End-Point Assessment Plagiarism Policy

2025

End-Point Assessment Plagiarism Policy	
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Policy Owner	End-Point Assessment Managers
Contact Email	apprenticeshipsupport@vqa.org
Contact Phone Number	03333583344
Approved By	Leadership Team
Policy Relates to	End-Point Assessment
Policy is for the use of	Learners, Apprentices, Training Providers, Recognised Centres, TQUK Employees, Third Parties,
Should be read in conjunction with	N/A

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Introduction

This policy is provided for Training Providers and Apprentices involved in Apprenticeship Standards for which Training Qualifications UK (TQUK) is the End-Point Assessment Organisation (EPAO). It is also relevant to anyone involved in suspected or actual plagiarism. TQUK staff members should use it to ensure they deal with any plagiarism investigations in a consistent manner.

This policy sets out the steps TQUK staff members will follow when reporting suspected or actual plagiarism and the procedural steps TQUK will follow when reviewing all such cases. Additionally, it confirms when Training Providers are required to notify TQUK of suspected or actual plagiarism.

As part of the assessment process, ensuring a valid and rigorous approach to evidencing Apprentice achievements supports learning and success. Therefore, it is paramount to robustly identify and confirm the authenticity of Apprentices' work. The quality of assessment practice, including that of making grading decisions, is a vital procedure, and the consistency of approach when dealing with potential plagiarism will improve quality and raise standards.

TQUK expects all staff to have relevant expertise to make fair and consistent grading decisions for all Apprentices when assessing and moderating assessment decisions. This expectation requires continuous and active commitment from all staff engaged in TQUK activity linked to assessment to validate that Apprentice work is authentic and original and to take consistent action when plagiarism is suspected or reported.

TQUK Internal Responsibility

The End-Point Assessment Department (Delivery) is responsible for maintaining and complying with this policy. If the End-Point Assessment Delivery Manager is absent, the Responsible Officer will appoint another member of the Leadership Team to ensure that all of TQUK's actions and activities are in accordance with its content.

The Managing Director has overall responsibility for ensuring that this policy complies with our ethical and legal commitments and that all TQUK actions and activities are in line with the contents of this policy.

Review Arrangements

We will review the policy as part of our annual self-evaluation process and revise it as and when necessary, from the following sources; in response to feedback from Recognised Centres, Training Providers, Learners or Apprentices, changes in our practices, actions by regulatory authorities or external agencies, changes in legislation, or trends identified from previous allegations of bribery/corruption.

In addition, this policy may be updated in light of operational feedback to ensure our arrangements for dealing with suspected cases of bribery or corruption remain effective. The annual review of this policy will be undertaken by the Quality and Compliance Department approximately four weeks prior to the submission of TQUK's Statement of Compliance to regulators. Any amendments or updates to this policy will be approved by TQUK's Executive Team.

If you would like to raise any points or offer feedback regarding this policy, please contact us via the details provided at the start of this document.

Training Provider's Responsibility

It is important that a Training Provider's staff involved in the management, assessment, and quality assurance of our qualifications or standards for where we are the EPAO and Apprentices are fully aware of the policy's contents and that they have arrangements in place to prevent and investigate instances of plagiarism.

If a Training Provider wishes to receive guidance/advice from TQUK on how to prevent, investigate, and deal with plagiarism then please contact us (details above) and we will happily provide advice and/or guidance as required.

Policy Statement

This policy aims to ensure consistency and fairness when dealing with all real and suspected plagiarism. This policy aims to ensure:

- The assessment process is valid, rigorous and reliable;
- All work submitted for assessment by an Apprentice is original to that Apprentice;
- Apprentices are informed of this policy, or any such locally related policies held within individual Training Providers, and have an understanding of what plagiarism is and its relevance to them;
- A fair and consistent approach when dealing with potential cases of plagiarism;
- Support is provided to enable Apprentice success;
- The assessment process meets the requirements of regulatory bodies.

What is plagiarism?

