Plagiarism Policy

In all assessed work, learners should take care to ensure that the work presented is their own and that they fully acknowledge the work and opinions of others. It is also the responsibility of the learners to ensure that they do not undertake any form of cheating or any other form of unfair advantage (referred to in this document as 'academic irregularities').

This policy and the subsequent procedures contained within it applies to all submissions and assessments carried out whilst studying with Riverside Training. Where Awarding Organisations have their own published procedures, these will take precedent over the Riverside Training plagiarism policy.

All staff have a responsibility to give full and active support to this policy by ensuring that it is known, understood and implemented. The aim of this policy is to provide a guide for our learners on what will be expected of them when submitting any form of assessment and to provide our staff with a process to follow in the event of an academic irregularity being identified.

What constitutes an Academic Irregularity?

If a learner submits any evidence or piece of work that contains work that is not their own, without indicating this to the Learning & Development Coach (LDC) by acknowledging its sources within the text of a submitted written document, they are committing 'plagiarism' and this is an offence. This might occur in a submission when:

- Using a choice phrase or sentence that they have come across. 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 its sources
- Copying from the notes or submissions of fellow learners
- Copying from their own notes, on a text, tutorial, video or workshop, that contain direct quotations

Although learners are encouraged to show the results of their research by referring to and quoting from works within the subject area, copying from such sources without acknowledgement is deemed to be plagiarism and will not be accepted by Riverside Training. This means that the learner must make it clear which words and ideas are theirs and which have come from elsewhere, using quotation marks as well as in-text citations, where necessary.

The temptation to plagiarise may arise from a lack of self-confidence or from a lack of understanding about the aims of their assessment and about what is required of them. Assessment plans provide a vehicle for assessing a learner's performance during their units and contribute to their overall framework result. However, they also assist learners in understanding their subject and aid their learning during the unit. Learners should be encouraged to collaborate with their employer when studying, but submitted work copied from or written jointly with others will not be acceptable.

There are different forms of "academic irregularities", all of which may be the subject of the procedures described later within this policy. However, it is not possible to state categorically that, in all cases, every perceived academic irregularity will be proved once that matter is investigated. Each case will have to be considered on its merits and based on the strength of evidence provided.

Definitions and Examples

This policy provides definitions and examples of possible academic irregularities which may occur in connection with our registered assessment locations, working practices and/or our learners. The process for preventing, investigating and dealing with these academic irregularities is also described later in this policy. Any major suspected or alleged instances of academic irregularities must be reported to the Quality Team. Detailed below are recognised definitions of a number of academic irregularities:

Plagiarism is a specific form of cheating which applies to submissions completed by learners 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 while examples of unpublished work could be a piece of work previously submitted by another learner, or work about to be submitted by another learner.

Examples of plagiarism include:

- Extracts from another person's work without using quotation marks and/or an acknowledgement of the source
- Summarising the work of another or using their ideas without an acknowledgement of the source
- Copying or using the work of another learner (past or present) with or without that person's knowledge or agreement
- Purchasing essays or downloading them from the internet to submit them as the learner's own work
- The inclusion in a learner's work of more than a single phrase from another person's work without the use of quotation marks and acknowledgement of the sources
- The summarising of another person's work by simply changing a few words or altering the order of presentation, without acknowledgement
- The substantial and unauthorised use of the ideas of another person without acknowledgement of the source

Guidance for Learners

It must be explained to our learners during the 'Sign Up/Induction' process what plagiarism is, how Riverside Training deals with it, and how the learner should acknowledge someone else's work. Plagiarism can result in a learner being withdrawn from a qualification. The act of submitting any piece of work for assessment, either on-line or paper based, will act as that learner's confirmation of the authenticity of his/her work.

The following guidelines will be helpful for our learners:

- If they use someone else's exact words in your work, they must be in quotation marks. Use quotations sparingly and only when they feel the author has expressed something so well and so concisely that the words cannot be improved
- When they have used a quote, they must provide the name of the author, the date of their work that they have referred to and the page number where they obtained the quotation from immediately after the quotation (e.g. Hill, 2004, p. 42) and provide full details of the reference in a bibliography
- They must provide a bibliography; a list of books, articles and any other sources that they have quoted at the end of their assessments or as part of their submission
- The Harvard system for referencing sources is well-established and our learners will be able to find guidance on how to use it on the internet

Cheating

Cheating is an attempt to deceive Riverside Training LDCs and invigilators and includes:

- Using books, notes, instruments, computer files or other materials or aids that are not permitted. Assistance or the communication of information by one learner to another in an assessment where this is not permitted
- Copying or reading from the work of another learner or from another learner's books, notes, computer files or other materials or aids, unless expressly permitted
- Offering a bribe of any kind to an invigilator or another person connected with an assessment
- Providing or receiving information about the content of an assessment before it takes place, except when allowed by the awarding organisation (e.g. case study materials issued before an examination)
- Impersonating or trying to impersonate a learner, or attempting to procure a third party to impersonate oneself
- Any attempt to tamper with an assignment or examination scripts after they have been submitted by learners
- Fabricating or falsifying data or results by individual learners or groups of learners

