



# Cheating & Plagiarism Policy

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Prepared for: QA group

Date: 07 January 2025

Issue: 1.11

## **Public**

This document can be disclosed outside of the QA group of companies without Director, InfoSec or Legal Team member approval.

# Version control

This policy applies to all Level 3-7 Apprenticeships in England not covered by university partner or higher apprenticeship policies

Document information	
Version 1.2	Addition of QA Disciplinary and Appeals policy

Document Approval		
Name	Position	Viewed / comments
Naomi Lavender	Quality Director	Approved
Emma Hambidge	Retention Manager	Approved
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Revision History			
Version	Issue date	Author	Description of change
1.0	March 2023	Naomi Lavender	New Policy Template
1.1	April 2024	Naomi Lavender	Removed references to Boot Camps
1.11	June 2024	Naomi Lavender	Updated to rebranding no changes to policy
1.2	January 2025	Emma Hambidge / Clare Dunne	Addition of QA Disciplinary and Appeals policy

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## Cheating & Plagiarism Policy Statement

QA Apprenticeships (QAA) is committed to encouraging academic excellence and integrity from learners, and confidence among all who deal with QAA, including parents, employers, awarding and funding organisations. To achieve this QAA will not tolerate cheating, or plagiarism

### 1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to define areas of academic misconduct in order to establish the procedures to be followed in suspected cases, plus ensuring adherence to all the requirements of affiliated awarding and examination bodies.

All learners have the responsibility to establish, maintain and develop academic standards and values necessary for study. Academic misconduct covers cheating, attempts to cheat, plagiarism, collusion, and any other attempts to gain an unfair advantage in assessment.

Plagiarism is defined as a learner using another person's work or idea and presenting it as if it were their own. The source of that work may be:

- Published work such as a book, magazine or photograph.
- Unpublished work such as a tutor's notes, class hand-outs, another learner's work (used with or without permission) and material from the internet.

Using any work produced by someone else in any of these ways without giving them credit is plagiarism and is academic misconduct. Sometimes plagiarism can be unintentional due to poor research skills or a lack of understanding of referencing conventions.

This policy refers to the statutory responsibility of QAA to meet the requirements of external awarding and examining bodies with regard to the behaviour of learners undertaking examinations and summative assessments.

### 2. Introduction

- QA's vision is to be the leading data, digital and tech apprenticeship provider in the UK.
- QA endeavours to work in partnership with our clients, researching the needs of employers, learners, and the local community, to plan a rationale and intent to ensure all appropriate needs are met.
- This policy outlines QA's approach to ensuring continuing quality improvement and represents the minimum requirement for performance and standards.
- QA seeks continuous improvement in the quality of all aspects of its work both internally and with sub-contractors to ensure all learners achieve to the highest standard and perform to the best of their ability.

### 3. Scope

This policy applies to all staff and learners on QA Level 3 and 4 apprenticeships. This policy will be applied to all examinations, course work and any other work produced by the learner.

Learners that are studying for a degree apprenticeship are covered by the relevant partner university policy. There is a separate policy covering Higher Apprenticeships.

Overall strategic responsibility for this procedure lies with the Apprenticeship Delivery Director. Operational responsibility lies with tutors and delivery staff for providing clear guidance to learners to ensure compliance with the procedure.

For the purposes of this policy, cheating, plagiarism and collusion are defined as follows:

- Cheating is any situation where a learner attempts to obtain an unfair advantage when submitting or presenting assessed work or during an examination. This also applies to the theft of another learner's work for submission.
- Plagiarism is any situation where a learner incorporates un-cited published material, or material produced by another learner into their assessed work, without proper referencing, therefore implying that it is their own original work. This also applies to the theft of another learner's work for submission.
- Collusion is the knowing collaboration, without official approval, between two or more learners in the preparation and production of work that is submitted in an identical or substantially similar form, and/or is represented by each to be the product of their individual efforts.

## 4. Objectives

QAA is committed to the integrity of its assessment processes, developing outstanding teaching and learning, and providing outstanding customer service to meet the needs of all learners.

All suspected cases of cheating, collusion and plagiarism will be reported to the Apprenticeship Delivery Director for appropriate action. The Apprenticeship Delivery Director will carry out an initial interview with the learner. If the learner maintains that they have not committed an act of cheating, collusion, or plagiarism, then in conjunction with their tutor, DLC or Skills Coach, the Apprenticeship Delivery Director may require the learner to participate in:

- Oral questioning on the work where cheating, collusion and plagiarism is suspected.
- Further investigation as deemed appropriate by the Apprenticeship Delivery Director.

If, as a result of investigation, the Apprenticeship Delivery Director is satisfied that, based on the evidence available, the learner has committed an act of cheating, collusion or plagiarism, the Director of Quality will consider an appropriate sanction.

- All investigations into suspected cases will be conducted in a fair and objective manner.
- Learners will be expected to take part in all stages of the investigation.
- Learners have the right to appeal to QA and/or the awarding body.

