

## Professional Training Solutions Malpractice and Plagiarism Policy

### Introduction

In all assessed work, learners should take care to ensure that the work presented is their own and that they fully acknowledge the work and opinions of others. It is also the responsibility of the learners to ensure that they do not undertake any form of cheating or any other form of unfair advantage (referred to in this document as 'Academic irregularity').

This policy and the subsequent procedures contained within it applies to all submissions and assessments carried out whilst studying with Professional Training Solution (PTS). Where Awarding Organisations have their own published procedures, these will take precedent over the PTS plagiarism policy. All staff have a responsibility to give full and active support to this policy by ensuring that it is known, understood, and implemented.

### Purpose

The aim of this policy is to provide a guide for our learners on what will be expected of them when submitting any form of assessment and to provide our staff with a process to follow in the event of an act of academic irregularity being identified.

### What constitutes Academic irregularity and Malpractice?

Malpractice refers to any deliberate act or practice which compromises or threatens to compromise the process and integrity of assessment, and as a result the validity of the result or certificate awarded.

If a learner submits any evidence or piece of work that contains work that is not their own, without indicating this to the Assessor by acknowledging its sources within the text of a submitted written document, they are committing 'academic irregularity', and this is an offence.

This might occur in a submission when:

- Using a choice phrase or sentence that they 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, without acknowledging the source.
- Copying or downloading figures, photographs, pictures, or diagrams without acknowledging its sources.
- Copying from the notes or submissions of fellow learners.
- Copying from textbooks, presentations or resources given out by PTS or from awarding organisations.
- Copying from their own notes, on a text, tutorial, video, or workshop, that contain direct quotations.
- Using Artificial Intelligence (AI) software to write an assessment and submitting this work as your own.

Although learners are encouraged to show the results of their research by referring to and quoting from works within the subject area, copying from such sources without acknowledgement is deemed to be academic irregularity and will not be accepted by PTS.

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This means that the learner must make it clear which words and ideas are theirs and which have come from elsewhere, using quotation marks as well as in-text citations, where necessary and bibliographies.

### **Why might academic irregularity occur?**

The temptation to plagiarise may arise from a lack of self-confidence or from a lack of understanding about the aims of their assessment and about what is required of them.

Assessment plans provide a vehicle for assessing a learner's performance during their learning and contribute to their overall qualification result. However, they also assist learners in understanding their subject and aid their learning during the qualification. Learners should be encouraged to collaborate with their employer when studying, but submitted work copied from or written jointly with others will not be acceptable. There are different forms of "academic irregularity" all of which may be the subject of the procedures described later within this policy. However, it is not possible to state categorically that, in all cases, every perceived act of academic irregularity will be proved once that matter is investigated. Each case will have to be considered on its merits and based on the strength of evidence provided.

### **Definitions and Examples**

This policy provides definitions and examples of possible acts of academic irregularity which may occur when conducting formative and summative assessments, working practices and/or our learners. The process for preventing, investigating, and dealing with academic irregularity is also described later in this policy. Any major suspected or alleged instances of academic irregularity must be reported to the Quality Manager and Sector Lead IQA.

Detailed below are recognised definitions of a number of forms of academic irregularity.

### **Plagiarism**

Plagiarism is a specific form of cheating which applies to submissions completed by learners independently. It is the substantial, unacknowledged incorporation into a learner's work of materials derived from published or unpublished work by another person. Published work includes books, articles and materials found on the internet while examples of unpublished work could be a piece of work previously submitted by another learner or work about to be submitted by another learner. Examples of plagiarism include:

- Extracts from another person's work 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 the learner's own work.
- The inclusion in a learner's work of more than a single phrase from another person's work without the use of quotation marks and acknowledgement of the sources.
- The summarising of another person's work by simply changing a few words or altering the order of presentation, without acknowledgement.
- The substantial and unauthorised use of the ideas of another person without acknowledgement of the source.

