Plagiarism and Cheating

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Overview

The aim of the Professional Assessment Limited (PAL) policy is to ensure all parties are aware of what constitutes plagiarism and cheating, the penalties, and sanctions for cheating or passing off someone else's work as your own and reducing the occurrences of such forms of malpractice.

Policy Scope

This policy should be read in conjunction with PAL's:

    ➢   Maladministration and Malpractice Policy

- ➢ Sanctions Policy
- ➢ Appeals and Enquiry Policy
- ➢ Invigilation Policy
- ➢ Special Considerations and Reasonable Adjustments Policy
- ➢ AI Guidance (available on request)

It is important that providers, employers and apprentices comply with this policy to support valid and reliable assessment.

> **Acts of plagiarism and cheating will be regarded as malpractice and where proven, PAL will apply such sanctions as detailed in our sanctions policy.**

Who is this policy for?
- ➢ Providers
- ➢ Employers- line managers
- ➢ Employers
- ➢ Apprentices
- ➢ PAL personnel (employed and engaged)

Purpose
The purpose of this policy is to clarify what as a regulated end-point assessment organisation, PAL as informed by the Ofqual General conditions of Recognition and EPA conditions regards as plagiarism and cheating. Secondly this policy is designed to act as a deterrent to anyone who might consider presenting work that is not of their own making.

The policy defines plagiarism and cheating; identifies when these acts can happen, intentionally or unintentionally and provides examples of plagiarism and cheating.

If any individual is uncertain as to how to interpret this policy or is unclear regarding any of the definitions, please contact the PAL EPA team.

What is Plagiarism?
Plagiarism is a specific form of cheating which applies to assignments or other types of written or recorded work completed by apprentices, where the work is meant to have been produced independently and be of their design, but is not. **Plagiarism is the substantial, unacknowledged incorporation into an Apprentice's work** of materials derived from published or unpublished work by another person or entity such as AI.

In addition to written work such as reports or projects, the replication of portfolio work, logs or recipe specifications is also regarded as plagiarism and will be treated accordingly.

PAL takes all incidents of plagiarism seriously, especially those incidents which are a determined and deliberate attempt by the apprentice to gain marks for an assignment/project/report without having done a substantial portion of the work themselves. Copying of work can include work from external published sources, and AI chatbots as well as that of other apprentices, and work colleagues.

Why does plagiarism happen?
There are a variety of reasons why apprentices' plagiaries, but some typical causes may be:

- ➢ Apprentice's lack of awareness of evidence production requirements.
- ➢ Apprentice's lack of skill in using source material/acknowledging the use of the material.
- ➢ Common use of the internet as a source of ideas/information and not appreciating copyright practice and the implications of Open Educational Resources (OER) tags and AI references and what that means regarding the use of such information.

➢ Pressure on an apprentice to succeed.
➢ Apprentice not allowing sufficient time to develop ideas, own research and rationale for assessments such as projects and reverting to shortcuts.

Examples of Plagiarism
Published work includes books, articles and materials found on the internet while examples of unpublished work could be a piece of work previously submitted by another apprentice or work about to be provided by another apprentice.

Examples of plagiarism include but are not limited to:

➢ Extracts from another person's work or AI chatbot without using quotation marks and/or an acknowledgement of the source, this could be found in presentations, assignments, or structured reports. PAL will use plagiarism checks on such written work.
➢ Summarising the work of another or using their ideas (to include AI chatbots) without an acknowledgement of the source.
➢ Copying or using the work of another apprentice (past or present) with or without that person's knowledge or agreement and without acknowledging their contribution.
➢ Purchasing essays or downloading them from the internet to submit them as your work.
➢ Using AI chatbot produced work, with no or highly limited acknowledgement.
➢ Using the work of a support trainer, scribe, reader, interpreter, where reasonable adjustments granted, but presenting the work as the apprentice's own.

Preventing Plagiarism
Before any endpoint assessment, PAL recommends that apprentices, employers, and providers review PAL's policies, located on the PAL website. **Any work found to be plagiarised will be discounted from the assessment process, and the apprentice will be advised of this and the reasons for a referral and possible sanctions in line with PAL's maladministration and malpractice policy, and sanctions policy.**

PAL also has a duty to report such events to the regulator, where PAL believes or has evidence that the act of plagiarism has caused an adverse effect or has the potential to cause an adverse effect.

