



Academic Malpractice

Policy and Procedures



Introduction

This policy provides guidance to students on Academic Malpractice. The aim is to maintain the integrity of the qualifications and the procedures that underpin those qualifications. The policy applies to all examinations and assessments conducted by CLTI.

All allegations of malpractice in relation to examinations and assessments will be investigated in order to protect the integrity of the qualification and to be fair to all candidates.

Candidates, as members of STEP, are expected to abide by the STEP Code of Professional Conduct which highlights the principal professional standards that a STEP member is expected to uphold. STEP considers academic malpractice a serious breach of the Code and reserves the right to investigate any breach of the Code under section 3, Integrity. Any breach of the Code may lead to disciplinary action.

Academic malpractice can result from a deliberate act of cheating, but may be committed unintentionally, for example, through failure to cite materials adequately. Whether intended or not, all incidents of academic malpractice will be treated seriously by CLTI.

1. Types of academic malpractice

Academic malpractice is any activity – intentional or otherwise - that is likely to undermine the integrity essential to the qualifications offered by CLTI. It includes:

- Examination offences
- Plagiarism
- Collusion
- Fabrication or falsification of results
- Self-plagiarism (use of a previous examination answer without reference)

1.1 Examination offences

Conduct which breaches examination protocol (see the online learning platform for the protocol relating to the programme that you are studying) and/or which is likely to affect the security of examinations and/or which is likely to give an unfair advantage to the candidate in examinations or assessments, whether in written, oral, practical or coursework form, shall be dealt with in accordance with the procedures described in Section 2 below.

Examination offences include, but are not restricted to:

- a) Use of any materials other than those permitted for the examination;
- b) Writing the answer or using a calculator during the reading time, if applicable;
- c) Any attempt to confer with or gain access to the script of any other candidate during the period of the examination; or to collaborate in or gain access to the assessed coursework of any other candidate, unless authorised to do so;
- d) Any attempt to tamper with examination scripts or coursework after they have been submitted by candidates;

- e) Impersonation or attempted impersonation of a candidate, including aiding and abetting someone to do so; both the candidate who is impersonated and the impersonator are liable to be punished;
- f) Contract cheating including the purchase of essays and other material from other sources;
- g) Removal of the examination paper from the examination (or examination room if applicable) except by a person of designated authority to do so;

1.2 Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the presentation, intentionally or unwittingly, of the ideas, work or words of another without proper, clear and unambiguous acknowledgement and therefore as your own work. Examples of plagiarism include:

- Quoting another's work 'word for word' without placing the phrase(s), sentence(s) or paragraph(s) in quotation marks and providing a clear citation and reference (This includes work from the course manual).
- Summarising or paraphrasing the work or ideas of another without citing and referencing the original source. Please note: Summarising/paraphrasing is putting across the source's ideas in your own words; restating the ideas in your own way.
- Using statistics, tables, figures, formulae, diagrams, questionnaires, images etc. created by others without citing and referencing the original source.
- Copying the work of another student, with or without their consent.
- Buying or commissioning a piece of work and presenting it as your own.

1.3 Collusion

Collusion is when a candidate or candidates collaborate with another candidate or candidates, as an individual or group to gain a mark or grade to which they are not entitled. Candidates who allow another candidate to copy their work are also committing collusion and both the copier and the provider of the work are liable to be penalised.

1.4 Fabrication or falsification of data or results

Fabrication or falsification of data or results by individual candidates or groups of candidates is the presentation or inclusion in a piece of work of figures or data, which have been made up or altered and have no basis in verifiable sources; potentially, this may involve other instances of academic malpractice.

1.5 Self-plagiarism

You should also be aware that self-plagiarism (i.e. use of content you have submitted for another examination previously, whether with CLTI or elsewhere) is strictly prohibited.

2. Procedure for dealing with an offence

Where a candidate is alleged to have committed an offence CLTI shall appoint an internal investigating officer who shall be responsible for investigating the incident.

Where the investigating officer deems on the evidence presented that the offence is of a minor or technical nature they, after consultation with the Chairman of the Examination

Board, may decide that the matter can be dealt with by the Examination Board in whatever way is considered appropriate. This can include the decision that no further action will be taken. A report of the decision shall be kept and the matter shall, thereafter, be regarded as closed.

Where the investigating officer has determined that there is prima facie a case to answer, they shall complete a written report, which along with a copy of this policy, shall then be sent to the candidate. The candidate must reply to the investigating officer within 10 working days from the date on the report.