- Communicating with or copying from any other learners during an assessment except insofar as the examination regulations may specifically permit this e.g. group assessments i.e. functional skills (FS) English speaking and listening
- Communicating during an assessment with any person other than a properly authorised invigilator or another authorised member of the Riverside Training staff
- Introducing any written or printed materials into the assessment room, unless expressly permitted by the assessment guidelines
- Introducing any electronically stored information into an assessment room, unless expressly permitted by the assessment guidelines

Because of the nature of cheating, this mainly applies to assessments and online tests. Riverside Training should bear in mind that cheating may involve a member of staff (e.g. tampering with assessment scripts or results after learners have submitted them).

Preventing Cheating

It is important that Riverside Training check the instructions that an Awarding Organisation provides for assessments, tests or examinations and complies with them, especially regarding materials which can and cannot be used in the examination and invigilation arrangements.

As an exam centre, Riverside Training is responsible for the supervision of assessments and the provision of appropriate invigilation in accordance with any disseminated regulations.

Collusion

Collusion exists where a learner:

- Submits as entirely his/her own, with intention to gain unfair advantage, work done in collaboration with another person
- Collaborates with another learner in the completion of work which is intended to be submitted as that other learner's own unaided work
- Knowingly permits another learner to copy all or part of his/her own work and to submit it as that learner's own unaided work

Artificial Intelligence (AI)

The use of AI tools and technologies to obtain information and content which could be used in work produced for assessments and learners EPA evidence is a not accepted by Riverside Training. This may involve the application of AI-powered algorithms, machine learning models, and data-driven processes to gather, analyse and generate relevant data insights or assessment content that can enhance the quality and effectiveness of work produced by learners.

Riverside Training considers the inappropriate use of AI software for the completion of an assignment as collusion. Therefore, the misuse of AI tools in relation to qualification assessments at any time is not acceptable.

Examples of AI misuse include, but are not limited to the following:

- Copying or paraphrasing sections of AI-generated content
- Copying or paraphrasing whole responses of AI-generated content and submitting it as their own work
- Failing to acknowledge/reference the use of AI tools when they have been used as a source of information
- Submitting work with intentionally incomplete or misleading references or bibliographies

Personation

"Personation" is the legal term of what is usually referred to by the lay person as "impersonation". Personation is therefore the assumption by one person of the identity of another person with intent to deceive or to gain unfair advantage.

It may exist where:

- One person assumes the identity of a learner, with the intention of gaining an unfair advantage for that candidate
- The candidate is knowingly and willingly impersonated by another with the intention of gaining unfair advantage for himself/herself

Ghosting

Ghosting exists where:

- A learner submits as their own, work which has been produced in whole or part by another person on their behalf e.g. the use of a ghost writing service;

- A learner seeks to make financial gain or other material gain by using work, which they have written or produced, available to another student.

Dishonest Practice

The use of any other form of dishonest practice not identified by the above definitions.

Actions to Implement and Develop this Policy

An allegation of any form of academic irregularity is not the same as proof of the incident. The determination of whether any form of academic irregularity has occurred should be resolved by the Riverside Training Quality Team and reported at the earliest opportunity via the Internal Quality Assurers (IQAs).

It is for the Quality Team to judge the seriousness of the case and to exercise discretion accordingly, having regard to any Riverside Training precedents, where appropriate.

Procedures used to deal with the above

Where an allegation has been made of an actual act of any of the above academic irregularities, then the following procedures are to be followed:

Initial Procedure for On Programme Assessments

When an academic irregularity is suspected, the member(s) of Riverside Training LDC staff concerned should first discuss the matter informally with the learner(s) concerned and the IQA and give the learner the opportunity to present his/her case.

If the learner(s) concerned admits to the academic irregularity, then the member(s) of Riverside Training staff concerned shall report the matter and the outcome to the Quality Team within two working days, to determine the action to be taken, in accordance with the procedure detailed below.

In cases where the learner admits misconduct the learner should be required to sign a letter to that effect. The learner should also be given the opportunity to declare academic misconduct in any other work that they have previously submitted for assessment.

If this informal meeting does not resolve the matter, the Riverside Training member(s) of staff concerned should then, within three days or as soon as reasonably practicable following the discovery or allegation, report the matter in writing to the Quality Team via their IQA. The report should contain full details about the circumstances surrounding the alleged irregularity including, if appropriate, photocopies of the learner's work.

An allegation may be made after the work has been marked and returned to the learner.

