

WEA Policy for Cheating, Malpractice and Plagiarism in relation to teaching and learning

1. Purpose

- To set out definitions/interpretations of cheating, malpractice and plagiarism in relation to teaching and learning
- To set out the rights and responsibilities of students, tutors, assessors and Course Organisers/Centre Administrators in relation to cheating, malpractice and plagiarism in relation to learning
- To set out procedures for handling suspected cheating, malpractice and plagiarism in relation to teaching and learning

2. Values

- Every effort should be made to ensure students, tutors and assessors are informed about appropriate study approaches to prevent the incidence of cheating, malpractice and plagiarism in teaching and learning
- Information about appropriate study approaches and cheating, malpractice and plagiarism in teaching and learning should be expressed and explained in language and situation appropriate to each individual student
- There is a difference between unintentional plagiarism, and deliberate, malicious or sustained plagiarism. Vulnerable¹ and inexperienced students and those new to the UK should be sympathetically treated – see under plagiarism in Scope and Definitions.
- Any suspected incidence of cheating, malpractice and plagiarism in teaching and learning should be investigated in a manner that supports the individual to understand and account for the incident without pre-judgement.

3. Scope and Definitions

a. **Cheating** constitutes any action whereby a student deliberately seeks to gain advantage by:

- taking unauthorised information or equipment into a test or examination
- submitting work for assessment done by a third party as one's own (including using IT to do so and/or paying for work from another source)

b. **Malpractice** constitutes any action that deliberately disrupts fair and equal opportunity for assessment or examination by:

Students:

- interfering with or gaining unauthorised access to assessment/test/examination papers prior to the designated time
- destroying the work of another student (paper/electronic/video etc)
- acting in a disruptive manner in the context of assessment/qualifications/test

¹ See the WEA Safeguarding policy for a definition

Tutors/Assessors:

- breaking the assessment/examination regulations of the Awarding Body
- acting in a manner that undermines the integrity of assessment/test/examination
- assisting students with the production of answers - this would include providing the work of another student taking the same assessment to use as a model for submission
- failing to keep students' work safe (paper/computer/audio etc.)

Course Organiser/Centre Administrator

- breaking the assessment/examination regulations of the Awarding Body
- failing to keep assessment/test/examination papers secure prior to assessment
- failing to keep students' work safe (paper/computer/audio etc.)

c. Plagiarism constitutes submitting work that is not one's own, without indicating or recognising this to the marker (acknowledging your sources). This might occur by:

- Using a choice phrase or sentence come across elsewhere
- Copying word-for-word directly from a text
- Paraphrasing the words from a text very closely
- Using text downloaded from the internet
- Borrowing statistics or assembled facts from another person or source
- Copying or downloading figures, photographs, pictures or diagrams without acknowledging their sources
- Copying from the notes or essays of a fellow student
- Copying from your own notes on a text, tutorial, video or lecture that contain direct quotations

Plagiarism, unlike cheating or malpractice, may be intentional or unintentional. There is a difference between unintentional plagiarism, and deliberate, malicious or sustained plagiarism. Vulnerable and inexperienced students and those new to the UK may be unaware of referencing and other rules. Where possible, some tasks/ assignments should be planned for completion early in the course to provide an opportunity to identify and correct unintentional poor practice without disciplinary action being taken. It should be made clear to students that they must address the issue within a specified timescale, and that they must agree to receive appropriate support to put things right. They should be informed that disciplinary action will be taken in future if plagiarism is sustained. Sustained plagiarism will be treated as deliberate.

4. Procedures

The WEA recognises that the temptation for cheating, malpractice or plagiarism may arise from lack of self- confidence or misunderstanding of the aims and conditions of the assessment /test/examination, or from stress/pressure. All policies and procedures should be interpreted to maximise support to the person accused, taking into account their particular circumstances. It may be more appropriate in

some cases to address the circumstances as a priority rather than individual behaviour. Undue stress, for example, might be reduced through appropriate support to prevent any recurrence. In all cases of cheating, malpractice or deliberate plagiarism, a senior Regional Manager must be involved. He or she may, at their discretion, and after taking advice where necessary, decide on an alternative or non-disciplinary course of action.

A written record of the circumstances, the decision and the reason for alternative or non-disciplinary action will be kept by the region. (This could include being in the form of an e-mail)

Stage 1

Prevention

- All relevant students should receive appropriate guidance through their tutor concerning the preparation of work and the correct use and referencing of sources
- All relevant tutors, students and course organisers/administrators should receive appropriate guidance on assessment/test/examination conditions
- All relevant tutors and students should be informed about the WEA's Policy on Cheating, Malpractice and Plagiarism and the consequences of such behaviour.

Stage 2

Formal proceedings

- Cheating, malpractice and deliberate plagiarism should be reported immediately to a senior WEA Regional Manager
- Any person suspected of cheating, malpractice or deliberate plagiarism shall be made fully aware by the WEA Regional Manager, in writing, at the earliest opportunity of the nature of the allegation. Care must be taken to ensure that the format and language is fully accessible to the recipient. If necessary, an agreed advocate can be involved to ensure understanding.
- Any person suspected of cheating, malpractice or deliberate plagiarism shall be presented with all evidence against them
- Any person suspected of cheating, malpractice or deliberate plagiarism must have an opportunity to respond – personally, and/or in writing within an agreed timescale.
- Any person suspected of cheating, malpractice or deliberate plagiarism will be invited to a meeting with the WEA Regional Manager or a responsible third party where he or she will be able to explain and defend his or her actions. He or she may be accompanied by an agreed advocate. Vulnerable students *must* be accompanied by an advocate. Advocates can include parents, friends or others. Students with impairments must be given appropriate support for any meeting, e.g. electronic notetakers or BSL interpreters.
- Alternatively, the disciplinary process may be conducted by email or in writing.

NB: Care must be taken when dealing with vulnerable and inexperienced students. Where behaviour is not clearly deliberate, the student will receive support and have an opportunity to re-submit work as described in 2c. If improvements are not then made, the student should be advised that formal disciplinary proceedings will commence.

Stage 3

Outcomes

1. Allegations of cheating, malpractice and/or deliberate plagiarism will be reported to the Awarding Body (where appropriate) in writing.
2. Where Awarding Body Regulations have been contravened, then a representative of the Awarding Body may wish to be involved in the investigation
3. A written report of the investigation and recommended actions and sanctions will be sent to all parties.
4. The person at the centre of the investigation will be informed of the Appeals Procedure should the judgement be found against him/her.
5. Where Awarding Body Regulations have been contravened, then the Awarding Body may wish to impose sanctions on the future involvement of that person in assessments/test/examinations.

Sanctions in the event of cheating, malpractice or deliberate plagiarism.

Sanctions will be applied proportionate to the seriousness of the behavior.

Student

- A student may lose credit for the individual unit or for all units in the qualification
- A student may be disqualified from completing the qualification
- A student may be barred from submitting work or taking an examination towards the qualification for a period of time.

Tutor/Assessor

- A tutor may be withdrawn from teaching/assessing the individual course
- A tutor may be barred from teaching/assessing that qualification in the future
- A tutor may be served with warning of disciplinary action by the region and those procedures will begin.

Course Organiser/Centre Administrator

- A Course Organiser/Course Administrator may be barred from dealing with the qualification in the future
- A Course Organiser/Course Administrator may be barred from dealing with all qualifications in the future
- A Course Organiser/Course Administrator may be served with warning of disciplinary action by the region and those procedures will begin

In very serious circumstances, and at the request of the Awarding Body, the Police may become involved.