

## METAC Plagiarism & Cheating Policy

METAC are committed to good academic standards, and we have effective policies and procedures in place to prevent, detect, combat, and deter plagiarism and cheating. This policy refers to cheating or plagiarism in relation to exams and to submission of assessment material.

METAC will not tolerate cheating or plagiarism. Any Learner found doing so may be expelled from the course. Cheating includes bringing unauthorised material into an examination, communicating with other Learners during an exam, or seeking to gain an unfair advantage in any other way.

Plagiarism is presenting somebody else's work as your own. It includes copying information directly from the Web or books without referencing the material; working with one or more and/or other people on an individual piece of coursework and submitting the joint coursework as your own individual effort; copying another Learner's coursework; or paying someone else to do the work for you.

Cheating and Plagiarism can be discovered or suspected in the following ways:

- 1) Observation of copying during an exam from instructor.
- 2) Observation of Learners using notes during the exam.
- 3) On correction where Learners have very similar answers on a number of exam questions or where an answer is entered related to a different version/suite of the exam.
- 4) Comparing two papers where a copying incident is suspected.

### Procedure in relation to breach of exam discipline/cheating & plagiarism:

If during an exam the Invigilating/Trainer/Assessor observes that a Learner is looking at another person's work or has unauthorised notes/materials or is breaching the exam guidelines in any other way they will:

- Remove any authorised materials such as notes etc from the desk of the Learner.
- Make a note on the Learner exam cover sheet regarding the infringement. If copying from another candidate is suspected, their paper will also be noted.
- The Invigilating/Trainer/Assessor will remind all candidates again of the rules regarding exam policy.
- Learner's undertaking Assessment will be asked to move tables after the next break.
- The Invigilating/Trainer/Assessor will notify the Quality Manager of the assessment violation or cheating incident.

If copying was not directly observed by the Invigilating/Trainer/Assessor during the assessment but is clear when assessments are being corrected that two sets of assessments are very similar, then the following steps are taken.

All assessment material from both Learners is scrutinised closely to see if any patterns emerge such as similarity in marks when both were sitting near each other but not when apart and discrepancy between written assessments and practical assessment.

For a project-based assessment which has been completed at home, instances of similarity to another person's work are closely examined.

ScanMyEssay/Viper or other IT scanning support systems are used on all modules to identify plagiarism in written assignments. Additionally, Learners are asked to sign a declaration on the Front Cover for Portfolio of Assessment (Appx 31) stating that all work included is their own.

In the instance of a suspected case of plagiarism a report will be made to the Quality Manager.

In the first instance it is recommended that the Learner would be invited to be informally orally interviewed by the Quality Manager and the Trainer/Assessor on the content of the coursework within 10 working days after submission of work. The aim of the interview is to determine whether the allegation is founded or unfounded.

If the Learner admits to plagiarism at this stage of the process, they will be given the opportunity to re-submit a new portfolio of work, but the maximum grade that can be achieved is a pass (50% - 64%).

If plagiarism cannot be confirmed during the oral interview process, no further action will be taken. However, if plagiarism is still suspected the Learner will be notified that there is an investigation.

If plagiarism is confirmed via ScanMyEssay/Viper or other IT scanning support systems, the Learner will be penalised.

The Learner will be informed of the findings and penalty accordingly within 5 working days of the interview or the scanning process.

Penalties include exclusion from the QQI submission process, and a lifetime ban on completing any other courses with METAC.