

**Plagiarism Policy**

**What is plagiarism?**

Plagiarism is attempting to pass off other people’s work and ideas as your own and can include:

* Copying from another learner
* Copying from books or the internet
* Paraphrasing
* Subcontracting the work to someone else
* Submitting the same piece of work for two different purposes
* Using artificial intelligence to complete work

**Why is plagiarism wrong?**

* It is fundamentally dishonest.
* Learners who commit plagiarism are seeking an unfair advantage over other learners.
* Learners who commit plagiarism are devaluating the value of the qualification they seek.
* It is disrespectful to their assessors/tutors, and a betrayal of their trust.

**What are the consequences of plagiarism?**

* Learners who commit plagiarism learn far less than those who do not.
* Assessment procedures are compromised if the work submitted is not the learners own.
* Assessors/tutors are unable to form correct decisions on the progress of individual learners.
* It may result in legal action due to infringement of copyright laws.
* It may be penalised by failure in one or more components of a course.
* It could be unfairly interpreted as professional incompetence on the part of the assessor/tutor.

**Why does plagiarism happen?**

* Learners may not understand what is meant by plagiarism, because it has never been explained to them.
* Learners believe plagiarism to be wrong: they download music, video clips and games all the time.
* Learners may not understand the concept of individual ownership of ideas and words.

**What is classed as responsible use of AI?**

ESTD recognise the value of emerging AI tools, but also the importance in ensuring they are not used to plagiarise work and submit it as their own. Apprentices using AI tools must adhere to the following guidelines:

* Any content generated by AI that is included in assignments or projects must be clearly cited. For example, “This section was generated with the assistance of [AI tool name], and has been reviewed and edited for accuracy.”
* AI tools should be used as a learning aid, not as a substitute.
* Apprentices must critically assess AI-generated content for accuracy, relevance, and originality before submission.
* AI as a tool for brainstorming, research, and language refinement, not for producing entire assignments.

**What we do at ESTD to help minimise the risk of plagiarism?**

* Develop clear policies and procedures re plagiarism and other forms of academic misconduct.
* Explain during induction what is meant by ‘plagiarism’ and responsible use of AI.
* Insist upon the use of referencing bibliographies from day one.
* Act as a team, with every tutor/IQA rigorously applying centre policies on referencing and bibliographies.
* Ensure that learners are not overloaded and have clear achievable targets and timescales.
* Ensure all work is verbally discussed when giving feedback to question the learners understanding.

**How we identify plagiarism or misuse of AI?**

The expertise of individual assessors/tutors is the best safeguard against plagiarism. We check learners work for:

* the use of unfamiliar words.
* grammar and syntax of a standard far higher than that demonstrated previously.
* a discontinuous rise in the quality and accuracy of the learners work.
* the use of texts familiar to the assessors/tutors, but without appropriate referencing.
* the use of American spellings and unfamiliar product names.
* type a few selected phrases into a search engine such as Google.
* share concerns with colleagues: if everyone has the same suspicions about a particular learner, it would seem appropriate to apply rigorous checks to all of his or her work.
* Unable to verbally discuss their work and answer questions.

**Plagiarism and departmental procedures for investigation and considerations of allegations**

* 1. It is the role of the Head of Department to consider all cases of suspected plagiarism and /or collusion identified in work submitted for assessment set by the department.
  2. Where the Head of Department suspects plagiarism, s/he will gather the necessary student evidence (original source that may have been used inappropriately, or use of AI detectors) and review this for evidence of plagiarism.
  3. If after initial investigation the Head of Department determines that there is no case to answer, they may dismiss the case.
  4. If there is evidence of plagiarism the Head of Department will write to the student, presenting the evidence assembled, and provide them with an opportunity to make a written response to the allegation (s) of plagiarism and/or collusion, including any information which s/he considers should be taken into account as mitigating factors for their actions. Information relating to any mitigating circumstances should wherever possible be supported by documentary evidence. A deadline will be set for the submission of the written response which shall not be fewer than five working days from the date of notification of this request.
  5. When writing to the student to present him or her with evidence, they may require the student, in addition to providing a written submission, to attend a meeting at head office to discuss matters relating to the allegations or for distance learning courses a recorded telephone call will be used. The student shall be given at least five working days written notice of a meeting or phone call.
  6. If having been served due notice, a student does not submit a written response to the allegations/ attend a meeting or take part in the telephone call, the Head of Department may proceed to determine an outcome to the case without offering any further opportunity to the student to make representations.
  7. Having reviewed the evidence assembled and the response received from the student, the Head of Department shall determine one of the following regarding the allegation:

1. That there is no case to answer and dismiss the case
2. That plagiarism or collusion are not proved, but that there is evidence of poor academic practice, the student should be warned, directed to academic support within the department and require to undertake the ESTD online plagiarism tutorial.
3. That there is evidence of plagiarism and impose a departmental-level penalty as permitted under these regulations.

