

East Coast College

Plagiarism Policy & Procedure

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1. Introduction and Purpose

The policy is to ensure that staff and students are aware of what constitutes plagiarism, possible consequences and the action that is required when concerns are raised.

2. Scope

This policy covers the work of East Coast College in respect of FE funded courses and commercial work. Higher education is covered under the University of Suffolk policies and procedures.

3. Definitions

There are many definitions of plagiarism, but they all have in common the idea of taking someone else's intellectual effort and presenting it as one's own. The Joint Council's *Guidelines for Dealing with Instances of Suspected Malpractice* defines plagiarism as:

"The failure to acknowledge sources properly and/or the submission of another person's work as if it were the candidate's own."

Plagiarism, Collusion and Artificial Intelligence (AI) misuse are very serious offences and any student found to be copying another student's work; quoting work from another source without recognising and disclosing that source; buying in an assignment from a third party to pass off as their own either in part or totally; or using Artificial Intelligence software to generate in part or totally an assessment without correct citation and against awarding body guidelines will be penalised

'Plagiarism' means presenting work, excerpts, ideas or passages of another author without appropriate referencing or attribution.

'Collusion' occurs when two or more Learners submit work which is so alike in ideas, content, wording and/or structure that the similarity goes beyond what might have been mere coincidence. It must be made clear to all students and staff that whilst the discussion of ideas, working in groups and other forms of verbal discussion are acceptable, the sharing of a student's written response to an assessment is NOT acceptable. To do so, even with the best intention, leaves the student open to their work being used without their knowledge and could lead to allegations of collusion.

'Artificial Intelligence (AI)' use in the context of assessment, refers to the use of AI tools and technologies to acquire information and content which might be used in work produced for assessments which lead towards a qualification. This may involve the application of AI-powered algorithms, machine learning models, and

data-driven processes to gather, analyse, and generate relevant data, insights, or assessment content that can enhance the quality and effectiveness of work produced by students. AI chatbots are AI tools which generate text in response to user prompts and questions.

Examples of AI misuse include, but are not limited to the following:

- Copying or paraphrasing sections of AI-generated content so that the work is no longer the learner's own;
- Copying or paraphrasing whole responses of AI-generated content and submitting them as their own work;
- Failing to acknowledge/reference the use of AI tools when they have been used as a source of information;
- Incomplete or poor acknowledgement/referencing of the use of AI tools;
- Submitting work with intentionally incomplete or misleading references or bibliographies.

4. Responsibilities

- Assistant Principals and Sixth Form Principal – validating policy
- Heads of Departments and Directors of Faculty – cascading information and ensuring compliance
- Lecturers/Assessors/any staff employed to undertake assessments at East Coast College – teaching students a range of writing styles. Ensuring students know what constitutes plagiarism, why it does and how to avoid it.
- Internal Quality Auditor (IQA) – to follow the policy if plagiarism is identified during an IQA process
- Exams team – to follow the college policy and awarding body policy in relation to plagiarism which has been identified.

5. Policy Statement

The policy statement provides a clear framework to ensure that there is a robust process in place in line with awarding body guidance. All students should be informed of this policy at induction or during the first few weeks of their course **prior to assessments taking place.**

To avoid plagiarism students should:

- Quote the source when using other people's work.
- Use appropriate quotation marks or indentations to identify direct quotes.
- Acknowledge help received from others when producing a piece of work.

- Quote the source when expressing other people's ideas or paraphrasing their work.
- Not allow other students to use their work as their own.
- Ask for guidance from their lecturers about what is acceptable or not.

There are three steps in the process for dealing with plagiarism:

- Monitoring content
- Confirmation
- Reporting

Monitor content

- You should check a candidate's work for acknowledgement of sources as the work is being completed. Particular care should be taken when candidates submit work without completing intermediate stages.
- Varying quality of content is one of the most obvious pointers. Well-written passages containing detailed analyses of relevant facts alternating with poorly constructed and irrelevant linking passages ought to give rise to suspicion.
- Another practice is for candidates to write the introduction and conclusion to an assignment to make it fit the question and then fill in the middle with work which has been lifted from elsewhere.
- If the work is not focused on the topic, but presents a well-argued account of a related matter, this could be a sign that it has been used elsewhere. The same applies if parts of the work do not fit well together in developing the response to the assignment.
- When candidates submit completed work without intermediate stages this can be an indication that the work is not the candidate's own.
- Dated expressions and references to past events as being current, can also be indications of work which has been copied from out-of-date sources.

