		
ISSUED BY: AO Director Caroline Walton	Awarding Organisation Policies and Procedures	**ISSUE DATE:** September 2026 **REVIEW DATE:** September 2027
	Plagiarism & Cheating Policy	**ISSUE:** V7

Scope and Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to guide all parties involved in the delivery of ELS apprenticeship assessment on how to approach examples of plagiarism and cheating.
This policy provides definitions and examples of plagiarism and cheating, which may occur during apprenticeship assessment. The process for preventing, investigating and dealing with plagiarism and cheating is described. Any major suspected or alleged instances of plagiarism and cheating must be reported directly to the ELS AO Director upon discovery.
This policy should be read in conjunction with the Appeals Policy.

Aims

ELS is committed to maintaining the integrity, validity and reliability of all apprenticeship assessments. Any suspected or confirmed incidents of plagiarism or cheating will be investigated fairly, consistently and proportionately to protect the integrity of assessment outcomes and ensure all apprentices are treated equitably.

Some assessments require learners to work in the same place at the same time. This may be a group of learners sitting an online knowledge test in a computer room. Another example would be a practical observation where more than one learner is being observed on the same day at the same employer. In these particular instances, and others similar, it is important for assessors and invigilators to be aware of this policy.

Plagiarism

The definition of Plagiarism for the purpose of this policy is at Annex A. Examples of plagiarism include:

1. Extracts from another person's work without using quotation marks and/or an acknowledgement of the source.
2. Summarising the work of another or using their ideas without an acknowledgement of the source.

3. Copying or using the work of another learner (past or present) with or without that person's knowledge or agreement.
4. Purchasing essays or downloading them from the internet to submit them as your own work.

Preventing Plagiarism

ELS provides submission sheets for assessment components such as work based projects or portfolios. On these submission sheets, candidates, training providers and employers are required to sign a statement to confirm that the work being submitted is that of the Apprentice.

Learner Guidelines on Plagiarism

The following guidelines will be helpful for learners:

1. If they use someone else's exact words in their work, it must appear in quotation marks. Use of quotations should be sparing and only when they feel the author has expressed something so well and so concisely that the words cannot be improved.
2. When they have used a quote, they must provide the name of the author, the date of the work that they have referred to and the page number where they got the quotation from, all immediately after the quotation (e.g. Hill, 2004, p. 42) and provide full details of the reference in the bibliography.
3. They must provide a bibliography - a list of books, articles and any other sources they have quoted - at the end of their projects/portfolios.
4. The Harvard system for referencing sources is well-established and is to be used:
    a. When making a reference to a book the Harvard format is:
    Hill, P. (2004) Concepts of coaching: a guide for managers. ILM, London.
    b. and for a reference to an article the Harvard format is:
    Grant, A.M. (2010) It takes time: a 'stages of change' perspective on the adoption of workplace coaching skills. Journal of Change Management, 10(1), pp. 61-77.

Cheating

Cheating is an attempt to deceive ELS assessors, examiners and/or external verifiers and includes:

1. Using books, notes, instruments, computer files or other materials or aids that are not permitted.
2. Assistance or the communication of information by one candidate to another in an assessment or examination where this is not permitted.
3. Copying or reading from the work of another learner or from another learner's books, notes, instruments, computer files or other materials or aids, unless expressly permitted.
4. Offering a bribe of any kind to an invigilator, examiner or other person connected with assessment.
5. Providing or receiving information about the content of an examination before it takes place, except when allowed by the ELS

AO (e.g. case study materials issued before an examination).
6. Impersonating or trying to impersonate a learner or attempting to procure a third party to impersonate oneself.
7. Any attempt to tamper with assignment or examination scripts after learners have submitted them.
8. Fabricating or falsifying data or results by individual learners or groups of learners.

Because of the nature of cheating, it mainly applies to examinations and online tests. It should be borne in mind that cheating may involve a member of staff1 (e.g. tampering with assessment or examination scripts or results after learners have submitted them).

Preventing Cheating

Instructions provided for assessments, tests or examinations are to be complied with, especially regarding materials, which can/cannot be used in the examination and invigilation arrangements.

As an AO, we are responsible for the supervision of apprentice assessments and the provision of appropriate invigilation in accordance with regulations.
As ELS takes all incidents of cheating seriously, learners and others connected with the test or examination must be made aware of the consequences of cheating.

Plagiarism and cheating may constitute malpractice depending on the circumstances and severity of the incident. Where an investigation identifies potential malpractice or maladministration, the matter will also be managed in accordance with the ELS Malpractice and Maladministration Policy

Process

Stage 1: Reporting

This is the process for any reported cheating and plagiarism incidences.

Reporting internal or external incidences of cheating and plagiarism.

1. If an internal incident of plagiarism or cheating through ELS AO is identified, this must be reported to the relevant Delivery Manager.
2. If an ELS assessor suspects a learner has been cheating or has committed plagiarism, they will notify the ELS apprentice assessment team who will refer the incident to the relevant Delivery Manager for investigation.

Stage 2: Initial Review

An appropriate person is to be appointed by the Delivery Manager to investigate any alleged incidents of plagiarism or cheating.

The learner will be informed by the appointed person of the following:

a. They (the learner) are being investigated for cheating or plagiarism.
b. The progress of the investigation
c. Answers to any questions from the learner concerning investigation.
d. The outcome of the investigation and possible actions.
e. The learners' right to appeal – provision of the appeals policy and explanation of the appeals process.

A written report by the appointed person is to be made to the Delivery Manager within 24 hours to decide if a fuller investigation is required.

Stage 3: Investigation
If an investigation is required, the AO Director, or an appropriately authorised nominee (who has not been directly involved in the matter) will conduct or oversee the investigation.

