

Hartlepool Jobs and Skills Service



Malpractice Policy

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1. PURPOSE

The purpose of the Malpractice Policy is:

- To set out definitions/interpretations of cheating, malpractice and plagiarism in relation to teaching and learning.
- To set out the rights and responsibilities of learners, tutors, assessors and staff members in relation to cheating, malpractice and plagiarism in relation to teaching and learning.
- To set out procedures for handling suspected cheating, malpractice and plagiarism in relation to teaching and learning.

2. VALUES

Every effort should be made to ensure learners, tutors and assessors are informed about appropriate study approaches to prevent cheating, malpractice and plagiarism in teaching and learning.

Information about appropriate study approaches, cheating, malpractice and plagiarism in teaching and learning should be expressed and explained in language and situations appropriate to each learner. This would be as part of their induction onto their course or qualification by the Service.

Any suspected incidence of cheating, malpractice and plagiarism in teaching and learning should be investigated in a manner that supports the individual to understand and account for the incident without prejudgement.

3. SCOPE AND DEFINITIONS

Cheating: Constitutes any action whereby a learner deliberately seeks to gain an advantage in the situation 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 I.T. to do so and/or paying for work from another source)

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

a) Learners:

- Interfering with or gaining unauthorised access to assessment, test or examination papers before the designed time.
- Destroying another learner's work (paper/electronic/video etc.).
- Acting disruptively in the context of assessment/qualifications/test.

b) Tutors/Assessors:

- Breaking the assessment/examination regulations of the Awarding Body.
- Acting in a manner that undermines the integrity assessment/test/examination.
- Assisting learners with the production of answers would include providing another learner's work and taking the same assessment for submission.
- Failing to keep learners' work safe (paper/computer/audio etc.)

c) Course Organiser/Administrator/Staff Members

- Breaking the assessment/examination regulations of the Awarding body
- Failing to keep assessment/test/examination papers secure before the assessment
- Failing to keep learners' work safe (paper/computer/audio etc.)

Plagiarism: Constitutes submitting work that is not one's own without indicting or recognising this to the marker (acknowledge your sources)

This might occur by:

- Using a choice phrase or sentence come across elsewhere
- Copying work-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 their sources
- Copying from the notes or essays of a fellow student
- Copying from your notes on a text, tutorial, video or lecture that contains direct quotations

Plagiarism, unlike cheating or malpractice, may be intentional or unintentional. There is a difference between unintentional plagiarism and deliberate, malicious or sustained plagiarism. Vulnerable and inexperienced learners and those new to the U.K. may be unaware of referencing and other rules. Some tasks and assignments should be planned for completion early in the course to provide an opportunity to identify and correct unintentional poor practices without disciplinary action being taken.

It should be made clear to learners that they must address the issue within a specified timescale and agree to receive appropriate support to make things right. They should be informed that disciplinary action will be taken if plagiarism is sustained. Sustained plagiarism will be treated as deliberate.

4. PROCEDURES

Hartlepool Jobs & Skills Service recognises that the temptation for cheating, malpractice or plagiarism may arise from a lack of self-confidence or misunderstanding of the aims and conditions of the assessment/test/examination or stress/pressure.

All policies and procedures should be interpreted to maximise support to the person accused, considering their particular circumstances. In some cases, it may be more appropriate to address the circumstances as a priority rather than individual behaviour. Undue stress, for example, might be reduced through appropriate support to prevent recurrence.

In all cases of cheating, malpractice or deliberate plagiarism, the Service Manager must be involved. They may, at their discretion, and after taking advice where necessary, decide on an alternative or non-disciplinary course of action.

The Service will keep a written record of the circumstances, the decision, and the reason for alternative or non-disciplinary action. (This could include being in the form of an e-mail).

a) Stage 1 Prevention

All relevant learners should receive appropriate guidance through their tutor concerning the preparation of work and the correct use and referencing of sources.

All relevant tutors, learners and course organisers/administrators should receive appropriate assessment/test/examination conditions guidance.

All relevant tutors and learners should be informed about Hartlepool Jobs & Skills Service's Policy on Cheating, Malpractice and Plagiarism and the consequences of such behaviour.

b) Stage 2 Formal Proceedings

Cheating, malpractice and deliberate plagiarism should be reported immediately to the Lead Officer – Skills and the Service Manager, who will inform the relevant Awarding Body of any alleged incident immediately.

Any person suspected of cheating, malpractice or deliberate plagiarism shall be made fully aware by the Lead Officer – Skills, in writing, at the earliest opportunity of the nature of the allegation. Care must ensure the format and language are fully accessible to the recipient. If necessary, an agreed advocate can be involved to ensure understanding.

Any person suspected of cheating, malpractice or deliberate plagiarism shall be presented with all evidence against them.

Any person suspected of cheating, malpractice or deliberate plagiarism must be able to respond - personally and/or in writing within an agreed timescale.

Any person suspected of cheating, malpractice, or deliberate plagiarism will be invited to a meeting with the Lead Officer – Skills or a responsible third party, where they can explain and defend their actions. An agreed advocate may accompany them.

Advocates can include parents, friends or others. Learners with impairments must be given appropriate support for any meeting, e.g. electronic note-takers or BSL Interpreters.

Alternatively, the disciplinary process may be conducted by e-mail or in writing.

N.B. Care must be taken when dealing with vulnerable and inexperienced learners. Where behaviour is not deliberate, the learner will receive support and have an opportunity to re-submit work. If improvements are not made, the learner should be advised that formal disciplinary proceedings will commence.

c) Stage 3 Outcomes

Allegations of cheating, malpractice and/or deliberate plagiarism will be reported to the Awarding Body (where appropriate) in writing.

Where Awarding Body Regulations have been contravened, a representative of the Awarding Body may wish to be involved in the investigation. A written report of the investigation and recommended actions and sanctions will be sent to all parties.

The person at the centre of the investigation will be informed of the Appeals Procedure should judgement be found against them.

Where Awarding Body Regulations have been contravened, then the Awarding Body may wish to impose sanctions on the future involvement of that person in assessments/tests/examinations.

d) Sanctions in the event of cheating, malpractice or deliberate plagiarism

Learner:

Sanctions will be applied proportionate to the seriousness of the behaviour and could incorporate the following:

- A learner may lose credit for the individual unit or all units in the qualification
- A learner may be disqualified from completing the qualification
- A learner may be barred from submitting work or taking an examination towards the qualification for a period of time.

Tutor/Assessor:

Sanctions will be applied proportionate to the seriousness of the behaviour and could incorporate the following:

- A Tutor/Assessor may be withdrawn from teaching/assessing the course.
- A Tutor/Assessor may be barred from teaching/assessing that qualification.
- A Tutor/Assessor may be served with a warning of disciplinary action by the region, and those procedures will begin.

Course Organiser/Centre Administrator:

Sanctions will be applied to the seriousness of the behaviour and could incorporate the following:

- A Course Organiser/Course Administrator may be barred from dealing with the qualification.
- A Course Organiser/Course Administrator may be barred from dealing with all qualifications in the future.
- A Course Organiser/Course Administrator may be served with a warning of disciplinary action by the region, and those procedures will begin.

In very serious circumstances, and at the request of the Awarding Body, the Police may become involved.