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### Guide for Learners:

It must be explained to our learners during the 'Sign Up/Induction' process what plagiarism is, how PTS deals with it and how the learner should acknowledge someone else's work.

**For further support, please refer to the learner handbook, Induction presentation and "A guide to referencing" documents.** Learners will also be guided to use the below as a useful tool to support referencing techniques:

- [Neil's Toolbox - A Collection of Useful Tools and Resources](#) and/or
- [harvard-referencing-generator](#)

Plagiarism can result in a learner being withdrawn from a qualification or apprenticeship. The act of submitting any piece of work for assessment, either on-line or paper based, will act as that learner's confirmation of the authenticity of their work.

The following guidelines will be helpful for our learners:

- If they use someone else's exact words in their work, they must be in quotation marks. Use quotations sparingly and only when they feel the author has expressed something so well and so concisely that the words cannot be improved.
- When they have used a quote, they must provide the name of the author, the date of their work that they have referred to and the page number where they obtained the quotation from immediately after the quotation (e.g., **Hill, 2004, p. 42**) and provide full details of the reference in a bibliography.
- They must provide a bibliography; a list of books, articles, and any other sources that they have quoted at the end of their assessments or as part of their submission.
- The Harvard system for referencing sources is well-established and our learners will be able to find guidance on how to use it on the internet and in "A guide to referencing" handed out at induction. 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.**

PTS assessing staff will use the following website to check for plagiarism within submitted work:

[Plagiarism Checker - Duplichecker](#)

### Cheating

Cheating is an attempt to deceive PTS assessors and invigilators and includes:

- using books, notes, instruments, computer files or other materials or aids that are not permitted. assistance or the communication of information by one learner to another in an assessment where this is not permitted.
- copying or reading from the work of another learner or from another learner's books, notes, computer files or other materials or aids, unless expressly permitted.
- offering a bribe of any kind to an invigilator or another person connected with an assessment.

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- providing or receiving information about the content of an assessment before it takes place, except when allowed by the Awarding Organisation (e.g., case study materials issued before an examination).
- impersonating or trying to impersonate a learner or attempting to procure a third party to impersonate oneself. This includes use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) software.
- any attempt to tamper with an assignment or examination scripts after they have been submitted by learners.
- fabricating or falsifying data or results by individual learners or groups of learners.
- Communicating with or copying from any other learners during an assessment except insofar as the examination regulations may specifically permit this e.g., group assessments i.e., Functional Skills (FS) English Speaking and Listening.
- Communicating during an assessment with any person other than a properly authorised Invigilator or another authorised member of the PTS staff.
- Introducing any written or printed materials into the assessment room, unless expressly permitted by the assessment guidelines.
- Introducing any electronically stored information into an assessment room, unless expressly permitted by the assessment guidelines.

Because of the nature of cheating, this mainly applies to assignments, written work, and online tests. PTS should bear in mind that cheating may involve a member of staff (e.g., tampering with assessment scripts or results after learners have submitted them).

### Preventing cheating

It is important that PTS check the instructions that an Awarding Organisation provides for assessments, tests or examinations and complies with them, especially regarding materials which can and cannot be used in the examination and invigilation arrangements. As an exam centre, PTS is responsible for the supervision of assessments and the provision of appropriate invigilation in accordance with any disseminated regulations.

PTS assessing staff will use the following website to check for the probability of AI content: [GPTZero](#)

### Collusion

Collusion exists where a learner:

- Submits as entirely their own, with intention to gain unfair advantage, work done in collaboration with another person.
- Collaborates with another learner in the completion of work which is intended to be submitted as that other learner's own unaided work.
- Knowingly permits another learner to copy all or part of their own work and to submit it as that learner's own unaided work.

### Personation

"Personation" is the legal term of what is usually referred to by the lay person as "impersonation". Personation is therefore the assumption by one person of the identity of another person with intent to deceive or to gain unfair advantage. It may exist where:

- One person assumes the identity of a learner, with the intention of gaining unfair advantage for that candidate.
- The candidate is knowingly and willingly impersonated by another with the intention of gaining unfair advantage for themselves.