A review panel will then be established. Where a candidate admits a cheating offence they shall be invited to submit a statement of mitigation to the Review Panel. If the candidate fails to submit this within 10 working days, the investigating officer shall send a warning letter. If, following another 10 working days, no answer is still forthcoming, CLT International shall, by default, proceed to the establishment of a Review Panel.

Although candidates are entitled to present evidence of mitigating circumstances, it must always be borne in mind that candidates are encouraged to bring such circumstances to the attention of CLTI at the earliest possible opportunity. This will enable CLTI to consider offering appropriate help in accordance with the Mitigating Circumstances Policy.

3. Establishment of a Review Panel

A Review Panel comprising a manager of the professional development team or Professional Development Committee at STEP, a programme manager at CLT International and a member of the Examination Board shall be established to consider the evidence and to agree on an appropriate outcome according to Appendix 1.

The Panel is obliged, when determining the penalty to be imposed as a consequence of academic malpractice, to take account of 'the consequences which the penalty will have for the academic progression of the candidate concerned'.

Each case is different and the Review Panel is expected to use its judgment in deciding the seriousness of an offence and whether there are circumstances that might affect the severity of the penalty. The Panel must attempt to ensure consistency of treatment between cases, making and recording a judgment about what is a proportionate penalty. Panels must ensure that the penalty chosen does not have disproportionate consequences for academic progression.

Factors that the Panel must take into account when determining the penalty and its proportionality include the following:

- The proportion of the piece of work that was subject to malpractice (the higher the proportion, the more serious the offence)
- The credit rating of the piece of work (the higher the rating, the more serious the offence)
- The candidate's previous history (a subsequent offence, occurring after a candidate has already received a warning or a penalty for academic malpractice, is more serious than a first offence)

- The degree of intention to deceive in the piece of work in question (which might be assessed by, for example, efforts to change wording, poor referencing or lack of referencing of plagiarised material, evidence from earlier drafts), and also in response to the allegations.

The investigating officer shall communicate the decision of the Review Panel, including where the decision is that no offence has been committed, in writing to the candidate within five working days following the decision of the Panel.

4. Appeal against the decision of the Review Panel

If the candidate wishes to appeal against the decision of the Review Panel, they must write to the investigating officer within five working days of receiving the decision of the Review Panel, stating that they wish to appeal and giving the grounds for the appeal. An appeal against the Review Panel's decision shall be allowed on the grounds listed below and, if the appeal is allowed, an Appeals Panel will be convened to consider the appeal.

An appeal may be allowed on the following grounds:

- a) Administrative error;
- b) Where there is new evidence of extenuating circumstances which was not available to the Review Panel or Examination Board at the time it made its decision;
- c) Where there is evidence that the Review Panel or Examination Board acted unfairly or where it was thought to have imposed too harsh an outcome.

A programme manager at CLT International in conjunction with a manager of the professional development team or Professional Development Committee at STEP (neither of whom should have sat on the Review Panel) will decide whether an appeal is justified based on the grounds given above. If an appeal is justified, an Appeals Panel will be convened. The Appeals Panel will have the power to confirm, reverse or modify the original decision, including the application of further and more severe outcomes in accordance with Appendix 1.

An Appeals Panel shall be convened for the purpose of hearing the appeal as early as possible after the receipt of notification of the intention to appeal and the candidate notified in writing of the relevant date and time of the hearing.

A copy of each document which will be presented to the Appeals Panel shall be sent to the candidate. The documents and notice shall be shared no fewer than five working days before the date set for the hearing.

Candidates who are unable to attend in person are offered the opportunity to have the Appeal Panel conducted via video or teleconferencing facilities (or equivalent).

5. Establishment of an Appeals Panel

The Appeals Panel shall be constituted as follows:

- a) Senior Manager of Professional Development, the Director of Profession at STEP
- b) The Managing Director at CLT International (Chair)

- c) Chair of the Examination Board (or if the Chair is the Managing Director at CLT International, another member of the Examination Board)

Candidates may, if they wish, be accompanied a representative from their employer. The person accompanying the candidate may speak in support of the candidate if the latter so desires.