The Head of Department shall notify the student concerned of the outcome of the case, including reasons for the judgement, normally no more than **10 working days** following the deadline for the students written response.

Four categories of plagiarism have been identified and a penalty will be applied for each of these. A lesser category of poor academic practice is also recognised, which will not attract a penalty.

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| Category | Characteristics | Action |
| ***Poor academic practice (PAP)***  First offences occurring in the first term of a student’s course should normally be treated as poor academic practice | This is not a disciplinary offence and does not count as a first offence. PAP involves collaboration or poor citation where there is evidence that the student did not appreciate the rules of academic writing or where the extent of copied material can be considered so slight that it does not justify disciplinary proceedings or a penalty. The work in question includes:   * A limited amount of material or copied text expressing ideas or concepts taken from the work of others in the students own words but without appropriate citation * A limited amount of material or copied text which is referenced in the bibliography but is not properly cited * A limited amount of material or copied text that has been AI generated * A limited amount of material or copied text that is cited but not in quotation marks | A formal warning could be issued by the Head of Department and the student is directed to academic support within the department. The learner may be asked to complete the work again and resubmit. |
| ***Category 1***  ***plagiarism and/or collusion*** | The work breaches the rules of academic integrity by presenting the material of others as the students original material. Category 1 plagiarism includes:   * Short blocks of materials or copied text/AI expressing ideas or concepts taken from the work of others without appropriate citation, or copied text that is cited but not in quotation marks * Short blocks of material or copied text which is referenced in the bibliography but is not properly cited * Short blocks of material or copied text that is cited but not in quotation marks * Collaboration between students as evidenced by structure, sources or short blocks of copied text or similar bibliographies. A short block of text may be as small as two continuing lines | A formal warning but no penalty is issued by the Head of Department and the student is directed to academic support within the department. The learner may be asked to complete the work again and resubmit. |
| ***Category 2***  ***plagiarism and/or collusion*** | A category 2 offence will be committed when the copied material represents a significant proportion of the work. The line between Category 1 and Category 2 offence will be determined by the level of similarity between the work and the source material on a case by case basis. Category 2 plagiarism includes:   * Significant or numerous blocks of material or copied text expressing ideas or concepts taken from the work of others without appropriate citation. * Significant or numerous blocks of material or copied text which is referenced in the bibliography but is not properly cited * Significant or numerous blocks of material or copied text that have been subjected to minor linguistic changes and presented as the students own, with or without citation * Significant or numerous blocks of material or copied text that is cited but not in quotation marks. Significant blocks of text may be a small as several continuing lines * Collaboration between students as evidenced by structure, sources, significant or numerous blocks of copied text. | A formal warning with potential penalty is issued by the Head of Department and the student is directed to academic support within the department.  The learner must complete the work again and resubmit. The employer will be alerted at this point. |
| ***Category 3***  ***Plagiarism and/or collusion – ‘repeat offence’*** | A category 3 offence will be committed if a category 1 or 2 penalty has been applied to a students work on a previous occasion (i.e. a repeat offence). Contemporaneous offences or offences in which a student has had no opportunity to act upon advice arising from an earlier offence due to close submission dates etc. are not treated as repeat offences but may attract PAP, Category 1 or Category 2 penalties in the normal way. | If both offences are Category 1 then the penalty on the second offence is a Category 2 penalty. If either of the two offences is a Category 2 offence then the penalty on the second offence is a Category 3 penalty. The Category 3 penalty is as follows:  Potential withdrawal from the course and no certification awarded. |
| ***Category 4***  ***plagiarism and/or collusion*** | A Category 4 offence is the most severe plagiarism where the departmental processes do not provide a sufficient penalty. It may be appropriate to refer to a disciplinary panel for a case which is complex and where the department is unable to establish the facts. A disciplinary panel has the power to impose penalties up to and including expulsion from the course and from ESDT. The would include the use of AI to create learner work. | Refer to panel |