PAL will use recognised plagiarism software checks on written work to confirm suspected plagiarism. Where such checks indicate possible plagiarism PAL will undertake further investigations and will invoke PAL's maladministration and malpractice policy as required.

PAL recommends that providers undertake plagiarism checks on all apprentices' project and assignment work prior to submission, to reduce the likelihood of flawed evidence being presented to PAL as an EPAO.

Apprentices are requested to complete and sign an authenticity check, confirming any work they present, is their own. Any contravention of the authenticity check will result in sanctions, as detailed in our sanctions policy.

Where apprentices are working on the same standard within the same employer organisation and notably the same employer location, PAL independent assessors and the quality team will pay particular attention to any submitted assessment products, as required by the assessment plan, to detect any excessive similarities or extensive copying of written work or work products.

PAL recognises that some apprentices and employers will be unfamiliar with the need to cite others work, mainly where internet sites have been used for research and apprentices mistakenly believe because information is in the public domain, they do not have to cite or quote such references. PAL encourages Training providers to inform all of their apprentices of basic referencing requirements, alongside making sure all relevant stakeholders have had sight of this policy.

PAL guidelines to referencing (and the list is not exhaustive) is as follows:

➢ If you use someone else's exact words in your work, they must be in quotation marks. Use quotations sparingly and only when you feel the author has expressed something so well and so concisely that the words cannot be improved

➢ If you use the internet to research and source information, you must provide the URL link, the title of the webpage and author where cited and date the webpage was last accessed by 'you'.

➢ When you have used a quote, you must provide the name of the author, the date of their work that you have referred to and the page number where you got the quotation from immediately after the quotation, or provide the website URL and date accessed

➢ You must provide a bibliography - a list of books, articles and any other sources you have quoted - at the end of your assignments

➢ The Harvard system for referencing sources is well-established, and you can find guidance on how to use it on the internet. Note Harvard referencing is typically for level 4 candidates and above

➢ **When referring to a book the Harvard format is: Gill, P. (2004) Concepts of negotiation: a guide for managers. Publisher name, location of publisher e.g. Brighton.**

➢ **And for a reference to an article, the Harvard format is: Spratt, J.D. (2017) it takes time: a 'stages of change' perspective on the adoption of workplace coaching skills. Journal of Change Management, 10(1), pp. 61-77.**

➢ In applying any form of referencing, PAL does consider the level of standard and the Apprentice's previous experience in writing formal assignments or projects, alongside the stated requirements in standards assessment plans and common approaches to assessment.

➢ Agreeing to undertake end-point assessment with PAL, means all parties understand and will abide by this PAL policy.

See appendix one for how PAL deals with cases of plagiarism.

Appeals

If an apprentice wishes to appeal against a decision of plagiarism, they should refer to the appeals and enquiry policy.

Cheating
What is cheating?

Cheating is an attempt to deceive the assessment and testing process and can include:

➢ Using books, notes, instruments, computer files or other materials or aids that are not permitted.

➢ Assistance or the communication of information by one apprentice to another in an assessment or examination where this is not allowed.

➢ Assistance from an assigned support tutor/trainer, for apprentices who have a need for reasonable adjustments, but where the assistance has presented work or evidence, that is not reflective of the apprentice's natural performance and if requested, the apprentice could not replicate similar evidence of the same quality.

➢ Copying or reading from the work of another apprentice or another apprentice's books, notes, instruments, computer files or other materials or aids, unless expressly permitted.

➢ Offering a bribe of any kind to an invigilator, examiner or other person connected with assessment.

➢ Providing or receiving information about the content of an examination before it takes place, except when allowed (some exams may require case study materials to be issued before an examination).

➢ Impersonating or trying to impersonate an apprentice, or attempting to procure a third party to impersonate oneself.

➢ Any attempt to tamper with assignment or examination scripts or test responses after they have been submitted by an apprentice.

➢ Fabricating or falsifying data or results by individual apprentice or groups of apprentices.

> ➢ Cheating is regarded as malpractice and will be subject to PAL's maladministration and malpractice policy and procedures.

