

Introduction

Opportunity Learning Academy is committed to fair assessment procedures for all learners and it is the purpose of this procedure to define areas of academic misconduct and to establish procedures to be followed in suspected cases of cheating, academic misconduct or plagiarism.

Our Plagiarism Procedure is designed to help learners in understanding what plagiarism is and how to avoid it in their work.

Academic misconduct threatens fair assessment, which can then disadvantage all Learners and challenge the quality of the awards made. We are therefore committed to

enabling learners to avoid plagiarism through support and education and promoting both fairness and consistency of treatment.

In addition to educating for the avoidance of plagiarism, we are committed to detecting and acting when a case of plagiarism is suspected.

What is plagiarism?

Plagiarism is the act of presenting the material, ideas, and arguments of another person/persons as one's own. To copy sentences, phrases, or even particular striking expressions without acknowledgement, in a manner which may deceive the reader as to the source, is plagiarism; to paraphrase, in a manner which may deceive the reader, is likewise plagiarism. Plagiarism is identified in the composition of the work submitted by a learner for assessment.

Plagiarism comes in differing forms:

- Copying - incorporating into an assessment, material from books, journals, the web, the work of another learner or any other source, without acknowledgement and submitting it in verbatim or paraphrased form as one's own, is an act of plagiarism.
- Collusion - through the submission of work for assessment that purports to be the learner's own work but is in fact jointly written with another learner or other learners, is an act of plagiarism.
- Duplication of material means the inclusion in coursework of a significant amount of material that is identical or substantially similar to material which has already been submitted by the learner for the same or any other course with Opportunity Learning Academy.

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Within an educational setting there are two main forms of plagiarism, these being:

- Copying of material from other sources such as Textbooks, Magazines, Journals, Internet, use of images from any other sources which is included in any work submitted for assessment and it has not been acknowledged about the source of information or the content of the material, this includes either referencing standards has not been fully or properly followed or not followed at all.
- Coursework presented by a learner as it is their own work although it was created or worked out by another learners or group of learners but presented as if it was the work of that person's individual work. In other words, using the content of some others learners work and presenting in way that it is their individual work.

Academic Misconduct

If a trainer suspects there has been any type of academic misconduct they should in the first instance verify the initial credibility of the alleged misconduct. All suspected cases of academic misconduct including internal cheating, collusion and Plagiarism are reported to the Academy Manager.

The Manager will investigate every allegation of academic misconduct in a fair and objective manner. Unless in exceptional circumstances, when this is not possible, the investigation will be completed by the another independent manager.

Learners must be informed by the Manager of an allegation of cheating, academic misconduct or plagiarism by email and letter.

Investigations

Investigators of academic misconduct must ensure:

- that the allegation is clear to the learner
- that the learner is offered the opportunity to make a statement
- that investigations comply with any awarding body regulations

Disciplinary Meeting

Where possible, the timing of the investigation will ensure that trainers are available to observe the meeting.

The Academy Manager may:

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- Consult with other staff
 - Decide there is no case to answer
 - Decide there is a case of minor misconduct (and if appropriate set a penalty)
 - Decide there is a case of serious misconduct
 - Request an investigation.

Minor Misconduct

The Academy Manager should be satisfied that the plagiarism is due to poor academic practice, there is no evidence to deceive and that this is the first incident. Where the Academy Manager determines that there is a minor offence they will write to the learner and propose a penalty informing the learner that it will be applied unless contested. Penalties will be determined by the Academy Manager and could include zero marks for the work, resubmission of the work or a new assessment and any marks given to be capped at pass.

Serious Misconduct

This is determined by the following:

- The contribution to the overall mark for a module made by the piece of work in which the instance of alleged plagiarism has been detected.
- The proportion of the piece of work that is plagiarised.
- Whether the learner is in receipt of a formal warning.
- The number of previous or contemporaneous offences, if any, with any instances of repeat offending normally to be regarded as constituting a more serious offence.
- Evidence of intent to deceive, with any such evidence normally to be regarded as requiring the treatment of the case as per a more serious offence

Where the Academy Manager determines that there is serious misconduct, a penalty is proposed that will be applied unless contested. They will write to the learner to inform them of the proposed penalty. In the case of serious misconduct, the learner will be invited to attend a disciplinary meeting for clarification of the proposed penalty and to provide any additional evidence. When attending such a meeting the learner can be accompanied by a member of staff or a union representative. These are not legal proceedings, and a learner may not be represented by a legal representative.

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Penalties will be determined by the Academy Manager or another appropriate person and the penalty may range from a mark of zero for a single piece of work to termination of registration depending on the circumstances of the case.

Communication

The learner will be informed in writing of the disciplinary meeting decision within 3 working days of the meeting. A duplicate letter will be sent with the purpose of acknowledging the results of the disciplinary meeting and must be returned within 10 days.

Appeal

The Department will make the learner aware that they have the right to appeal to the training Academy in the first instance and thereafter to the Managing Director following the investigation and decision. Appeals have to be made within 21 days of the disciplinary meeting.

Learners are required to put their appeal in writing and submit to the relevant person.

Policy/Process Review Date

This policy/process is reviewed every 12 months with the next review date being 30th April 2023