Malpractice & Plagiarism

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Approved by Senior Leadership Team (SLT)

Strategy/Policy Responsibility: Senior Leadership Team (SLT)	
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MALPRACTICE POLICY

The following policy is applicable to both candidates and staff associated with accredited provision at the College.

- Any incident of student or staff malpractice will be reported to the awarding body immediately by phone or e-mail. This would then be followed by a written report within 48 hours. The College will conduct an investigation into the reported incident immediately.

- The College will inform the candidate and/or member of staff of the accusations made against them in writing or at a formal meeting within 48 hours. This communication will convey what evidence there is to support any allegations made against them and the consequences if the investigations prove the allegation. It will also provide details of how to appeal against any allegations proven.

- All meetings will be minuted.

- Confidentiality of this information will be maintained at all times. Information gathered will not be shared with third parties.

- Once information has been gathered, the College will report back to the awarding body and seek guidance on how to proceed.

- The associated awarding body would make the ultimate decision in relation to the case.

- In instances where the associated awarding body have ruled that a candidate has acted/behaved in such a way as to be categorised as malpractice, the College will then use its discretionary powers to determine the future of that candidate at the College and whether there is any possibility of them continuing to study at the centre. This process will involve consultation with the awarding body and will be informed by any 'Guidance for Training Providers' documents that they produce.

Examination Protocols

The College will work vigilantly to prevent malpractice in exams.

- The arrangement of workstations will be in accordance with the number of candidates sitting the exam during that sitting, with the invigilators desk positioned in such a way as to guarantee/facilitate detection of unauthorised activities from candidates.

- In the case of computer-based assessments, each work station will be at least 1.25 metres apart from another workstation (depending on room layout), the basis for this measurement being the nearest outer edge of one screen to the next. In any configuration of workstations, it will be guaranteed that no candidate's work can be overseen by others.

- Invigilators will have been internally trained in advance of any exam they invigilate.

- Invigilators will fully communicate all guidance notes from the awarding body's assessment protocols and the awarding body's terms and conditions on exam protocol

to all candidates before commencement of any exam to ensure all candidates are absolutely clear of expectations/requirements/regulations at the outset.

- Invigilators will guarantee that candidates do not have mobile phones or any external devices at their work stations.

- Invigilators will ensure that no unauthorised notes are brought to the candidate's work station. Coloured paper (pink and/or green) will be issued to candidates before commencement of the exam for note taking purposes. Coloured paper will facilitate detection of unauthorised material.

- All requirements stipulated by the relevant award bodies will be observed.

PLAGIARISM POLICY

1. What is plagiarism?

Plagiarism is a form of cheating. It has been described as "a practice that involves knowingly taking and using another person's work and claiming it, directly or indirectly, as your own".

This definition covers a range of degrees of seriousness and intent. In its worst case it involves conscious deception where a student knowingly copies someone else's work and attempts to pass it off as their own without acknowledging the source. Alternatively, it could be an outcome of laziness or ignorance – that a student does not yet understand that this is not acceptable practice.

There is a clear difference of intent between poor referencing of a quotation and the deliberate passing off of an entire piece of work or elements of it with the intention of obtaining a qualification unfairly. It should be noted, however, that whatever the intent, plagiarism presents a problem when it interferes with the accurate assessment of a student's ability – it subverts the purpose of assessment.

Plagiarism can also be seen as a breach of trust between lecturers and their students, and between society and its members, and as such issues relating to plagiarism are matters of citizenship, integrity, and fairness.

2. An overview

Sutton College has an obligation to assessment bodies, its students, employers and society in general to ensure that the qualifications its students receive are a fair and accurate representation of their work, and of the knowledge and skills attained. Plagiarism, and other forms of cheating, undermines the skills attained. Plagiarism, and other forms of cheating, undermines the value of qualifications for all concerned because they undermine their credibility. If a student passes an assessment, or gets a qualification, by unfair means then this is unfair to those who have achieved the same qualification fairly. For these reasons the College will take all appropriate measures to ensure that student work is in fact their own, and that plagiarism and other forms of cheating have not taken place. Where plagiarism is detected the College will view it very seriously. It will be formally investigated and appropriate action will be taken up to and including suspending the student and/or invalidating the work submitted.

3. College policy

Sutton College is committed to the detection of plagiarism and to taking appropriate measures when it is detected including:

- the implementation of electronic means of plagiarism detection where available
- the training of its staff in plagiarism prevention and detection
- informing its students of the College position on plagiarism and of the methods being used to aid detection
- engendering in its students an ethos of fairness and appropriate reward or effort expended
- the promotion of effective assessment design and assessment practice
- ensuring that students are properly instructed in what constitutes fair practice and appropriate referencing
- taking disciplinary action as appropriate where required

4. The use of plagiarism detection systems

The development of digital technologies and the Internet has both exacerbated the problems of plagiarism (copying is now extremely easy, and potential sources easily available). The College is committed to the use of appropriate technologies to support its staff in the detection of plagiarism.