Preventing cheating-Tests

Anyone undertaking the role of an invigilator (this is typically PAL personnel) are responsible for the appropriate supervision of tests and the invigilation of the assessment in accordance with the relevant assessment plan and PAL's invigilation policy.

PAL invigilators[1] are appropriately trained, checked to ensure there are no conflicts of interest and fully informed of the pre-test; during the test; post-test arrangements.

Procedures for handling paper-based tests can be checked with the PAL EPA team and must be followed. The use of paper-based testing will be carefully managed, and tracking of paper tests from issue to return will be logged in the management information system. Where paper-based tests are used, a member of the PAL team will always act as an invigilator.

Apprentices, employers, and providers should take this policy as notification, that any suspicion of cheating will be reported to the appropriate regulatory body.

Preventing cheating-other assessments

PAL as an EPAO issues specifications for each apprenticeship standard, an EPA Manual and Quality Assurance Manual that clearly details expectations in respect of the integrity of end-point assessment, and apprentice's demonstrating their personal competence and capability.

Our client relationship management and approach to compliance with all third parties and centres where centre status is granted makes specific references to the requirement of policies, procedures and protocols that facilitate fair, equitable, valid, and reliable assessments.

It is critical that any preparation for assessment, such as preparing for professional discussions or competency based interviews and presentations, should draw from the apprentice's experience and allow them to showcase their talents and voice.

Portfolio and project work has to be representative of the apprentice's involvement and again allow them to showcase their experiences and skills, knowledge and behaviours.

Permitting apprentices sufficient time and resource to compile portfolio/project/report work is vital, cheating can sometimes occur where apprentices have insufficient time to complete work and thereby take shortcuts. If an apprentice needs additional support in providing evidence of competence in a specific format, please refer to PAL's reasonable adjustment policy and guide and our PAL quality team are always available to discuss reasonable adjustment requirements.

Falsely requesting reasonable adjustments which unfairly confer an advantage on an apprentice, that does not require such an assessment intervention or modification, PAL regards as form of cheating. Any such false requests, or requests where there is no contemporary evidence or requirement for the reasonable adjustment, PAL will sanction the appropriate parties and review the assessment results accordingly.
Where an apprentice legitimately requires reasonable adjustments in respect of support personnel during an assessment, PAL's assigned assessor will ensure the guidance is followed.

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[1] Typically, PAL only uses PAL personnel for invigilation duties

Artificial Intelligence (AI)

AI use refers to the use of AI tools to obtain information and content which might be used in work produced for assessments which lead towards certificated qualifications and apprenticeship standards.

While the range of AI tools, and their capabilities, is likely to expand greatly in the near future, misuse of AI tools (intentionally or unwittingly) in relation to qualifications and apprenticeship standards assessments at any time constitutes malpractice.

What are AI chatbots?

AI chatbots are AI tools which generate text in response to user prompts and questions. Users can ask follow-up questions or ask the chatbot to revise the responses already provided. AI chatbots respond to prompts based upon patterns in the data sets (large language model) upon which they have been trained. They generate responses which are statistically likely to be relevant and appropriate. AI chatbots can complete tasks such as the following:

> ➢ Answering questions

> ➢ Analysing, improving, and summarising text

> ➢ Authoring essays, articles, fiction, and non-fiction

> ➢ Writing computer code

> ➢ Translating text from one language to another

> ➢ Generating new ideas, prompts, or suggestions for a given topic or theme

> ➢ Generating text with specific attributes, such as tone, sentiment, or formality

AI chatbots currently available include:

- ➢ ChatGPT (https://chat.openai.com)

- ➢ Jenni AI (https://jenni.ai)

- ➢ Jasper AI (https://www.jasper.ai/)

- ➢ Writesonic (https://writesonic.com/chat/)

- ➢ Bloomai (https://huggingface.co/bigscience/bloom)

- ➢ Google Bard

- ➢ There are also AI tools which can be used to generate images, such as:

- ➢ Midjourney (https://midjourney.com/showcase/top/)

- ➢ Stable Diffusion (https://stablediffusionweb.com/)

- ➢ Dalle-E 2 (OpenAI) (https://openai.com/dall-e-2/)

The application of Artificial Intelligence to complete end-point assessment submissions such as assignments and projects, using **large language models (LLMs) is considered a form of plagiarism** as the work submitted is not considered the apprentice's own work.

