

# D8 PLAGIARISM AND CHEATING POLICY

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## SCOPE

The policy provides definition and examples of plagiarism and cheating that might occur. The process for preventing, investigating and dealing with Plagiarism and Cheating is described along with the need for a formal declaration of authenticity by the learner.

## DEFINITION

**1) Plagiarism** is 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.

Plagiarism is the substantial, unacknowledged incorporation into a learner's work of materials derived from published or unpublished work by another person and presented as if it were the learner's own work. A strict interpretation could include the original ideas, as well as the actual words, produced by another. Unless the candidate has submitted an extensive and unacknowledged paraphrase of another person's writings, however, we will not include paraphrasing under the definition of plagiarism.

Published work includes books, articles and materials found on the internet. Examples of unpublished work could be a piece of work previously submitted by another learner, or work about to be submitted by another learner, or perhaps copied from a work colleague or family member.

Some assignments require learners 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 is then ratified as being the learner's own work.

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- Extracts from another person's work, published or unpublished, without using quotation marks and/or an acknowledgement of the source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 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.

This policy therefore applies to assessments submitted for the Awarding Organisation qualifications and programmes, whether regulated or unregulated and whether assessed by Accipio or by the Awarding Organisation. The policy also applies to examinations and online tests, as well as assignment tasks that are completed independently by the learner in their own time.

## Preventing plagiarism

We will ensure that no learners can unwittingly find themselves guilty of plagiarism without knowing the implications. It is essential that we explain to learners what plagiarism is, how you deal with it, the possible sanctions and how they should

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acknowledge someone else's work. This is commonly achieved through the obligatory programme induction and reinforced in assignment briefings and/or in tutorial support.

Following up on this, every learner 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 centre could be grounds for malpractice.

The following guidelines will be helpful for our learners:

- 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.

## Learner authenticity

As noted above, learners must confirm the authenticity of every piece of work to be assessed. For the typical Awarding Organisation assignment, a declaration of authenticity is the learner's confirmation that the assignment is his/her own work without plagiarism. In the case of examinations and online tests, authenticity takes the form of the Accipio ensuring that another person is not being substituted to take the test on behalf of the learner. This typically necessitates a confirmation of the identity of every learner, for example through photographic ID.

In order to confirm authenticity for assignment tasks, we require learners to preface each of their assessment submissions with the Awarding Organisation submission cover sheet (see **Appendix 1**). The act of submitting this cover sheet acts as that learner's confirmation of the authenticity of his/her work.

As a minimum, Accipio will include the statement: ***'By the act of making this submission, the learner certifies that this is the work of the learner named above.'***

**2) Cheating** is an attempt to deceive the Awarding Organisation assessors, 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 a learners in writing an assignment, or writing any of it for them
- impersonating or trying to impersonate a learner, 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 learner 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 learner or from another learner'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 learners
- fabricating or falsifying data or results by individual learners or groups of learners

Because of the nature of cheating, this mainly applies to examinations and online tests.

## **Preventing cheating**

We will check the instructions the Awarding Organisation provides 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. Learners and others connected with the test or examination must be made aware of the consequences of cheating. The Awarding Organisation Instructions for Conducting Examinations specify announcements that must be made at the beginning of every exam or online test.

The Awarding Organisation takes seriously all incidents of plagiarism or cheating, especially those incidents that are an attempt by the learner to gain marks without having done a portion of the work themselves. Plagiarism or cheating can reflect badly



on both the learner and Accipio 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.

## **PROCESS: PLAGIARISM OR CHEATING DETECTED BY THE CENTRE**

We have our own robust policy in relation to plagiarism and cheating which is supervised by the Managing Director of Accipio.

We will follow our own policy and process to investigate, and the Awarding Organisation will then review the steps we have taken.

We will inform our Quality Manager at the earliest opportunity and preferably before starting your investigation.

We will keep a thorough record throughout the process in order to provide an audit trail for subsequent examination by our External Verifier, bearing in mind that this might not happen for some months.

We will appoint a tutor or assessor or other appropriate person to investigate any detected or alleged incidents of plagiarism or cheating. This person must be independent. He/she 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 learner(s).

Early in the process, the learner is to be informed that plagiarism or cheating is suspected and he/she is to be subsequently be updated on progress regarding the investigation. At the conclusion of the investigation, the learner must be informed of the outcome and their right to appeal explained.

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 learner, 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 learners. Throughout the process, these interviews must be recorded, especially where they reveal key information.

If your investigation finds that plagiarism or cheating did occur, the next step depends on whether Accipio has Direct Claim Status (DCS).

### **If Accipio does NOT have DCS**

If your investigation finds a proven incident of plagiarism or cheating, then the Awarding Organisation will make the ultimate decision on action to be taken. To this end, the Awarding Organisation will audit the Accipio's investigation and examine our proposed sanction with a view to ratifying it.

Consequently, at the conclusion of your investigation, we must inform the Awarding Organisation's Head of Quality & Compliance by emailing them within 30 working days of the original incident. Before the Awarding Organisation's review of our investigation can start, we must provide auditable evidence:



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- Accipio's policy on plagiarism and cheating
- evidence to show how Accipio advises learners on plagiarism, cheating and authenticity, such as lesson plans for programme induction, assessment briefing, tutorial support, etc
- details of the learner/s
- the learner's declaration of authenticity for the particular piece of work in question
- if relevant, the plagiarised work and, if available, the original from which it was copied
- clearly describe the plagiarism or cheating and the qualification and units affected and the test/examination/assignment/s involved.
- an assessment of the impact the plagiarism or cheating could have had on the learner/s results
- records (auditable and preferably contemporaneous) of the centre's investigation
- records of interviews and statements made
- the sanction recommended by the centre, if any

The Head of Quality & Compliance will then appoint an Awarding Organisation lead reviewer. In order to maintain a complete audit trail, all subsequent communication between Accipio and the Awarding Organisation with reference to the case should be copied to the email inbox.

