Plagiarism, Collusion and AI Misuse Policy

Introduction

Plagiarism, Collusion and AI Misuse will not be tolerated. The Plagiarism, Collusion and AI Misuse Policy applies to all electronic assessments submitted for any ABE qualification or unit, including Assignments and OBEs. Electronic assessments submitted to ABE can be subject to scrutiny using our plagiarism checking software.

Definitions

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the unacknowledged use of another person's work.

It takes the form of the reproduction or quotation, without acknowledgement, of the work of others (including the work of fellow learners), published or unpublished, either verbatim or in close paraphrase, including material from computer files or downloaded from the internet. All work submitted for assessment is accepted on the understanding that it is by the learner's own effort without wrongful appropriation of any kind. Learners are expected to offer their own analysis and presentation of information gleaned from research. Any sources or quotations used should be acknowledged and/or referenced in accordance with the appropriate convention. Failure to do so may result in learners committing academic misconduct.

Collusion

Collusion is a form of plagiarism, involving unauthorized co-operation between at least two people, with the intent to deceive. It can take the following forms:

(a) The conspiring by two or more learners to produce a piece of work together with the intention that at least one passes it off as their own work.
(b) The submission by a learner of the work of another learner, in circumstances where the latter has willingly leant the former the work and where it should be evident to the learner lending the work that by so doing an advantage is conferred on the other learner. In this case, both learners are guilty of collusion.
(c) In cases where there is unauthorized co-operation between a learner and another person in the preparation and production of work which is presented as the learner's own.
(d) The commissioning and submission of work as the learner's own, where the learner has purchased work, or solicited another individual to produce work on the learner's behalf.

Obligations of Learners

All learners must be willing on each occasion to sign a declaration that the work they are submitting is their own work and that they have not knowingly let other learners copy it.

Learners are expected to familiarise themselves with and make use of the method(s) of citing other people's work in accordance with the appropriate conventions. Please refer to the latest ABE Assignment and OBE Style Guides located on the ABE Portal.

Plagiarism Checking Software

Assessments submitted to ABE may be put through a plagiarism checking software programme called Turnitin. Unit assessments are loaded into Turnitin, and the software allocates each unit submission a 'match score' based on its similarity to other publicly submitted assessments.

Any assessment whose Turnitin match score is more than the permitted threshold for the Level on first load will be checked and some common sources (those associated with the assessment context and the referencing) will be excluded, lowering the overall score.

The software can determine if an assessment has been copied from another submission and will identify the learner(s) ABE registered centre and the date of submission, if a learner has passed off another ABE learner's work as their own.

If the assessment submission remains above the match score threshold for the Level, then that assessment will automatically fail.

The maximum per level is:

- Level 4 – 45%
- Level 5 – 40%
- Level 6 – 35%

Assessments whose scores are on the borderline of the Level threshold (or where the single source percentage threshold is higher than the stated maximum for the Level, even where the overall headline score is below the Level threshold), then the assessment will be capped at a pass (40%) by reason of 'poor academic practice' (or PAP).

AI misuse has its own criteria – please refer to the ABE AI Guidance Notes on the ABE Portal and see below.

Outcomes and Penalties

Plagiarism

Where a learner's assessment Turnitin score cannot be reduced below Level threshold for Turnitin, ABE will award the assessment the mark of **One***. The learner will need to rebook the assessment and resubmit it to ABE.

Collusion

Learners whose assessment Turnitin analysis shows links between learner assessment submissions within the same unit between one (or more) other learner(s) will be awarded the mark of **One***. The learner(s) will need to submit a new assessment to ABE.

Misuse of AI

ABE does not prohibit the use of AI as it can act as a very valuable research tool.

ABE does permit some level of AI in writing assessments, and this is equivalent to the single source allowance for each level. These limits currently are:

- Level 4 – 25%
- Level 5 – 20%
- Level 6 – 15%

Learners whose work is assessed with an AI Index between the single source level allowed and the overall limit per level (see above) will have their work capped at a pass grade (40%) for poor academic practice (PAP), or relevant passing grade.

We recommend that learners limit their risk of being exposed to an AI fail in the Turnitin checking process by confining the use of AI to the research part of the assessment process only wherever possible. Learners should note that an AI 'signature' can be generated if the learner uses:

- Grammar and syntax programmes that are AI based
- Web sources that are AI generated
- Digitally transmitted tutor notes created using AI
- The use of any part of a previous submission in a unit resit which has an AI footprint

Where a learner is deemed to have exceeded the AI threshold, ABE will award the assessment the mark of **One***.   The learner will need to rebook the assessment and resubmit it to ABE.

Centre and Learner Watchlists.

ABE also maintains a 'Watch List' of learners who have committed academic misconduct in each assessment session. Repeated attempts of collusion and/or plagiarism by learners may lead to a termination of membership of ABE according to the Three Strikes Policy.

This rule states that where a learner is found to be committing acts of collusion and plagiarism in their submitted assessments three times, in one or more assessment sessions, the learner and their registered centre will be advised of the intention to terminate that learner's membership of ABE and the action executed in accordance with the ABE Three Strikes Policy. This policy can be found on the ABE Portal and will be activated from the May 2025 session onwards.

Centres whose learners habitually submit above average levels of assessments affected by misconduct may be placed on a watch list. This will mean that ABE will more closely scrutinise learner work for plagiarism and AI misuse from centres placed on the centre watch list.

ABE works with the centres to combat academic misconduct. ABE alerts all registered centres at the end of each assessment session whether their learners are 'at risk' of reaching the threshold that triggers the loss of membership.

Centres are advised on the actions needed to reduce the incidence of such misconduct in subsequent assessment sessions through training sessions. This approach is always meant to be collaborative and will include agreed actions aimed at reducing the incidence of academic misconduct.

*The award of a mark of **One** by ABE indicates that the assessment has been marked and run through the plagiarism software used by ABE