PAL will use plagiarism detection software to check all submissions for originality and will investigate any suspected cases of plagiarism, in line with this policy.

As has always been the case, apprentices must submit work for assessments which is their own. This means both ensuring that the final product is in their own words and isn't copied or paraphrased from another source such as an AI tool, and that the content reflects their own independent work.

Apprentices are expected to demonstrate their own knowledge, skills and understanding as required for the apprenticeship standard in question and set out in the PAL specification. Any use of AI which means apprentices have not independently demonstrated their own attainment is likely to be considered **malpractice**.

While AI may become an established tool at the workplace in the future, for the purposes of demonstrating knowledge, behaviours, and skills for apprenticeship standards, it's important for apprentices' not to rely on AI tools when undertaking end-point assessment.

When can AI be used?
AI tools must only be used when the conditions of the assessment permit the use of the internet for the purpose of research and where the apprentice is able to demonstrate that the final submission is the product of their own independent work and independent thinking.

Examples of AI misuse
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 apprentice's own

> Copying or paraphrasing whole responses of AI-generated content

> Using AI to complete parts of the assessment so that the work does not reflect the apprentice's own work, analysis, evaluation, or calculations

> Failing to acknowledge use of AI tools when they have been used as a source of information

> Incomplete or poor acknowledgement of AI tools

> Submitting work with intentionally incomplete or misleading references or bibliographies

All submissions that utilise artificial intelligence should be appropriately cited with the name of the software using the Artificial Intelligence or LLM listed as a co-author. No or poor referencing means apprentices are taking credit for the content that is not their intellectual property, which is plagiarism.

Where AI tools have been used as a source of information, an apprentice's acknowledgement must show the name of the AI source used and should show the date the content was generated.

For example: ChatGPT 3.5 (https://openai.com/ blog/ChatGPT/), 25/01/2023. The apprentice must, retain a copy of the question(s) and computer-generated content for reference and authentication purposes, in a non- editable format (such as a screenshot) and provide a brief explanation of how it has been used.

This must be submitted with the work submitted for end-point assessment, so the assessor is able to review the work, the AI-generated content and how it has been used. Where this is not submitted, and the PAL assessor suspects that the apprentice has used AI tools, the assessor will need to consult the centre's malpractice policy and the PAL quality team for appropriate next steps and should take action to assure themselves that the work is the apprentice's own. Where PAL as an EPAO cannot substantiate the authenticity of an apprentice's work and has evidence of, or reasonable belief that plagiarism has been committed, this will be reported to PAL's Responsible Officer (RO). If the RO review indicates concerns, PAL will report the event as a potential or actual adverse effect to the qualifications regulator.

Identifying Misuse

Identifying the misuse of AI by apprentices requires the same skills and observation techniques that PAL as an EPAO already uses to assure apprentice work is authentically their own. In addition to using plagiarism checking software, PAL can compare the outputs of the apprentice's work from different assessment components. The following is an example of what PAL's assessment and quality assurance checks can review and question.

Comparison with other assessments

When PAL reviews a given piece of work to ensure its authenticity, we can compare it against other work created by the apprentice. Where the work is made up of writing, to include presentations and discussions PAL can make note of the following characteristics:

- Spelling and punctuation *
- Grammatical usage
- Writing style and tone *
- Vocabulary
- Complexity and coherency
- General understanding and working level
- The mode of production (i.e., whether handwritten or word-processed)*

*Not used for discussions and interviews

In written work PAL will note the following:

a)   A default use of American spelling, currency, terms, and other localisations*

b)   A default use of language or vocabulary which might not appropriate to the qualification level*

c)   A lack of direct quotations and/or use of references where these are required/ expected~

d)   Inclusion of references which cannot be found or verified (some AI tools have provided false references to books or articles by real authors)

e)   A lack of reference to events occurring after a certain date (reflecting when an AI tool's data source was compiled), which might be notable for some subjects

f)   Instances of incorrect/inconsistent use of first-person and third-person perspective where generated text is left unaltered

g)   A difference in the language style used when compared to that used by a student in the classroom or in other previously submitted work

h)   A variation in the style of language evidenced in a piece of work, if a student has taken significant portions of text from AI and then amended this

i)   A lack of graphs/data tables/visual aids where these would normally be expected