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## Ghosting

Ghosting exists where:

- A learner submits as their own, work which has been produced in whole or part by another person on their behalf e.g., the use of a ghost-writing service or AI software.
- A learner seeks to make financial gain or other material gain by using work, which they have written or produced, available to another student.

## Dishonest Practice

The use of any other form of dishonest practice not identified by the above definitions.

## Actions to Implement and Develop this Policy.

An allegation of any form of academic irregularity is not the same as proof of the incident. The determination of whether any form of academic irregularity has occurred should be resolved by the PTS Quality Team and reported at the earliest opportunity via the Internal Quality Assurers (IQAs). It is for the Quality Manager to judge the seriousness of the case and to exercise discretion, accordingly, having regard to any PTS precedents, where appropriate.

## Procedures used to deal with the above

Where an allegation has been made of an actual act of any of the above academic irregularities, then the following procedures are to be followed:

### Initial Procedure for On Programme Assessments

When an academic irregularity is suspected, the member(s) of PTS Assessor staff concerned should first discuss the matter informally with the learner(s) concerned and the IQA and give the learner the opportunity to present their case.

If the learner(s) concerned admits to the academic irregularity, then the member(s) of PTS staff concerned shall report the matter and the outcome to the Quality Manager and Sector Lead IQA within two working days, to determine the action to be taken, in accordance with the procedure detailed below.

In cases where the learner admits misconduct the learner should be required to acknowledge this by signing the Academic Malpractice record completed by the assessor. This will be sent to the Quality Manager, Sector Lead IQA and a copy attached to the e-portfolio. The learner should also be given the opportunity to declare academic misconduct in any other work that they have previously submitted for assessment, and this should be documented in the same form.

For a first offence involving a piece of evidence that counts for a small proportion of the total assessment of a qualification, the learner may be asked to complete the unit / work again using different forms of evidence and no further action will be taken, however the learner records will reflect the instance as detailed above.

If this informal meeting does not resolve the matter or it is a repeat offense of academic irregularity, the PTS member(s) of staff concerned should then:

Within three days or as soon as reasonably practicable following the discovery or allegation, report the matter in writing to the Quality Manager, Sector Lead IQA and their IQA using the Academic Malpractice form.

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The report should contain full details about the circumstances surrounding the alleged irregularity including, if appropriate, photocopies of the learner's work. An allegation may be made after the work has been marked and returned to the learner.

### **Initial Procedure for Online and/or Paper Based Assessments**

Where an academic irregularity is suspected during an assessment, the Invigilator concerned will inform the Examination and Bookings Administrator, and in the presence of that colleague will inform the learner of their suspicions and clearly annotate the learner's piece of work. The learner will also be advised by the Invigilators that a full report will be submitted following the assessment. The Invigilators will seek to confiscate any relevant evidence (for example, any unauthorised material) and allow the learner to continue with the assessment. However, if the learner persists with the irregularity, they will be expelled from the Testing Room. The learner will also be expelled from the Testing Room if they refuse to submit any suspected material to the Invigilators.

Immediately following the assessment, the Invigilator will submit a full report of the matter in line with the awarding organisations policy using the Academic Malpractice form. The report will be returned along with the scripts and other examination stationery to the Examinations and bookings Administrator who will log the dispute and escalate to the Sector Lead IQA and Quality Manager who will determine the action to be taken in accordance with the paragraphs below.

If a learner considers other learner(s) to be gaining unfair advantage during an assessment, it is the responsibility of the learner to bring this to the attention of the Invigilator. However, no action can be taken unless the infringement of rules on behalf of the learner(s) is subsequently verified by the Invigilator.