Plagiarism is defined as an act of taking someone else's work to submit or pass as your own and as such, TQUK will classify this as cheating under academic misconduct.

Examples of plagiarism include:

- Verbatim (word-for-word) quotation – copying another person's (including another Apprentice's) work with no reference or acknowledgement.
- Cut/copy of material directly from a website/textbook book etc., without reference or acknowledgement
- Paraphrasing (altering a few words of another to pass as your own) from books, websites, or another individual's work.
- Collusion – unauthorised collaboration between Apprentices which unfairly assists an Apprentice to produce work which is not purely their own.
- Employment/engagement of another person, professional or other, to produce work on your behalf.
- Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools (e.g. ChatGPT, Gemini, Copilot) to generate or significantly alter work, unless explicitly authorised by TQUK or the Training Provider. This includes presenting AI-generated content as your own, without acknowledgement, or relying on AI to create whole or part assessment responses.

Why does plagiarism happen?

Plagiarism is not always intentional, and can often occur through unintentional means, whereby an Apprentice has attempted but failed to correctly cite or reference another person's work or text. Where it is clear that such efforts have not been made and work is identical to or indicates small changes have been made to disguise the copying of another person's work it is classed as

intentional. Plagiarism can be prevented by providing a reference which attributes the work to the correct source, regardless of the form that this work takes.

The list below contains common reasons, both intentional and unintentional, for plagiarism.

Unintentional reasons:

- Poor understanding of the definition of plagiarism and the rules associated with it;
- Incorrect citation or referencing of another person's work caused from a misunderstanding of the correct process;
- Insufficient time is given to the completion of a task/ assignment causing mistakes to be made in relation to referencing;
- Adopting previous incorrect practice that had been accepted;
- Over-reliance on the original source material;
- Compensating for poor English language skills;
- Being unable to distinguish between intellectual property rights and common knowledge;
- Lacking effective study or research skills;
- Failure to determine the difference between class/ group work and individual assessment work.

Intentional reasons:

- Ignorance relating to plagiarism or the belief that they will not be caught;
- Not believing that plagiarism is wrong;
- No value of academic regulation;
- Regarding plagiarism as a shortcut to success;
- Intentional cheating and passing off of another's work for own ends.

The vast majority of plagiarism instances occur through unintentional means, however it must still be deemed as a serious act of academic misconduct and swift action taken. Apprentices must be held accountable for ensuring they have met all outlined requirements in relation to citation and referencing and they are submitting work that is their own.

How is plagiarism identified?

Whilst assessors employ various safeguarding strategies to prevent plagiarism there are a number of indicators that may alert an assessor or IQA to potential plagiarism which include:

- Apprentice work produced to a surprisingly higher quality than previous submissions;
- Writing styles differing to those previously demonstrated;
- Assignments that contain unfamiliar words, terminology or Americanised spelling;
- Distinct lack of comprehension of their written work when asked about the subject matter;
- Use of texts familiar to the assessor but not referenced;
- Differences in the level of performance between assignments and activity completed under uncontrolled conditions. Alongside the indicators already listed, assessors and IQAs should also be aware of potential misuse of AI. Signs may include:
- Responses that are generic, lack personal context, or repeat phrasing commonly associated with AI outputs.
- Content that demonstrates inconsistent depth of knowledge compared to previous submissions.
- Formatting or referencing styles that differ from apprentice's prior work.
- Lack of ability to explain or expand upon written responses when questioned verbally.

EPA assessors may use plagiarism detection software, AI-detection tools, and direct questioning of the Apprentice to validate authenticity.

TQUK procedure for dealing with suspected plagiarism

The use of AI by Apprentices to generate or edit submissions represents a significant malpractice risk. As with other forms of plagiarism, suspected AI use will be reviewed by:

- Applying plagiarism and AI-detection software;
- Comparing work with previous submissions;
- Questioning the Apprentice to test their understanding and originality;
- Seeking corroborating evidence (drafts, notes, references).