j)   A lack of specific local or topical knowledge

k)   Content being more generic in nature rather than relating to the student themself, or a specialised task or scenario, if this is required or expected

l)   The inadvertent inclusion by students of warnings or provisos produced by AI to highlight the limits of its ability, or the hypothetical nature of its output

m)   The submission of student work in a typed format, where their normal output is handwritten

n)   The unusual use of several concluding statements throughout the text, or several repetitions of an overarching essay structure within a single lengthy essay, which can be a result of AI being asked to produce an essay several times to add depth, variety or to overcome its output limit

o)   The inclusion of strongly stated non-sequiturs or confidently incorrect statements within otherwise cohesive content

p)   Overly verbose or hyperbolic language that may not be in keeping with the candidate's usual style

*Please be aware, though, that AI tools can be instructed to employ different languages and levels of proficiency when generating content.

~However, some AI tools will produce quotations and references.

AI Reliability
AI chatbots often produce answers which may seem convincing but contain incorrect or biased information. Some AI chatbots have been identified as providing dangerous and harmful answers to questions and some can also produce fake references to books/ articles by real or fake people.

Where research is carried out using an LLM (Large Language Model), apprentices need to be aware of untrustworthy sources being used by the Chatbot and potential hallucinations that the LLM may have. This can impact on the outcome of the work being created and ultimately the validity and reliability of the work being submitted by the apprentice. LLMs must be cited in research alongside the websites being used by the LLM to provide their response to your prompts.

Training Providers should as part of the on-programme delivery ensure all their apprentices and personnel are clear on the definitions of plagiarism and cheating and the likely sanctions and outcomes of proven plagiarism or cheating in an end-point assessment.

Automated detection
AI chatbots, as large language models, produce content by 'guessing' the most likely next word in a sequence. This means that AI-generated content uses the most common combinations of words, unlike humans who use a variety of words in their normal writing. Several programs and services use this difference to statistically analyse written content and determine the likelihood that it was produced by AI:

> OpenAI Classifier (https://openai.com/blog/new-ai-classifier-for-indicating-ai- written-text/)

> GPTZero (https://gptzero.me/)

> The Giant Language Model Test Room (GLTR) (http://gltr.io/dist/)

PAL will blind test such automated detection, by using known AI scripted work to determine the levels of detection. Other software AI checkers such as Turnitin and Grammarly are reviewing their AI detection.

Adverse Effects
Plagiarism and cheating falls under maladministration and malpractice and if PAL suspects any such act, or we are advised of such activities by another person or party, and there are reasonable grounds for that suspicion or allegation, the Ofqual regulator's conditions require PAL to investigate such claims.

Where such actions give cause to a potential or actual adverse effect, PAL will report such actions to the regulator and will expect all parties participate in any subsequent investigation. Dependent on the outcome of any such investigation, previous results, achievements, and certificates may be rescinded.

Regulatory References

PAL is required to establish and maintain compliance with regulatory conditions and criteria. This policy relates to Ofqual General Conditions of Recognition: Identification and management of risks A6; Malpractice and Maladministration A8.

Condition EPA3Notification to Ofqual of certain events in relation to EPAs

Date Created: 6th June 2017

Last Review: 9th April 2024

Next Review: 9th April 2025

Person Responsible for review: Business Operations Director

This Policy has been agreed by Linda Martin, Managing Director

Appendix One Dealing with Plagiarism

Proven cases of plagiarism, dependent on the nature of the occurrence could be judged as maladministration or the more serious offence of malpractice.

Independent assessors will take the following checks and reporting procedures.

Stages in the process for investigating plagiarism are:

1. Vigilance – check apprentice's work for acknowledgement of sources, varying quality of content, the use of a mixture of vocabulary/spellings/punctuation/fonts/presentation.

2. Confirmation – if an assessor or a member of PAL's quality team suspect any aspect of an apprentice's work submitted as assessment evidence has been plagiarised, it is imperative to locate the source via the internet and/or plagiarism detection software. It is also helpful to speak with the apprentice and ask them questions about the work, to assess whether the work is that of the apprentice.

3. Reporting – if plagiarism is confirmed the maladministration and malpractice policy will be invoked and followed and reported and logged in accordance with PAL's policies and procedures and regulatory requirements.