Monitor vocabulary, spelling and punctuation

- The use of a mixture of English and American vocabulary or spellings can be a sign that the work is not original.
- If the piece contains specialised terminology, jargon, obscure or advanced words, the lecturer should ask if this is typical of this level of candidate and reasonable, or is it because the candidate did not write the passage.
- Is the style of punctuation regular and consistent?

Monitor style and tone

- Look for differences in the style or the tone of writing. If a candidate uses material from textbooks alongside items from popular magazines, the change of tone between the two should be marked.

- Look at level of sophistication of the sentence structure. Is this the sort of language that can be expected from the candidate? Is the use of language consistent, or does it vary? Does a change in style reflect a change in authorship at these points?

Monitor presentation of work

- Look at the presentation of the piece. If it is typed, are the size and style of font uniform? What about the use of headers and sub-headers? Are the margins consistent throughout? Does the text employ references and if so is the style of referencing consistent? Are there any references, for example, to figures, tables or footnotes, which don't make sense (because they have not been copied)?
- Lack of references in a long, well-written section could indicate that it had been copied from a range of sources such as **websites, journals and textbooks or other similar general knowledge sources**.
- Look out for quotations that run on beyond the part which has been acknowledged.
- Staff should always consider where English is not their first written language and put in place appropriate considerations/support.

Confirmation

- If you suspect that an assignment has been plagiarised, the next step is to try to locate the source. The easiest method is to type a four to six word phrase from the text (preferably one with an unusual phrase in it) directly into a search engine such as Google and perform an "exact phrase search". If the article was copied from the free, visible web there is a good chance this approach will find it, particularly if a few search engines are tried.
- Computer programmes to detect plagiarism have been available commercially for some time. Staff can contact Learning Services for advice.

Reporting

If your suspicions are confirmed and the candidate has not signed the declaration of authentication, your centre need not report the malpractice to the appropriate Awarding Body. Centres can resolve the matter themselves prior to the signing of the declarations.

Teachers must not accept work which is not the candidate's own. Ultimately the Head of Department or Director of Faculty are accountable for ensuring that candidates do not submit plagiarised work. If plagiarism is detected by the centre

and the declaration of authentication has been signed, the case must be reported to the Awarding Body.

• Step 1

If the issue is of poor academic practice rather than deliberate plagiarism, the student should be given support and guidance on appropriate academic conventions. This may involve a review of the additional learning support, and any associated feedback linked to the work in question.

Where possible, the issue of plagiarism should be resolved by the lecturer/assessor and the student. If the problem is not resolved to everyone's satisfaction, the work should be passed to a second lecturer/assessor for re-marking within 5 days. The first marker should inform the internal verifier/moderator and the Head of Department/Director of Faculty of the need for the process.

The assignment should then be resubmitted for marking within 5 days. The maximum mark attainable in this situation would be a pass. This is also the case if plagiarism is discovered prior to the signing of a declaration of authenticity.

• Step 2

If the student admits to plagiarism, the student disciplinary process for misconduct should be started. If the student wishes to appeal, the Academic Appeals policy would be followed. The relevant Awarding Body must also be informed, and the Head of Department/Director of Faculty will lead this.

External concerns

If plagiarism is suspected by an Awarding Body's moderator or examiner or has been reported by a candidate or member of the public, full details of the allegation will be reported to the College. The Head of Department/Director of Faculty will be asked to conduct an investigation into the alleged malpractice and to submit a written report.

6. Monitoring and review

The Assistant Principal will monitor this process through internal audit and correlation to the Academic Appeals reports. External Awarding Body visits will also monitor the implementation of this policy. Where new guidance is released, the policy will be amended. The Exams Office will monitor the exam process and ensure full compliance with JCQ8 guidance.