As part of its approach to the detection of plagiarism the College may utilise software to detect plagiarism. This software uses an extensive databases of material from a range of sources, including the work of other students, in order to detect when the material submitted by a student has been copied from another source.

While this system is very powerful, and provides an aid to the judgement of College staff, it should not be seen as a substitute for that judgement. The responsibility for judging whether plagiarism has taken place remains with teaching staff.

By enrolling at the College students agree to the submission of their work to be scrutinised by College staff. Further they agree to the following:

- The transfer of their College course work and data relating to this work outside the EU for purposes of plagiarism detection
- The transfer of work submitted for assessment to third parties for the purpose of present and future plagiarism detection
- The processing of such work and related data for the purposes of plagiarism detection and the provision of information to the College relating to this work
- The future use and storage of this material in order to facilitate the work of the Plagiarism detection service

The above will be carried out only for the purpose of plagiarism detection, and will involve:

(i) Comparison with other works, published or unpublished, either on the internet or in some other electronic form
(ii) Comparison with works previously submitted by students for purposes of assessment and maintained on the databases of the third party supplier of plagiarism detection services
(iii) Addition of the work submitted to the above databases for purposes of future plagiarism detection

Under the Data Protection Act students have a number of rights which are described in the College Data Protection Policy. Plagiarism detection will be implemented in line with this policy, and with the provisions of the Act.

5. Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of all students and staff to ensure that student work submitted for purposes of assessment, especially purposes of summative assessment, is in fact their own work. The following details the specific responsibilities of students and various members of staff.

6. Students

It is the responsibility of students:

- To ensure that work submitted for purposes of assessment is their own
- To ensure that the words and arguments of others are appropriately cited and referenced using an accepted referencing system such as the Harvard referencing system

Students must not simply copy materials from other students, past or present, from written sources, from the Internet, or from any other source whether this is through cutting and pasting, rewriting or by any other means. Changing a few words within a copied piece of text does not render this original and still counts as plagiarism. In short, work submitted by students must be their own unless it is specifically indicated within the text through appropriate referencing that this is not the case.

7. Teaching staff/ College technical support staff

It is the responsibility of teaching staff:

- To stress to their students the unethical nature of plagiarism
- To make clear to students the College's policy on plagiarism and the consequences if they fail to comply
- To ensure that students have the knowledge and skills required to enable them to cite and reference appropriately
- To report any concerns to the line manager
- Technical support staff will ensure that appropriate technical means of plagiarism detection are effectively implemented and maintained
- Provide statistics on usage for purposes of self-evaluation and the effective management of contracts relating to plagiarism detection between the College and third party providers
- Ensure effective integration between plagiarism detection software and services and other College systems such as the Virtual Learning Environment
- Report any instances where the suspect plagiarism has taken place or is likely to arise

In all cases Sutton College will act to protect the integrity of the assessment process and will take action to report concerns to the relevant award bodies as required.

8. Springboard Department Policy

- Malpractice may involve any or all of the following: candidates, centre staff, awarding organisation staff, for example:
- Candidate malpractice could be plagiarism of any kind; collusion or copying of another candidate's work; assuming the identity of another person for the purposes of assessment; providing false information in relation to exemption from assessment.
- Centre staff malpractice could be contravention of, or continued failure to meet centre approval, or any Awarding Bodies administration or quality assurance requirements; providing improper assistance to candidates in the production of work for assessment; allowing evidence which is known by the staff member not to be the candidate's own to be included; or making claims for certification prior to the candidate completing all the requirements of the assessment
- Sutton College and where appropriate Awarding organisation malpractice could be the failure of an Awarding body auditor or Assessor, internal verifier, external moderator to fully undertake their role in line with quality assurance requirements. In suspected cases involving an Awarding Body External Moderator or other member of Sutton College and or Awarding Body staff, the Awarding Body and or Sutton College will conduct an investigation appropriate to the nature of the allegation
- Sanctions will be implemented with the discretion of Sutton College and where appropriate the Awarding Body. Where there is an Awarding body Sutton College will liaise closely and follow the Awarding bodies' policy. This may mean there will be disciplinary action and or disqualification.

- **You are not allowed to:**
- Copy work and say it is your own
- The work you do must be your own
- If you copy a picture or writing from a book or the internet, you must write or copy the link to say where you found it.
- Your tutor or support person is not allowed to pass work that is not your own.
- You will be told if you may have done something wrong and have everything explained in a way that you understand to include braille, symbols, signing , or you can choose how we can help you to understand
- You have the right to appeal:
- If you think that it is wrong you can talk to Sutton College/Awarding body to tell us why
- Sutton College and or the Awarding Body will look at what you have told us so that we can tell you what we are going to do.
- We will write a report
- We will maintain confidentiality
- We will share only relevant information with other professional bodies