The authorised nominee will seek additional evidence from people associated with the incident:

- Learner
- ELS invigilators
- External verifiers
- Quality Managers.

The AO Director will contact each party within **five working days** of being appointed. They will ask each party for a written statement. This will be followed by a face-to-face interview. The interview may be conducted via Microsoft Teams, if requested.

The AO Director will collect as much evidence as possible and will use the individual statements to question each party. All notes, statements and interview records will be safely and securely stored.

Stage 4: Decision and Outcome
Once the AO Director has received all the evidence (and spoken to relevant parties) they will carry out a review and make a decision based on all the evidence received. A written report explaining the outcome of the investigation will be produced.

The report will be presented to members of the AO Team, including the relevant Delivery Manager. This meeting will be attended by an independent person who has appropriate competence within the assessment process and the subject matter. It is anticipated that ELS will ratify the outcome of the review within **10 working days**.

If it has been determined based on the evidence provided that the learner has been found to be cheating or plagiarising their work, one or more of follow sanctions could occur:

a. Adjusting the marks given for the assessment, test or examination
b. Requiring the learner to re-do one or more assignments and re-submit for assessment
c. Requiring the learner to re-sit the test or examination
d. Refusing to accept further test or examination entries for that learner
e. Withholding full certification or component grading
f. Withholding certification, and withdrawing membership

If it is a proven incident that will result in the learner being withdrawn from the qualification, the AO Director must inform both the training provider and employer within three working days of the decision, giving details clearly describing the plagiarism or cheating incident and the test/examination, assignment/s or

component/s affected. ELS should also provide an assessment of the impact the plagiarism or cheating could have had on the learner/s results.

Sanctions for other incidents of plagiarism or cheating will be the responsibility of the AO Director. Sanctions could include, but are not restricted to, requiring the learner to redo an assessment and, on re-completion, awarding a minimum pass mark. See ELS AO Sanctions Policy for more details on this.

Stage 5: Appeals
The learner has a right to appeal any decisions made or sanctions issued based on the outcome of the investigation. The learner will have ten working days to appeal any decision made and must do so in writing.

All appeals received by ELS are reviewed along with their outcomes. ELS record all decisions in the ELS Appeals Log.

If it has been determined, based on the evidence provided, that the learner has not been found to be cheating or plagiarising their work, they will be able to continue with their apprenticeship assessments.

A record of all plagiarism and incidents of cheating, major or minor, and the actions taken are recorded, stored and are consistently monitored and used towards continuous improvement of this process. All records are kept for seven years.

Activity	Timescale
Initial referral	Immediately
Preliminary report	Within 24 hours
Investigation contacts	Within 5 working days
Outcome ratification	Within 10 working days
Employer/provider notification	Within 3 working days

Continuous Improvement
ELS maintains a register of all plagiarism and cheating incidents. Trends, root causes and corrective actions are reviewed quarterly to identify opportunities for improvement and reduce the likelihood of recurrence.

Where an incident identifies a potential risk to other apprentices, assessments or centres, ELS will undertake additional investigation and implement appropriate corrective actions.

Review and Version Control
ELS is committed to ensuring all policy documentation is subject to document control and reviewed annually.

RELATED DOCUMENTS: -	**APPROVED BY: -**
009AO Maladministration and Malpractice Policy 013AO Sanctions Policy	Caroline Walton, AO Director

Annex A – Definitions

Cheating
An immoral way of achieving a goal. It is generally used for the breaking of rules to gain advantage in a competitive situation. The rules infringed may be explicit, or they may be from an unwritten code of conduct based on morality, ethics or custom, making the identification of cheating a subjective process.

Major Incident
A deliberate attempt to gain an unfair advantage through plagiarism, cheating, collusion, falsification or another form of assessment misconduct.

Plagiarism
A specific form of cheating which applies to assignments completed by learners working independently. It is the substantial, unacknowledged incorporation into a learner's work of materials derived from published or unpublished work by another person.

Published work
Includes books, articles and materials found on the internet; examples of unpublished work could be a piece of work previously submitted by another learner, or work about to be submitted by another learner.

Attribution
The acknowledgement that something came from another source e.g. "The following sentence properly attributes an idea to its original author:".

Bibliography
A list of sources used in preparing a work.

Citation
- A short, formal indication of the source of information or quoted material.
- The act of quoting material or the material quoted.

Cite
- To indicate a source of information or quoted material in a short, formal note.
- To quote.
- To ascribe something to a source.

Common Knowledge
Information that is readily available from a number of sources or so well known that its sources do not have to be cited.
For example, the fact that carrots are a source of Vitamin A is common knowledge, and you could include this information in your work without attributing it to a source. However, any information regarding the effects of Vitamin A on the human body are likely to be the products of original research and would have to be cited.

Endnotes
Notes at the end of a paper acknowledging sources and providing additional references or information.

Footnotes
Notes at the bottom of a paper acknowledging sources or providing additional references or information.

Intellectual Property
A product of the intellect, such as an expressed idea or concept that has commercial value.

Original
- Not derived from anything else, new and unique
- Markedly departing from previous practice
- The first, preceding all others in time
- The source from which copies are made

Paraphrase
A restatement of a text or passage in other words.
It is extremely important to note that changing a few words from an original source does NOT qualify as paraphrasing. A paraphrase must make significant changes in the style and voice of the original while retaining the essential ideas. If you change the ideas, then you are not paraphrasing -- you are misrepresenting the ideas of the original, which could lead to serious trouble.

Acknowledgement
All third parties, i.e. regulatory bodies, associates etc. will be made aware of this policy.