

Plagiarism, Collusion and Cheating Policy

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Version 7

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1. Aim

The aim of the Plagiarism, Collusion and Cheating Policy is to increase awareness of the type of behaviour that constitutes unacceptable practice and malpractice in order to support VTCT Skills' preventative approach to reduce instances through awareness and understanding. The policy provides VTCT Skills and centre staff with a basic understanding giving some common examples of plagiarism, collusion and cheating.

VTCT Skills' preventative approach will increase awareness and support centre staff with the adherence of the policy. Additionally, the learner will have increased awareness of the risk of being withdrawn from the qualification they are taking, or prevented from taking qualifications at the training centre of their choice due to contravention of the policy.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all staff and registered learners involved in the delivery or studying of a VTCT Skills qualification or unit.

3. Monitoring

There is strong collaboration between the Assessment and Quality Assurance Departments to identify and address any potential threats to the reliability, validity and integrity of assessments.

VTCT Skills clearly publishes centre assessment controls relating to assessments in the qualification specification and proactively checks that centres have adhered to these controls through external quality assurance monitoring activity.

There is strong collaboration between the Assessment and Quality Assurance Departments to identify and address instances of malpractice. Information about potential risks is gathered through External Quality Assurance monitoring of the activity of centres (via EQA reports), and the Assessment Department's marking and moderation teams. All cases of suspected and confirmed malpractice are reviewed and managed through VTCT Skills' Malpractice Committee.

VTCT Skills' External Quality Assurers will sample learner portfolios during verification visits, where they will check evidence and record keeping, to identify and report examples of plagiarism, collusion and cheating. Additionally, VTCT Skills has processes in place to identify instances of interest through its marking of examination papers or evidence submitted for external moderation.

4. Plagiarism

Plagiarism can be described as using someone else's work and changing words but retaining the structure and meaning without acknowledging the source or ownership of the originator of the work.

There are many reasons why plagiarism occurs. Often this is because a learner does not realise that the method of gathering and preparing their evidence was not an acceptable practice, or through poor planning, that results in pressure for a learner to complete work when time is at a premium. Learners will generally know what method, activity or approach to research is considered to be plagiarism, however, there are examples where plagiarism is less obvious to the learner.

Common examples include:

- getting somebody else to do the work
- giving false information about a source used
- copying information from the internet

Less obvious examples include:

- copying all or some of another person's work
- getting a friend or family member to help, often including dictation of responses
- copying and pasting from the internet
- copying either word for word or extracts from a text without providing a reference to the source
- copying from another learner's portfolio with or without their consent
- borrowing or taking another learner's work

5. Collusion

Collusion is considered to be a type of plagiarism if two or more people knowingly and with planned intent work together and submit work that is not solely their own.

Examples include:

- two or more learners sharing information leading to the production and submission of the work by both learners
- passing off the work of another learner with their consent
- a learner knowingly provides an opportunity for other learners to see their work; such as during an examination to the learner sitting next to them

6. Cheating

Cheating is the planned intention to pass off work of others, claiming it to be their own.

Centres are encouraged to ensure that safeguards are in place to prevent staff from assisting learners to improve achievement during the taking of examinations and to protect staff against any accusation from others that could lead to an adverse effect. For example, a learner claims

that the invigilator provides some answers, and this is why the learner failed the examination. If another person is present, the invigilator will have some protection against potential claims of unfairness by the learner(s).

Examples include:

- having access to an examination paper prior to the examination taking place
- assessors, tutors and/or invigilators helping learners while they are preparing and submitting information for assessment and/or marking
- impersonating another learner with the purpose of giving an unfair advantage
- encouraging or accepting help from others
- copying or reading another person's work
- accessing a mobile phone during an examination.