Where confirmed, inappropriate use of AI will be treated under the same framework as plagiarism — with distinction made between unintentional misuse (e.g. apprentice misunderstanding acceptable use) and intentional academic misconduct (e.g. deliberately submitting AI-generated work as their own).

Checking potential plagiarism

The level of Artificial Intelligence used by Apprentices to support submissions of evidence is a risk. Along with the points above, plagiarism may be less obvious to identify. With any suspected use of plagiarism the EPA Assessor will utilise a Plagiarism Checker to verify potential mal-practice prior to investigation. Where plagiarism is suspected, the following steps should be carried out in a discrete and professional manner. The assessor should address their concerns with the Apprentice by asking them questions in relation to the authenticity of their work. This may include knowledge-based questions to confirm the Apprentice's comprehension, or reviewing relevant partially or attempted referenced materials.

Additionally, generic reviews of search engines or familiar textbooks/source materials may be carried out. In some instances, such as written testing, the Apprentice cannot be challenged. Therefore, the investigation would occur using a Plagiarism Checker, and where identified as a potential plagiarised answer, the issue would be escalated to the compliance for further investigation. This may lead to a void examination and suspension of certain Training Providers from being able to invigilate Apprentice examinations.

Unintentional Plagiarism

During the course of such investigation, if it is deemed that plagiarism has taken place but is classified as unintentional then the assessor can refer the work back to the Apprentice for revision.

TQUK will inform the relevant Training Provider who should seek to provide adequate support to prevent further instances of plagiarism, prior to revised and or additional work being submitted for assessment. All such instances should be recorded by both TQUK and the training provider

Intentional Plagiarism

However if the investigation results in a finding of intentional plagiarism, then the work should not be accepted for assessment.

In such instances TQUK will inform both the apprentice and the training provider/employer and refer them back to the Training Providers own disciplinary policy for further action.

All such instances should be recorded by both TQUK and the training provider/employer.

Apprentices retain their right to appeal decisions made by TQUK in relation to plagiarism. All such appeals should be directed to the Quality and Compliance Department, which will conduct a further review of the evidence with a view to either supporting the assessor's finding and decision or overturning the decision and thereby reinstating the Apprentice's right to assessment. For guidance on the appeals process please refer to the TQUK Appeals Policy.

In all instances of Plagiarism, an incident form will be completed, initiating an investigation. Outcomes of which will be shared with training providers and Key Stakeholders as required under the Incident Reporting Process.

Training Provider procedure for making an allegation of plagiarism to TQUK

Training Providers in the first instance should refer to their own internal policy for dealing with plagiarism. Where investigations result in intentional plagiarism and refer to any Apprentice that may have been certificated by TQUK or completed an Apprenticeship standard assessment with TQUK as the EPAO the Training Provider should immediately notify TQUK. Training Providers should put their concerns in writing/email and enclose appropriate supporting evidence.

All allegations must include (where possible):

- Training Provider name, address and number;
- Apprentice's name and TQUK registration number;
- Training Provider/TQUK personnel's details (name, job role) if they are involved in the case;
- details of the Apprenticeship end-point assessment affected;
- nature of the suspected or actual plagiarism;
- details and outcome of any initial investigation carried out by the Training Provider or anybody else involved in the case, including any mitigating circumstances.

If a Training Provider has conducted an initial investigation prior to formally notifying TQUK, the Training Provider should ensure that staff involved in the initial investigation are competent and have no personal interest in the outcome of the investigation. TQUK would expect that such investigations would normally involve the Training Provider contact/Training Provider manager.

It is important to note that in all instances the Training Provider must immediately notify TQUK if they suspect plagiarism has occurred and certificates have been issued/assessment components passed as we have a responsibility to the regulatory authorities to ensure that all investigations are carried out rigorously and effectively.

For any reported case of suspected plagiarism, TQUK will protect the identity of the 'informant' in accordance with our duty of confidentiality and/or any other legal duty.

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