## 5. Disciplinary Sanctions for Cheating, Collusion or Plagiarism

The following sanctions are prescribed to deal with cheating, collusion, and plagiarism, subject to the nature and severity of the offence, and the consideration of any mitigating circumstances. They are instigated after full consultation with the tutor, DLC or Skills coach, Apprenticeship Delivery Director, and Director of Quality.

1. Discussion with the Apprenticeship Delivery Director, course tutor, DLC

2. or Skills coach and learner. Learner resubmits work for full marks and no formal record is kept.
3. Discussion with the Apprenticeship Delivery Director, course tutor or DLC/Skills coach, and learner. Learner resubmits work for full marks with a record being kept.
4. Resubmission of work for full marks using either a different task or new work.
5. Re-marking of the original work with the plagiarised section removed and the marks reflecting the remaining work.
6. Resubmission of new work for a reduced mark.
7. Resubmission of the unit (where applicable).
8. Permanent removal of new work for a pass grade only.
9. Zero marks/fail grade for the piece of work with no resubmission.
10. Failure of the whole programme.

**Note:** With sanctions 1 and 2 the learner will be required to undertake verbal questioning if the plagiarised section includes a key part of an assessment criteria, to ensure that they have a full understanding.

## 6. Thresholds for acts of cheating, collusion, or plagiarism

<p><b>Minor acts of cheating, collusion and plagiarism include:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poor referencing.</li> <li>• Mixing up references.</li> <li>• Changing a few words from a copied passage of work and passing it off as original work.</li> </ul> <p>Although these offences may be described as minor, if an assignment has a significant percentage of this type of offence, the sanction given to the learner should reflect this.</p>	<p><b>Thresholds for minor acts of cheating, collusion, and plagiarism</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Sanction 1</b> - The amount of plagiarism does not exceed 10% of the total assignment.</li> <li>• <b>Sanction 2, 3 or 4</b> - The learner has committed a previous act(s) of plagiarism, or the plagiarism exceeds 10% of the total assignment.</li> <li>• <b>Sanction 5, 6 or 7</b> - The learner has committed numerous previous plagiarism offences over the period of their course of study.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Intermediate acts of cheating, collusion and plagiarism must be referred to the Delivery Director and include:</b></p>	<p><b>Thresholds for Intermediate Acts of cheating, collusion, and plagiarism</b></p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two learners on the same course copying from each other.</li> <li>• A learner copying from a past learner on the same course.</li> <li>• Verbatim copying from a source(s) without acknowledgement.</li> </ul> <p>As with minor acts of cheating, collusion and plagiarism, the sanction given to the learner within this category may vary taking into account the percentage of copying involved.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Sanction 2, 3 or 4</b> - The total amount of plagiarism does not exceed 10% of the total assignment, or there are genuine mitigating circumstances in relation to a particular learner.</li> <li>• <b>Sanction 5, 6 or 7</b> - The learner has committed a previous act(s) of cheating, collusion and plagiarism, or the plagiarism exceeds 10% of the total assignment.</li> <li>• <b>Sanction 8 or 9</b> - The learner has been found guilty of numerous previous cheating, collusion, and plagiarism offences over the period of their course of study.</li> </ul>
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<p><b>Major Acts of cheating, collusion, and plagiarism (5 or above) must be referred to the Director of Quality and include:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recycling of assignments from essay banks on the Internet (whether paid for or not)</li> <li>• Purchasing ‘custom-made assignments’ from an Internet site or getting others (including parents) to write the assignment.</li> <li>• ‘Stealing’ an assignment from another learner without permission.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Thresholds for Major Acts of cheating, collusion, and plagiarism</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Sanction 4, 5 or 6</b> - The Director of Quality is satisfied that the learner has established mitigating circumstances in relation to this cheating, collusion, and plagiarism.</li> <li>• <b>Sanction 7, 8 or 9</b> - There are no mitigating circumstances.</li> </ul>
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## 7.QAA Disciplinary Procedure

After a sanction is applied for cheating, collusion, or plagiarism, the QAA Disciplinary and Appeals Policy will be followed to decide whether the learner should receive a further sanction.

If this is in relation to a QA employee, then the People Team will be notified and necessary action will be taken internally, in line with internal company policies.

## 8.Appeals

Appeals against any decision will be subject to the normal QA Appeals process outlined in the relevant QA Disciplinary and Appeals policy.

## 9. Monitoring & Review

The policy and associated procedures will be monitored and reviewed annually by the Director of Quality and the Apprenticeship Delivery Director.

- The effectiveness of the Cheating and Plagiarism policy will be measured through:
- The audit of assessment (Internal and External)
- Internal verification reports
- External verification reports
- Analysis of learner feedback
- Course evaluations / reviews
- Analysis of complaints and disciplinary trends

## 10. Policy Review

The next review of this policy will take place during January 2026



