Plagiarism, Malpractice and Maladministration Policy

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Introduction

This guidance is written for the staff and learners of MERCURI INTERNATIONAL (UK) LTD who have responsibility for completing, supervising and/or marking learners' portfolio work.

If work is to remain as a viable assessment method it is the duty of all who are preparing and assessing learners, as well as those who have an interest in the setting, marking and administration of this work, to do whatever they can to ensure the integrity of the components is upheld.

Defining Plagiarism

There are many definitions of plagiarism, but they all have in common the idea of taking someone else's intellectual effort and presenting it as one's own. It is the failure to acknowledge sources properly and/or the submission of another person's work.

It should be noted that plagiarism does not include collusion, by working collaboratively with other learners; neither does it include copying from another learner in the same examination session. Both are defined as different forms of malpractice.

Preventing Plagiarism

All Learning & Development Coaches and Trainers entering learners for a course with MERCURI INTERNATIONAL (UK) LTD, must accept the obligation to authenticate the work which is submitted for assessment. They must confirm that the work produced is solely that of the learner concerned and must not accept work which is not the learner's own.

Within MERCURI INTERNATIONAL (UK) LTD's E-Portfolio system (BUD), learners will be asked to confirm after each assessed piece of work, to confirm this was their work and have not been plagiarised.

Any quotation from the published or unpublished works of other person's must therefore be clearly identified as such by being placed inside quotation marks, and learners should identify their sources as accurately and fully as possible. Equally, if a learner summarises another person's ideas, judgements, figures, software or diagrams, a reference to that person in the text must be made and the work referred to must be included in the bibliography. Use of unacknowledged information downloaded from the internet also constitutes plagiarism.

MERCURI INTERNATIONAL (UK) LTD accept that learners may not know all the answers to every question within their individual programmes of learning and the expectation is that most learners will want to research the topics and issues being discussed during assessment visits. However, they must present their answers or projects with accurate referencing, footnotes and a bibliography to show how and where their research has influenced the final piece of work. They should also be able to present their work in context to their own job role and working environment showing that they have understood the research element and can apply this to their own experiences.

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Guidance on Referencing

- A reference in the text, or as a footnote, should show at least the name of the author, the year of publication and the page number, for example: (Morrison, 2000, pg.29.)
- Learners must also include a bibliography at the end of their work, which lists details of publications that have been used to research their project
- For material taken from web pages, the reference must show the precise web page, not the search engine used to locate it.

Reporting Plagiarism

If suspicions are confirmed and the tutor/assessor believes the learner has submitted work that is not their own, they should firstly attempt to locate the original source document. This can be done using an internet search engine such as Google, Bing or Yahoo. Searching for all or a proportion of the submitted content in a search engine may show the original source material for the learner's work, proving that it is not their own.

The Learning & Development Coaches or Trainer should then decide if the learner has attempted to present the work as their own. It does not matter if the learner intended to plagiarise or not; in the eyes of the law, and most publishers and academic institutions, any form of plagiarism is an offence that demands punitive action. If confident the evidence submitted is not their own work the Learning & Development Coaches or Trainer should not assess this into the portfolio and remind them of the implications of their actions. Incidents of plagiarism must be reported to the Internal Quality Assurer who will agree further action with MERCURI INTERNATIONAL (UK) LTD's Quality Assurance Manager.

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Malpractice and Maladministration

Introduction

MERCURI INTERNATIONAL (UK) LTD treats all cases of suspected malpractice and maladministration very seriously and will investigate all suspected and reported incidents of possible malpractice. The purpose of this policy is to set out how allegations of malpractice in relation to all accredited qualifications are dealt with.

Defining Malpractice and Maladministration

Malpractice may be defined as deliberate wrongdoing or misconduct. Maladministration may be defined as inefficient, bad or dishonest management or administration. This may or may not be deliberate and the two can overlap. The following list is not exhaustive but is intended to give examples of malpractice/maladministration within the context of training, assessment and certification.

Learners:
- falsifying records
- pretending to be someone else
- failing to disclose a medical condition which might jeopardise the safety of themselves or other people
- cheating during assessment/examination
- unauthorised collusion with others
- false identity

Provider:
- giving deliberately misleading information
- failing to carry out assessments as required for the qualification concerned
- breach of confidentiality of assessment materials (including loss or theft)
- copying test papers without authorisation
- making changes to materials, including test questions without prior approval from the Awarding Organisation
- failing to carry out adequate internal quality assurance procedures
- submitting false claims for certificates
- failing to co-operate with anyone carrying out quality assurance checks
- misusing the MERCURI INTERNATIONAL (UK) LTD logo or MERCURI INTERNATIONAL (UK) LTD materials or that of any Awarding Organisation
- failing to act in accordance with the conditions of approval as a tutor, assessor, invigilator or provider

Preventing Malpractice and Maladministration

Potential for malpractice and maladministration is considered as part of the development, delivery design and the award of the qualification as far as is reasonably possible.

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Learning & Development Coaches and Trainers play an important part in identifying and preventing malpractice. This includes being extra vigilant in training/coaching sessions, warning learners about the consequences of having unauthorised material, reminding learners to read instructions on assignments thoroughly and above all ensuring they physically see learners personal identification to reduce risk of mistaken or false identify and record what they have seen within our E-Portfolio system at sign up

Reporting Malpractice and Maladministration

Incidents of suspected malpractice and maladministration must be reported to the Internal Quality Assurer who will agree further action with MERCURI INTERNATIONAL (UK) LTD's Operations Manager.

Where investigations show that malpractice or maladministration has occurred, MERCURI INTERNATIONAL (UK) LTD will take appropriate action. This could include:

- reporting any suspected malpractice to the Awarding Organization (APS, ILM, CMI or C&G) immediately.
- a temporary or permanent ban on attending MERCURI INTERNATIONAL (UK) LTD courses or registering for other qualifications
- a temporary or permanent suspension of approval as Learning & Development Coach or Trainer
- withdrawal of certificates and results being deemed invalid
- imposition of special conditions for the future involvement of the individual(s) in the conduct, teaching, supervision or administration of learners and/or examinations
- MERCURI INTERNATIONAL (UK) LTD's Quality Team may carry out unannounced monitoring of the working practices of the individual(s) concerned.

Any individual can report suspected malpractice directly to the AO (APS, ILM, CMI or C&G) by following their Whistleblowing policy.

Notification to Regulators

Certificates may be invalid due to malpractice or maladministration. MERCURI INTERNATIONAL (UK) LTD's Quality Assurance department will report this to the External Quality Assurer (EQA) / End Point Assessment Organisation (EPAO), Awarding Organisation and (if applicable) Ofqual and will fully co-operate with investigations carried out. In such cases MERCURI INTERNATIONAL (UK) LTD will seek to agree a course of remedial action with the External Quality Assurer (EQA) / End Point Assessment Organisation (EPAO), Awarding Organisation and (if applicable) Ofqual.

Appeals and Disputes

Those involved in the malpractice or maladministration case may appeal against the outcome or any sanction(s) imposed as a result.

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Monitoring and Review of Process

MERCURI INTERNATIONAL (UK) LTD's Quality Assurance department is responsible for ensuring that this policy and associated processes and procedures are followed for all staff and learners and that it is reviewed for effectiveness on a regular basis.

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