6. Appeals Panel procedure

- I. The candidate shall have the right to be present at all proceedings of the Appeals Panel excluding paragraph IX below.
- II. Proceedings of the Appeals Panel shall not be invalidated by reason of the absence from the meeting of the Panel of the candidate provided correct notification has been sent to the candidate (section on Establishment of an Appeals Panel above).
- III. All members of the Panel shall introduce themselves. The particulars of the allegation will be read to the candidate and ask they will be asked to confirm the decision made by the Review Panel irrespective of whether the allegation has been admitted to or not.
- IV. If, at this stage, the candidate decides to admit to an offence that they had previously not admitted, the Panel has the authority to consider which outcome(s) to impose immediately so long as the Chair of the Examination Board and the candidate are in agreement that this should occur.
- V. In all other cases, each side, first the Chair of the Examination Board and then the candidate shall present the documentary material and call witnesses who may be examined.
- VI. The candidate shall have the right to examine any documents, reports or written statements that have been used in the case as the Appeals Panel has the right to examine any written reports or documents introduced by the candidate.
- VII. If the candidate wishes, they may give evidence, and may thereupon be questioned by the members of the Appeals Panel.
- VIII. Before the Panel considers its findings, the Chair of the Examination Board and then the candidate shall have the opportunity to make any closing arguments.
- IX. The Panel shall consider its findings in private and shall if possible reach its findings without adjournment.

7. Decision of the Appeals Panel

An Appeals Panel shall have the power to confirm, reverse or modify the original decision in any way, including the application of further and more severe outcomes (listed in Appendix 1).

The decision of the Appeals Panel shall be reached by a majority vote but shall be announced as the decision of the Appeals Panel. In cases of a split vote, the Chair shall have the casting vote. The votes of individual Panel members shall always be treated as confidential.

There is no right of appeal against the decision of the Appeal Panel.

8. Outcome of an offence

In deciding upon the outcome of an offence, the Review Panel or Appeals Panel shall refer to Appendix 1. For all outcomes except 'a.' ('that the allegation is not proven and that no further action is required'), a note must be entered on the candidate's record.

Findings and outcomes of the Appeals Panel, including where the decision is that no offence has been committed, shall be sent to the candidate and any other persons in the case as soon as possible after the review or hearing, at most no more than five working days. The outcome may also be referred to the disciplinary panel at STEP, depending on the severity of the offence.

9. Plagiarism

If plagiarism is suspected in an assignment, the work should continue to be marked or assessed to gather evidence of the extent of the alleged malpractice. The formal examination process should then be suspended and the result withheld pending an investigation. The investigation officer should submit a brief report, identifying the possible malpractice, to the internal assessment board, who will undertake an investigation as described in sections 2 to 8 above.

Unless there are very good reasons, there is no expectation that, on the finding of plagiarism in a piece of assessed work, previous work will be routinely checked. The option remains to review all of the candidate's assessed work if the investigating officer determines, through consultation, that it is appropriate to do so.

If the investigating officer judges that the case does **not** constitute academic malpractice but rather poor academic practice, the matter will be referred back to the Programme Delivery Manager responsible for the piece of work/programme in question, with appropriate advice as to how to proceed [e.g. advice may include – poor referencing = poor piece of work, mark accordingly, etc.]. In such instances, it is essential that the candidate is given appropriate feedback and guidance.

Appendix 1

Outcomes for cases of academic malpractice

In considering allegations of academic malpractice, the Review Panel can decide as follows.

- a. That the allegation is not proven and that no further action is required; or
- b. That the offence is a minor one and should be referred to the relevant Examination Board; or
- c. That the allegation is proven and that one of the following penalties shall be applied:
 - i. That the candidate is to be formally reprimanded but that no further action is required; (Warning only)
 - ii. That candidate will be formally reprimanded and that the mark obtained in the assessment(s) concerned to be set at the lower grade boundary. E.g. A mark of 72 (distinction) will be reduced to a merit.

- iii. That the candidate is to be formally reprimanded and that the mark obtained in the assessment(s) concerned is to be set at zero. Where the candidate is eligible to retake the assessment(s), they shall be required to retake the assessment(s) at the next available opportunity in the calendar year, but the mark recorded will be 'capped' at the pass-mark;
- iv. That the candidate is to be formally reprimanded, that zero is to be recorded for the performance of the candidate in all the written examinations and other assessments they sat in the calendar year the offence occurred and that the candidate not be permitted to retake the assessment in the following 12 months; and
 - a) That the candidate, where eligible, should retake the assessments at the next available opportunity but the mark recorded will be 'capped' at the pass-mark; or
 - b) That the candidate is not to be permitted to re-enter for any assessments before the expiry of a stated period, not exceeding two years and the mark recorded will be 'capped' at the pass-mark; or
 - c) That the candidate is to be permitted to re-enter for those assessments on the next available opportunity but the mark recorded will be 'capped' at the pass-mark, but that no qualification is to be awarded to the candidate before the expiry of a stated period, not exceeding two years, following satisfactory completion of the conditions for the award;
- v. That the candidate is to be formally reprimanded, that zero is to be recorded for the performance of the candidate in all the written examinations and other assessments they sat in the calendar year the offence occurred and s/he is to be excluded any future assessments administered under CLT International/STEP's jurisdiction.

Version control	
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