EPA Malpractice and Plagiarism Guidance for Learners

Malpractice

Chartered Institute of Procurement and Supply (CIPS) is a recognised and regulated End Point Assessment Organisation (EPAO). The EPAO is committed to high levels of quality assurance and policies that are open, transparent and free from bias.

Individual apprentices, as members to the profession, are expected to conduct themselves at all times in an ethical manner, and to sign and be bound by the CIPS Code of Conduct. Our Royal Charter includes disciplinary procedures that enable the governing body to investigate complaints against members and, if it is found that the Code of Conduct has been breached, to take appropriate action.

For clarity, malpractice is deemed to be those deliberate actions and practices that threaten the integrity of any CIPS qualification, or threaten the reputation of CIPS. Maladministration can be deliberate or accidental, but has the same effect.

Where malpractice is suspected or is alleged, and where there are reasonable grounds for that suspicion or allegation, the EPAO will promptly take all reasonable steps to establish whether or not malpractice did occur, and to prevent any adverse effect. Should any such adverse effect be unpreventable, the EPAO will mitigate it as far as possible and correct it.

Examples of Malpractice

The following are examples of malpractice by Training Provider staff:

- Inaccurate or deliberately misleading statements or submissions provided during the Gateway / Registration process or at any time during the EPA
- Moving the time or date of fixed assessments without permission from the EPAO
- The unauthorised obtaining, disseminating, or facilitating of access to secure assessment materials (e.g. case studies / question banks) prior to or following an assessment
- Assisting or prompting apprentices in the production of answers to assessment questions or assessment evidence, beyond which is permitted by EPA requirements
- Colluding with, or permitting collusion, or failing to report an apprentice in any activity that constitutes apprentice malpractice
- Deliberate failure to adhere to, or to circumnavigate, the requirements of CIPS’ Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations Policy
- Administrative error with serious effect on apprentice performance or results
- Any action likely to lead to an Adverse Effect.
The following are examples of apprentice malpractice:

- Obtaining assessment material without permission
  Copying from another apprentice, or knowingly allowing another apprentice to copy from their own work
- Entering offensive or inappropriate material into the assessments
- Failure to abide by the instructions or advice of assessor, or CIPS in relation to the assessment rules and regulations
- Offering a bribe to any kind of assessor, employer or training provider staff member
- Impersonation - pretending to be someone else or arranging for another to take one’s place in an assessment.
- Falsifying evidence for your showcase portfolio (APO1 only)
- Any attempt to undermine the EPA process
- Any attempt to gain an unfair advantage
- Plagiarism - presenting ideas, research, theories, or words of others as one’s own
- Fraudulent claims for special consideration.

**Plagiarism**

A great way to exhibit your knowledge and understanding of a subject area is to utilise information from a published source; such as a book, journal or a website. However, in order to do this, appropriate methods of referencing need to be undertaken.

All sources used in an assignment, whether a direct quotation (must be accompanied by a set of quotation marks) or in a derived form, must be cited in the body of the text. In addition all cited sources must be detailed in your bibliography at the end of your work alongside other publications that you have used in your research, which have not been directly referred to.

**Published Sources**

A reference from a printed book or journal should be cited in the main body of text by using the authors name followed by an initial, the year of publication and the relevant page number.

*For example;* (Longdin, I; 2009; pg.12)

Within the bibliography a more detailed reference to this source should be made using the following format; author’s surname, initials, date of publication, title, if a journal its title and volume number and page numbers of the cited paper, if a book publisher’s name and place of publication.

*For example;*


**Internet Sources**

When using material from the internet, the exact webpage must be cited with the date the webpage was accessed.

*For example;* (http://www.guardian.co.uk/world-government-data/dataset/purchasing-power-parities-for-gdp, accessed; 12.02.2012)

Within the bibliography a more detailed reference to the webpage needs to be completed using the following format; name of the website organisation or company, title of the specific webpage, full website address, date the webpage was accessed.

*For example;* The Guardian. *Purchasing power parities for GDP.*
http://www.guardian.co.uk/worldgovernment-data/dataset/purchasing-power-parities-for-gdp, accessed on 12th February 2012.

**Detection of Plagiarism**

If you do not show your sources throughout your work and include a bibliography this will be considered as plagiarism, a form of cheating.

In addition you should be aware that there are many ways to detect plagiarism which will be utilised for all assignments;

- Our assessors are able to spot changes in style of writing and use of language
- Our assessors are very experienced subject specialists who have extensive knowledge of the published sources in the area concerned.
- Our assessors have access to specialised computer software which is used to match phrases or wording of texts with original sources and detect changes in grammar and style of writing or punctuation.

