

TCPS Assessment Malpractice Procedure

Introduction:

The purpose of this procedure is to define the processes involved in investigating and taking action against learners who are suspected of assessment malpractice. The procedure applies to all learner-produced assessment material. TCPS will take action against any learner who has taken action to gain unfair advantage in any component of the assessment process.

Definitions of Assessment Malpractice:

Plagiarism:

- The presentation by a learner, as his/her own work, material which is wholly or partially the work of another, either in concept or expressions, without acknowledgement of source through the correct use of quotations, references and a bibliography.
- Copying the work of another learner.

Academic Dishonesty:

- Seeking to obtain/obtaining access to examination papers prior to the commencement of the examination process.
- Any infringement of an organisation's procedures for the conduct of written examinations, including failure to comply with the invigilator's instructions.
- Offering a bribe or other inducement to any person connected with the assessment process.
- Any other arrangement intended to gain unfair advantage.
- Collusion by working collaboratively with other learners to produce work that is submitted as individual learner work (learners should not be discouraged from team work, but mechanisms for making this explicit must be made clear to the learner).
- Impersonation by pretending to be someone else in order to produce the work for another, or arranging for another to take one's place in an assessment, examination or test.
- Fabrication of results or evidence relating to an assessment.
- Induction or use of unauthorised material contrast to the requirements of a supervised assessment, examination or test conditions, for example; notes, study guides, personal organisers, calculators, dictionaries (where prohibited), personal stereos, mobile phones or other similar electronic devices.
- Obtaining, receiving, exchanging or passing on information which could be assessment, examination or test related (or attempting to) by means of talking or in written form during supervised assessment, examination or test conditions.

- Behaving in such a way as to undermine the integrity of the assessment, examination or test.
- The alteration of any results document, including certificates.

Guidelines:

Learners must be advised, during induction to their programme/course of study, of the difference between acceptable and unacceptable forms of work. Academic dishonesty and plagiarism rules should be reiterated at significant intervals throughout the course of study. Staff should use reminders such as ‘DO NOT COPY or MAKE SURE THAT YOUR WORK IS YOUR OWN’.

Submitted work must represent the learner’s own work and be authenticated by the learner using appropriate Partnership/awarding body documentation. To prevent the occurrence of plagiarism and collusion, programme/course teams should devise a range of procedures for assessing work such as changing assignments annually and ensure that other assessments, e.g., tests rotate at least every two years.

Plagiarism or academic dishonesty during exams will follow the awarding body examinations policy and procedures. Plagiarism or academic dishonesty during other forms of programme/course assessment will follow the organisation’s disciplinary procedure. If an allegation of plagiarism or academic dishonesty is made against a learner, staff must:

- 1) In the first instance, talk to the learner explaining their suspicions, asking the learner to respond with reasoning and/or evidence.
- 2) Where plagiarism is suspected the appropriate senior manager responsible for curriculum and quality should be informed. Work/materials should be re-inspected prior to discussing the findings with the learner.
- 3) A copy of unmarked work is to be given to the learner, the original to be retained by the individual teacher/ professional tutor.

A record of proven allegation of plagiarism or any academic dishonesty will be kept on the learner’s file in accordance with the disciplinary procedure.

Action to be taken by Assessors:

Where an invigilator suspects a learner of infringing the awarding body procedures for the conduct of written examinations, the following action should be taken, if possible in the presence of another invigilator to act as witness:

- 1) Confiscate any unauthorised material in the learner’s possession.
- 2) Mark the learner’s examination script with a note of the time alleged infringement was discovered and its nature. Wherever possible this endorsement should be countersigned by a second invigilator acting as a witness.

- 3) Issue the candidate with a new script booklet and instruct the candidate to continue the examination, but not to redo previously answered questions.
- 4) At the end of the examination, inform the candidate that the alleged infringement will be reported to the examinations officer.
- 5) Note brief details of the incident in the invigilator's report and draw the incident to the attention of the examination officer.
- 6) The examinations officer shall be responsible for notifying the programme/course leader responsible for curriculum and quality in writing of the incident.

All Other Forms of Assessment:

Where an assessor suspects a learner of academic malpractice the assessor will:

- Endorse the learner's work or assessment feedback sheets as appropriate with a note detailing the nature of the suspected infringement.
- Talk to the learner, explain the suspicion and ask the learner to respond with reasoning and/or evidence.
- Report the allegation in writing to the subject leader/domain assessor and the relevant senior managers responsible for curriculum and quality.
- The work/materials should be re-inspected prior to discussing the findings with the learner.
- A copy of the work is to be given to the learner; the original is to be retained by the individual teacher/assessor.

Investigation/Judgement:

The investigation should take place as soon as practicable after the assessment in question. It will be conducted through a meeting attended by the learner and the subject leader/domain assessor and chaired by an appropriate manager. The learner can choose to be accompanied by another person acting in a supportive role. The meeting will consider the reports from invigilators and assessors in the light of explanations from the learner.

- Following the meeting the senior manager will make a judgement about whether or not the actions of the learner represent malpractice; judgement shall be communicated to the learner in writing within five days of the investigation meeting.
- If the judgement is that no malpractice took place the assessment in question will be marked on its merits and all records relating to the incident will be removed from the learner's file.
- If the judgement is that malpractice took place then the learner will be subject to the organisation's disciplinary procedure and appropriate penalties relating to the assessment.
- Learners who consider that the investigation was conducted unfairly, or that the judgement did not reflect the evidence presented, can appeal.