The lead reviewer will examine all relevant evidence and review Accipio's investigation and proposed sanction. He/she will then write a report on the outcome and recommend the sanction(s), if any.

The report will be presented to members of the Awarding Organisation Quality & Regulatory Group for a decision on the sanction(s) to be imposed. The centre will be informed of the outcome. This will normally be achieved via the monthly meeting but, if time does not permit this, it can be reported to members of the group outside of the regular meeting cycle. The full Quality & Regulatory Group will then ratify the outcome at its next meeting.

## **If Accipio DOES have DCS**

If Accipio has DCS then, following Accipio's investigation, this status authorises Accipio to proceed to sanction. Accipio is entitled to decide on an appropriate sanction, if any, and to impose it.

Accipio should inform our QM at the earliest opportunity and preferably before any sanctions are implemented. If Accipio has found serious or widespread plagiarism or cheating, or is otherwise unsure how to proceed, is encouraged to seek guidance from their Quality Manager before taking action.

Accipio's investigation and sanction(s) will subsequently be audited as part of the EV's routine centre review.

## **PROCESS: PLAGIARISM OR CHEATING DETECTED BY THE AWARDING ORGANISATION OR REPORTED BY OTHERS**

If an Awarding Organisation External Verifier or assessor suspects plagiarism or cheating, he/she will notify the relevant the Awarding Organisation Quality Manager and refer the incident to the centre. If it is reported by somebody other than the centre (e.g. an employer, learner or a 'whistle blower'), then it will similarly be transferred to the Quality Manager. If the information is provided over the telephone then the informant will normally be asked to make the allegation in writing.

Once it has been established that there is some substance to the suspicion, and that there is therefore a case to answer, the Quality Manager will inform the Awarding Organisation Head of Quality Practice using email inbox.

The Awarding Organisation will then appoint a lead investigator to coordinate the investigation. As part of this, the centre may be asked to carry out parts of the investigation on behalf of the Awarding Organisation at no cost. Relevant parties will be consulted, e.g. the learner, centre staff, invigilators, assessors, External Verifiers, Quality Manager. Other people associated with the incident may be asked for additional information.

As above, all relevant evidence will be reviewed and a report written on the findings. The report will be presented to members of the Awarding Organisation Quality & Regulatory Group for a decision on the sanction(s) to be imposed, if any. The centre will be informed of the outcome. This will normally be achieved via the monthly meeting but, if time does not permit this, it can be reported to members of the group outside of the regular meeting cycle. The full Quality & Regulatory Group will then ratify the outcome at its next meeting.

## **ACTION**

Whether decided by the Awarding Organisation or by a DCS centre, sanctions for the learner 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 minimum mark in the event of pass
- requiring the learner to re-sit the test or examination
- withholding full or unit certification
- withdrawing membership
- withholding certification and withdrawing membership
- disqualification from the qualification and refusing to accept further test or examination entries



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- debarment from further certification and/or registration

If the Awarding Organisation finds that Accipio has been negligent (e.g. inadequate invigilation or failing to advise learners about plagiarism in the induction/assessment briefing) or complicit (e.g. providing exam answers or writing any part of the assignment for the learner) then sanctions will be imposed on the centre. These include:

- warning
- action plan
- removal of Direct Claim Status
- change of QQR to provide increased monitoring and quality assurance
- appointment, at the centre's expense, of independent invigilators
- requiring the centre to use the Awarding Organisation Assessment service for a period
- suspension of registration and/or certification
- withdrawal of qualification approval for the qualification in question □  
withdrawal of centre approval or provider recognition.

Accipio can appeal against the sanctions imposed by the Awarding Organisation for plagiarism or cheating by following the Appeals Policy.



## APPENDIX 1: THE AWARDING ORGANISATION SUBMISSION COVER SHEET

**Instruction to learner:** this cover sheet must preface every assessment submission, for assessments being carried out by the centre or through the Awarding Organisation Assessment service. It is a regulatory requirement that every assessment submission is authenticated as the work of the named learner. Hence any submission not carrying this cover sheet will not be verified.

Centre name	
Centre number	
Learner name	
Learner registration number	
Unit(s) covered in this submission	
Date submitted	
<b>Statement of confirmation of authenticity</b>  <b>By the act of making this submission, the learner declares that this is the work of the learner named above.</b> The work has not, in whole or in part, been knowingly presented elsewhere for assessment, or where assessment has been built on a previous assessment, this has been identified. Where materials have been used from other sources it has been properly acknowledged. If this statement is untrue, the learner acknowledges that an assessment offence has been committed.  Attention is drawn to the plagiarism and cheating policies of both the centre and of the Awarding Organisation. Plagiarism can result in a learner being withdrawn from a qualification.	
<b>Permission for the Awarding Organisation to use this script</b>  The Awarding Organisation uses learners' submissions – on an anonymous basis – for assessment standardisation. By submitting, both the centre and the learner agree that the Awarding Organisation may use this script on condition that identifying information is removed.	

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However, if you are unwilling to allow the Awarding Organisation use this script,  
please refuse by ticking the box: