Plagiarism Policy

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2.0	February 2026	National Talent Academy	New policy created; includes AI-generated

			content guidance; aligned to TQUK endorsement and online delivery model
2.1	September 2026	National Talent Academy	Added a document control block recording the document owner, status, date published, next scheduled review and contact. Set the review frequency to annual. Replaced the stated record retention period with a reference to the NTA Data Retention Schedule. Corrected the description of certification: TQUK issues the certificate for the full Level 3 Award and NTA issues certificates for individual units, including the mandatory unit. Changed programme duration from GLH to hours TQT, in line with the agreed terminology standard, and removed the separate mandatory-unit hours figure pending confirmation.
2.2	September 2026	National Talent Academy	Updated the name of the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy in the list of related policies, following its renaming. No other change.

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1. Introduction

1.1 About National Talent Academy

National Talent Academy (NTA) is an educational technology company providing online qualifications in essential work skills for 16–19 year olds and adult learners in Further Education colleges, schools and training providers across the UK.

NTA was founded in 2020 by Cambridge graduate David Jaffa, who previously founded SAM Learning (online GCSE/KS3 revision used in hundreds of UK schools) and Penda Learning (online science/maths for US schools, sold 2019). David received the 2021 BETT Outstanding Achievement Award for his lifetime achievements in EdTech.

1.2 Purpose of This Policy

NTA is committed to maintaining the integrity of its qualifications and assessment processes. This policy sets out NTA's approach to preventing, identifying and responding to plagiarism in all forms, including the misuse of artificial intelligence (AI) tools.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Define what constitutes plagiarism in the context of NTA programmes.
- Ensure learners understand what plagiarism is and the consequences of committing it.
- Distinguish between poor academic practice and deliberate plagiarism.
- Set out prevention, detection and investigation procedures.
- Outline the sanctions that may be applied where plagiarism is confirmed.
- Protect the integrity and reputation of NTA qualifications and the interests of all learners.

1.3 Scope

This policy applies to the NTA Level 3 Award in Essential Work Skills, which is an unregulated qualification endorsed by Training Qualifications UK (TQUK) as a Certified Learning Course (CLC). The programme comprises 35 hours TQT (the mandatory unit plus the 30-hour Level 3 Award), delivered fully online via the NTA platform as a self-paced learning programme, with a 75% pass threshold. TQUK issues the certificate for the full Level 3 Award; NTA issues certificates for individual units, including the mandatory unit.

This policy applies to all learners registered on NTA programmes, all NTA staff and tutors and all delivery partners (FE colleges, schools, sixth forms and training providers) involved in the delivery and assessment of NTA qualifications.

By enrolling on an NTA programme, a learner agrees to the terms and conditions set out in this policy.

1.4 Review and Availability

NTA will review this policy annually and may revise it in response to changes in legislation, technological developments (particularly in relation to AI), feedback or guidance issued by TQUK or other external bodies. Copies are available on request at hello@nationaltalent.org or via www.nationaltalent.org.

2. What Is Plagiarism?

Plagiarism is the presentation of another person's work, ideas or outputs as one's own, without appropriate acknowledgement of the original source. It is a form of malpractice that undermines the integrity of the assessment process.

NTA recognises the following forms of plagiarism:

Form	Description
Direct plagiarism	Copying another person's work, in whole or in part, and presenting it as one's own without acknowledgement of the original source.
Collusion	Unauthorised cooperation between two or more learners, where one or more submits work that is not entirely their own, with the intent to gain an unfair advantage.
AI-generated content	Submitting content generated by artificial intelligence tools (e.g. ChatGPT, Google Gemini or similar) as the learner's own work, without acknowledgement or where it does not demonstrate the learner's own knowledge and understanding.
Self-plagiarism	Submitting work that has previously been submitted for assessment elsewhere, without acknowledgement or permission.
Paraphrasing without attribution	Rewording another person's ideas or arguments and presenting them as one's own, without crediting the original source.
Contract cheating	Having another person (or service) complete assessment

	work on behalf of the learner, who then submits it as their own.

2.1 Artificial Intelligence and Plagiarism

The use of AI tools to generate assessment responses that are then submitted as the learner's own work is considered a form of plagiarism. This includes, but is not limited to, the use of large language models (e.g. ChatGPT), AI writing assistants, AI paraphrasing tools or any other tool that generates content which the learner presents as their own without acknowledgement.

Learners may use AI tools to support their learning (for example, to help understand concepts or to support research), but must not submit AI-generated content as their own assessment evidence. Where learners have used AI tools to support their work, they must clearly acknowledge this.

3. Poor Academic Practice vs. Deliberate Plagiarism

NTA recognises that not all instances of unattributed content represent deliberate plagiarism. Some learners may lack the academic skills to reference correctly, resulting in honest mistakes. NTA distinguishes between poor academic practice and deliberate plagiarism as follows:

Poor Academic Practice	Deliberate Plagiarism
There are identifiable attempts to reference sources, but they are not used correctly. The learner demonstrates a lack of understanding of referencing conventions rather than an intent to deceive. The extent of unattributed material is limited. This is treated as a learning opportunity: the learner is given guidance and the chance to resubmit.	There is no attempt to reference or acknowledge sources. Substantial portions of the work are copied, generated by AI or produced by another person. The learner has been previously educated about plagiarism and referencing requirements. There is evidence of intent to deceive or gain an unfair advantage. This is treated as malpractice and investigated accordingly.

