate's registration on the qualification
- Debarred from further certification and/or registration

Course trainers/tutors

Sanctions will be applied proportionate to the seriousness of the behaviour and may include:

- A trainer may be withdrawn from teaching/assessing the individual course
- Barred from teaching/assessing that qualification in the future
- Immediate termination of contract with Skills4Stem

Stage 5

Appeal

Appeals can be made following the Skills4Stem Academic Appeals Policy. an appeal must be lodged **within 5 days of the report into the incident being published.**