Plagiarism Policy

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Policy Title:	Learner Plagiarism Policy
Applies To:	All learners (18+), staff, assessors, and internal quality assurers involved in the delivery and assessment of ESOL and Functional Skills qualifications.
Date Approved:	14/04/2025
Review Date:	01/08/2026

1. Purpose and Aims

This policy outlines the organisation's commitment to academic integrity and provides a clear definition of plagiarism. Its aims are to:

1. Maintain the integrity and value of all qualifications awarded by the organisation and our awarding bodies.
2. Ensure that all assessed work is the authentic, original effort of the individual learner.
3. Provide clear guidance to learners on what constitutes plagiarism and how to avoid it.
4. Establish clear procedures for dealing with suspected instances of plagiarism.

2. Definition of Plagiarism

Plagiarism is presenting someone else's work, words, ideas, images, or data as your own, without proper acknowledgement of the original source.

Plagiarism constitutes a form of academic misconduct or malpractice. It can be intentional (deliberate cheating) or unintentional (due to a lack of understanding of referencing). Both are treated seriously.

Examples of Plagiarism:

Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to, the following activities:

- **Direct Copying:** Copying and pasting text directly from a website, book, training material, or another learner's work without using quotation marks and citing the source.
- **Paraphrasing without Citation:** Rewriting someone else's ideas or work in your own words but failing to acknowledge the original source.
- **Collusion:** Working with other learners to produce a piece of work that is submitted as the individual effort of one learner (unless the assignment explicitly permits group work).
- **Purchased or Contracted Work:** Submitting work that has been purchased from an essay mill, downloaded from an online resource, or written by another person (including family or friends).
- **Self-Plagiarism:** Submitting a piece of work for one unit/qualification that has already been submitted for a prior assessment, without permission or acknowledgement.

Specific Guidance on the Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Using Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools (e.g., ChatGPT, Gemini, etc.) to generate content for an assessment is generally considered plagiarism if it is presented as your own original work.

- Learners must produce answers to be assessed in their **own words**, reflecting their own thoughts and understanding.
- If you use an AI tool as a source of information, you **must explicitly reference** it, just as you would a book or website, and ensure the final work demonstrates your own knowledge and skills.
- Submitting AI-generated content without appropriate reference may be deemed malpractice.

3. Preventing Plagiarism and Learner Responsibilities

The responsibility for submitting original work rests with the learner. To avoid plagiarism:

- **Submit Your Own Work:** All assessed work must be the result of your own genuine effort.
- **Reference Correctly:** Acknowledge all sources (books, websites, videos, articles, and AI tools) that you have used to gain ideas, words, or images.
  - *For ESOL and Functional Skills at lower levels (Entry Level to Level 2),* simple referencing (e.g., listing sources in a bibliography or citing the website at the end of a section) may be sufficient, but must still be clearly done.
  - *For Level 3 and above,* more detailed referencing is required.
- **Use Quotations Marks:** If you use the exact words of another person, you must put the text in quotation marks and cite the source immediately.
- **Sign the Declaration:** Any portfolio-type assessed coursework must be accompanied by a signed **Learner Declaration of Authenticity** confirming that the work is your own.

4. Dealing with Suspected Plagiarism (Procedure)

Tutors, Assessors, and Internal Quality Assurers (IQAs) are trained to be vigilant for potential plagiarism. If plagiarism is suspected, the following steps will be taken:

Stage	Action
4.1 Initial Detection	The Assessor suspects plagiarism (e.g., unacknowledged text, inconsistent writing style, or excessive similarity to an online source/AI content).
4.2 Investigation	The Assessor/Tutor will discuss the matter with the learner to clarify their understanding of plagiarism and referencing. The Assessor/Tutor will compile a brief report, including the evidence of the suspected plagiarism.
4.3 Minor Offence (Unintentional)	If the plagiarism is deemed to be a **minor offence** (e.g., poor referencing technique, omission of a citation) and is considered *unintentional*, the Assessor will: 1. Refuse to mark the work as a Pass. 2. Provide guidance and feedback to the learner. 3. Require the learner to **resubmit** the work with proper referencing and authentication within a given timescale.
4.4 Major Offence	If the plagiarism is deemed a **major offence** (e.g., wholesale copying, purchasing work, intentional deception, or a repeat

(Intentional)	offence), the Assessor will refer the case to the **[Education Coordinator/ Head of Centre]** for a formal investigation, following the organisation's Malpractice and Maladministration Policy.
4.5 Formal Outcome & Penalties	Following the formal investigation, if plagiarism is upheld, the learner will be informed in writing. Penalties may include: • . A final warning and required resubmission. • Failure of the specific unit or qualification. • Disqualification from the entire course • The incident being reported to the relevant Awarding Body (e.g., Ascentis, etc.), who may impose further sanctions.
4.6 Appeals	The learner has the right to appeal the outcome of a formal finding of plagiarism using the appeals procedure.

Learner Declaration of Authenticity

To be completed by the Learner for portfolio work.

I declare that the work submitted for this assessment is my own, original work. I have not copied from any other person, book, website, or source, and have not submitted work that was written by Artificial Intelligence, another person, or purchased from any service.

Where I have used the words or ideas of others, I have clearly indicated this by using quotation marks and/or providing a reference to the source.

I understand that if plagiarism is discovered, my work may fail, and I may be withdrawn from the qualification.

Learner Name:	
Learner Signature:	
Date:	

Last updated: April 2025

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Next review date: August 2026