**Procedure for Dealing with Malpractice**

All incidents of malpractice, irrespective of the nature of the incident, must be reported to the Head of Assessment Standards and Operations (via the EPAO team; epa@cips.org) who is independent of the management of normal working relationships with Training Providers. Incidents may be reported by a Training Provider, an assessor or any other person present at the time the alleged malpractice took place. Anonymous reports of malpractice will be acted upon only if there is supporting evidence, or if the nature of the report warrants it.

1. A malpractice allegation is received by the EPAO team and escalated to the Head of Assessment Standards and Operations.
2. The head of Assessment Standards and Operations will seek to establish the full facts and circumstances of the alleged malpractice and, where appropriate, the apprentice’s conduct in other assessments before deciding to initiate an investigation.

3. A report from the apprentice’s Training Provider may be required, but an investigation will only be initiated if reasonable suspicion of malpractice exists. Where possible, the confidentiality of the ‘whistleblower’ will be respected.

4. Determine if an interview is warranted with the person(s) involved within the alleged malpractice incident.

5. Determine if a visit to the Training Provider involved is required.

6. CIPS EPAO may suspend the issue of results to the apprentice and/or Training Provider concerned until the issue is resolved.

7. Apprentices or Training Provider staff accused of malpractice will be informed in writing at the earliest opportunity of the nature of the alleged malpractice, and of the possible consequences should malpractice be found. They will be invited to provide (within 14 days of receiving notification of the allegation) a written statement to explain the incident from their perspective.

8. Training Providers should ensure that all actions taken as part of the investigation are fully documented.

9. The Head of Assessment Standards and Operations will oversee the investigation and determine:
   - whether the regulations have been adhered to
   - where the culpability lies for the breach in regulations
   - appropriate measures to be taken to protect the integrity of the award and to prevent future breaches as well as mitigate against any adverse effect
   - the nature of any sanction/penalty to be applied.

10. Sanctions (penalties) will be based only on the evidence presented, and must be justifiable, reasonable in scale, and consistent with previous decisions in similar circumstances. (See the Sanctions section below)

11. Apprentices / Training Providers will be notified of all decisions in writing to their home or main address within 5 working days of the decision. Our aim is to complete the investigation and reach a decision within 40 working days of notifying the apprentice / Training Provider of the allegation. Apprentices / Training Providers will be kept informed of any unavoidable delays in the process.

12. A report covering all stages of the above process will be kept on file. The report will include a summary of the origin of the complaint or mode of discovery of the alleged irregularity, the investigations carried out, the evidence secured, the conclusions drawn and the decision reached, including any sanctions or recommendations for action.

13. All parties will be given the opportunity to seek a review of the decision should a judgement be made against them. (See section 7 below)

14. Training Providers, other awarding bodies, qualifications regulators and/or the police will be notified if an issue of malpractice is likely to have an adverse effect on other Apprentices or Training Providers involved in CIPS’ qualifications, or the general public.

15. The Head of Assessment Standards and Operations may require actions to be taken to prevent similar incidents of malpractice from recurring. Where any further action is required at a Training Provider, the Awarding Body Manager will establish an action plan with the Provider.
Sanctions

Following a decision on malpractice, the EPAO may impose penalties on individuals or Training Providers found guilty of breaking assessment regulations. This is in order to:
- Maintain the integrity of the award
- Create a remedy, so that there is no advantage to be gained from breaking the regulations
- Deter others from doing likewise.

Sanctions applied against Training Providers for malpractice could include:
- The Training Provider is required to complete an action plan, which could include a requirement for staff training
- The Training Provider is required to undergo additional monitoring, or an inspection visit, or adhere to special conditions for any subsequent sittings of the same or different assessments at a cost to the Training Provider.
- The Training Provider is charged for any additional costs resulting from the malpractice case, e.g. new certificates, or re-sits.
- The appointment for a specified period of time, at the Training Provider’s expense, of independent assessors (appointed/approved by CIPS) to ensure that the conduct of assessments is in accordance with the regulations.
- Disallowing the future involvement of a member of staff in CIPS’ qualifications or assessments
- Suspension of certification for either the award concerned or for all other assessments
- Withdrawal of study or Training Provider approval

If applicable and relevant, CIPS will inform other awarding organisations of the Training Provider’s malpractice and the sanctions applied.
Sanctions applied against apprentices may include:
- Issue of a warning
- No marks awarded for a whole paper
- Results for all the apprentice’s outstanding assessments withheld
- Suspension from taking CIPS assessments for up to three years.
- Notification to an employer, regulator or police
- No marks for the whole cohort’s papers

Malpractice by an individual apprentice may breach the CIPS Code of Conduct, depending on the nature of the malpractice. The EPAO is not empowered to impose membership-related sanctions against individuals. It is however, the role of the EPAO to report all instances of individual malpractice to the CIPS Disciplinary Committee.

References

The following sources were used to help formulate this guidance document:

Joint Council for Qualifications. Information for candidates.

CIPS EPAO (July 2019)