Initial Procedure for Online and/or Paper Based Assessments

Where an academic irregularity is suspected during an assessment, the Invigilator concerned will inform the Examination Officer, and in the presence of that colleague will inform the learner of his/her suspicions and clearly annotate the learner's piece of work. The learner will also be advised by the Invigilators that a full report will be submitted following the assessment.

The Invigilators will seek to confiscate any relevant evidence (for example, any unauthorised material) and allow the learner to continue with the assessment. However, if the learner persists with the irregularity he/she will be expelled from the Testing Room. The learner will also be expelled from the Testing Room if he/she refuses to submit any suspected material to the Invigilators.

Immediately following the assessment, the Invigilator will submit a full report of the matter using the Invigilator Report Form. This form will be returned to the Examinations Officer along with the scripts and other examination stationery. The Examinations Officer will then ensure that the report is immediately sent to the Quality Team to determine the action to be taken in accordance with the paragraphs below. The Invigilator's Report should be accompanied by any relevant evidence.

If a learner considers other learner(s) to be gaining unfair advantage during an assessment, it is the responsibility of the learner to bring this to the attention of the Invigilator. However, no action can be taken unless the infringement of rules on behalf of the learner(s) is subsequently verified by the Invigilator.

Action by the Quality Team

Where an allegation of an academic irregularity has been made in accordance with the paragraphs detailed above and not resolved, the matter will be investigated as soon as reasonably practicable following the discovery or allegation of the irregularity by the Quality Team.

The Examinations Officer should notify the members of the Panel, and the learner(s) concerned, within three working days* of the receipt of the report, of the date, time and place of the meeting of the Panel.

*Note: If an alleged irregularity comes to light during a set of assessments, and the learner still has some assessments to sit, this timescale shall be extended to three working days after the end of that particular set of assessments i.e. Technical Certificates (Tech Certs).

The learner(s) should be provided, by the Quality Team, with full details of the alleged irregularity and informed of his/her right to appear before the Quality Team, accompanied by a friend or representative of his/her choice and to submit a written statement of mitigation concerning the alleged irregularity. Failure by the learner(s) to appear before the Quality Team or to submit a statement will not prevent the investigation proceeding.

The Quality Team may call witnesses, as appropriate i.e. the Invigilating Officer, to substantiate the allegations, and will not unreasonably refuse permission for the staff or learner(s) concerned to call such witnesses as they deem appropriate.

The Quality Team will interview the learner(s), Riverside Training staff and witnesses as appropriate to consider the learner's written statement and come to a decision on the basis of the learner's statement and the supporting evidence. The learner will wait outside the room while the Quality Team deliberates.

The order of proceedings will be as follows:

- Consider the statement of the case against the learner(s) and production of evidence in support of it
- Evidence may be received by the Quality Team by oral statement and/or by a written and signed statement
- Each member of the Quality Team has equal status except that, in the event of a disagreement about the decision, the decision shall be made by a majority of those present
- If the learner(s) has attended, he/she will be informed of the Quality Team decision at the conclusion of the meeting. The Quality Team will report the outcome in writing to the student within two working days of the Quality Team decision. The learner(s) has no right of appeal at this stage
- All records of academic irregularity must be recorded in the minutes of the Quality Team meeting

All Submissions - Statement of Confirmation of Authenticity

By the act of making a submission of any piece of work for assessment, whether it be paper based or through the e-portfolio software, the learner will be certifying, because of the submission that it is the work of that learner. The work has not, in whole or in part, been knowingly presented elsewhere for assessment, or where assessment has been built on a previous assessment, this has been identified. Where materials have been used from other sources it has been properly acknowledged. If this statement is untrue, the learner acknowledges that an assessment offence has been committed.

The Learner's attention is to be drawn to the plagiarism and cheating policies of both Riverside Training and of the Awarding Organisations and made aware that, potentially, plagiarism may result in a learner being withdrawn from a qualification.

Monitoring, Evaluation & Continuous Improvement

The Quality Team will review the outcomes of all incidents of academic irregularities to identify where improvements to Riverside Training processes and procedures can be made and where training and development opportunities arise as a result. Where any failures in the assessment process are uncovered, the Quality Team will be responsible for investigating whether other remote locations and/or learners could be affected and any remedial actions required. This review is to take place quarterly and will help to ensure that our qualifications and programmes are accessible to all whilst maintaining quality through its implementation.

Riverside Training aims to continually improve its business processes and our responses to our customers in the light of learning from the feedback we receive from across the business.

Riverside Training take all incidents of academic irregularities seriously, especially those incidents which are a determined and deliberate attempt by the learner to gain marks for an assessment without having done a substantial portion of the work themselves.

Monitoring & Review

This policy is reviewed annually

Current Review Date	July 2026
Next Review Date	July 2027

Plagiarism Policy