### **Action by the Quality Team**

Where an allegation of an academic irregularity has been made in accordance with the paragraphs detailed above and not resolved, the matter will be investigated as soon as reasonably practicable following the discovery or allegation of the irregularity by the Quality Team.

The learner(s) should be provided, by the Quality Team, with full details of the alleged irregularity and informed of their right to appear before the Quality Team, accompanied by a friend or representative of their choice and to submit a written statement of mitigation concerning the alleged irregularity. In the case of the learner being an apprentice, the employer will also be informed.

Failure by the learner(s) to appear before the Quality Team or to submit a statement will not prevent the investigation proceeding. The Quality Team may call witnesses, as appropriate i.e., the Invigilating Officer, to substantiate the allegations, and will not unreasonably refuse permission for the staff or learner(s) concerned to call such witnesses as they deem appropriate.

The Quality Team consisting of the Quality Manager, Sector Lead IQA and one other IQA (preferably from a different sector to ensure impartiality) will interview the learner(s), PTS staff and witnesses as appropriate to consider the learner's written statement and come to a decision based on the learner's statement and the supporting evidence.

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The learner will wait outside the room while the Quality Team deliberates or in the case of an online meeting, the learner will be asked to wait in a breakout room, or a suitable time for feedback and decision will be scheduled. The order of proceedings will be as follows:

- Consider the statement of the case against the learner(s) and production of evidence in support of it.
- Make judgement against the statement of the case for the learner(s) and production of evidence in support of it.

Evidence may be received by the Quality Team by oral statement and/or by a written and signed statement. Each member of the Quality Team has equal status except that, in the event of a disagreement about the decision, the decision shall be made by a majority of those present. If the learner(s) has attended, they will be informed of the Quality Team decision at the conclusion of the meeting.

The Quality Team will report the outcome in writing to the student within two working days of the Quality Team decision. The learner(s) has right of appeal at this stage which will be escalated to the awarding organisation quality team. Their decision will be final.

All records of academic irregularity must be recorded in the minutes of the Quality Team meetings and records of Academic Malpractice forms stored centrally for the duration of the learner's programme of learning.

### **All Submissions - Statement of Confirmation of Authenticity**

By the act of making a submission of any piece of work for assessment, whether it be paper based or through the e-portfolio software, the learner will be certifying, as a result of its submission that it is the work of that learner.

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. The Learner's attention is to be drawn to this Plagiarism and Malpractice policy and that of the Awarding Organisations and made aware that, potentially, plagiarism may result in a learner being withdrawn from a qualification.

All learners are required to sign a Learner Acknowledgement, after having read this policy document during their Induction Sign Up programme via their e-portfolio or DocuSign.

### **Monitoring, Evaluation & Continuous Improvement**

The Quality Team will monitor the implementation and promotion of this and, where necessary, report any incidents or identified trends at the next SMT meeting. It will also be reported to the Awarding Organisation via External Quality Assurance reviews. The Quality Team will review the outcomes of all incidents of academic irregularities to identify where improvements to PTS processes, procedures can be made and where training and development opportunities arise as a result.

Where any failures in the assessment process are uncovered, the Quality Team will be responsible for investigating whether other remote locations and/or learners could be affected, and any remedial actions required.

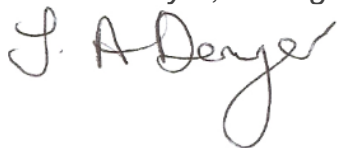
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PTS take all incidents of academic irregularities seriously, especially those incidents which are a determined and deliberate attempt by the learner to gain marks for an assessment without having done a substantial portion of the work themselves.

Review of process and procedure is to take place quarterly and will help to ensure that our qualifications and programmes are accessible to all whilst maintaining quality through its implementation. PTS aims to continually improve its business processes and our responses to our customers in the light of learning from the feedback we receive from across the business.

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*This Policy has been agreed by  
Jackie Denyer, Managing Director*



*Date Signed:- 20<sup>th</sup> July 2023*

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