NTA will always consider the circumstances of each case on its individual merits. Factors such as the learner's experience, the extent of the unattributed material and whether the learner has previously received guidance on plagiarism will all be taken into account.

4. Prevention

Prevention is the most important element of NTA's approach to plagiarism. NTA and its delivery partners will take the following steps to prevent plagiarism from occurring:

4.1 Learner Education

- All learners will be informed about what constitutes plagiarism (including AI-generated content) as part of their programme induction.
- Learners will be shown appropriate formats for recording cited texts, websites and other sources.
- Learners will be informed about the consequences of plagiarism, including the sanctions set out in this policy.
- The mandatory unit 'Thinking for Yourself: Building Your Future', presented by Dr Helen Lawal, supports learners in developing independent thinking skills as part of the programme.

4.2 Declaration of Authenticity

All learners are required to confirm that their assessment evidence is their own work. On the NTA platform, learners will be asked to make a declaration of authenticity before submitting assessment evidence. This declaration confirms that:

- The work submitted is the learner's own.
- Any sources used have been appropriately acknowledged.
- The work has not been previously submitted for assessment elsewhere.
- The learner understands that submitting work that is not their own may lead to sanctions.

4.3 Assessment Design

NTA designs its assessments to reduce the risk of plagiarism. This includes:

- Altering assessment tasks on a regular basis.
- Designing questions that require learners to apply knowledge to their own context and experience, making generic or AI-generated answers less likely to meet the assessment criteria.
- Using the NTA platform's automatic evidence trail, which captures a complete audit trail of all learner activity, including submission times and patterns.

4.4 Staff and Delivery Partner Responsibilities

NTA staff, tutors and delivery partners must:

- Ensure learners are aware of and understand this policy.
- Embed good academic practice in their teaching and assessment.
- Use oral questions with learners to verify their understanding and confirm that submitted work is their own, where appropriate.
- Be vigilant for signs of plagiarism when reviewing learner evidence.
- Report any suspected plagiarism to NTA promptly.

5. Detection

Plagiarism may be detected through a range of methods, including:

- The NTA platform's automatic evidence trail, which records submission times, access patterns and the sequence in which learners complete activities.
- Assessment marking and quality assurance processes, where tutors, assessors and internal quality assurers identify concerns about the authenticity of learner evidence.
- Comparison of learner submissions within a cohort to identify identical or substantially similar responses.
- Identification of writing styles, vocabulary or content that is inconsistent with the learner's previous work or expected level of attainment.
- The use of plagiarism detection and AI detection tools, where appropriate.
- Reports from delivery partners, other learners or third parties.

6. Investigation Procedure

Where plagiarism is suspected, the following procedure will be followed:

6.1 Initial Review

The tutor or assessor who identifies the concern will report it to NTA. NTA will conduct an initial review to determine whether the concern relates to poor academic practice or suspected deliberate plagiarism.

If the concern relates to poor academic practice, the learner will be given guidance and the opportunity to resubmit their work (see Section 3). No formal investigation is required.

6.2 Formal Investigation

If the concern relates to suspected deliberate plagiarism, NTA will conduct a formal investigation in line with NTA's Malpractice and Maladministration Policy. The investigation will:

- Notify the learner in writing of the allegation and give them the opportunity to respond.
- Gather and review all relevant evidence, including the learner's submitted work, platform data from the automatic evidence trail and any comparator material.
- Where the learner is aged under 18, notify the delivery partner and, where appropriate, the learner's parent or guardian.
- Consider the learner's response and any mitigating circumstances.
- Reach a decision on the balance of evidence.

6.3 Outcomes

Following the investigation, NTA will inform the learner (and, where applicable, the delivery partner) in writing of the outcome. Outcomes may include:

- No case to answer – the allegation is not upheld.
- Poor academic practice confirmed – the learner is given guidance and the opportunity to resubmit.
- Deliberate plagiarism confirmed – a sanction is applied (see Section 7).

All confirmed cases of deliberate plagiarism will be reported to TQUK as the endorsing awarding organisation.

7. Sanctions

Where plagiarism is confirmed, the following sanctions may be applied, proportionate to the seriousness of the case:

Sanction	When It May Be Applied
Guidance and resubmission	First instance of poor academic practice (not deliberate plagiarism). The learner is educated on correct practice and given the opportunity to resubmit their work.
Written warning	First instance of confirmed deliberate plagiarism, or a second instance of poor academic practice after guidance has been given.

Invalidation of assessment and resubmission	Confirmed deliberate plagiarism where the assessment evidence cannot stand. The learner may be given the opportunity to retake the assessment with different tasks/questions.
Invalidation without resubmission	Serious or repeated deliberate plagiarism, contract cheating or collusion. The learner's assessment results are invalidated and no resubmission opportunity is offered.
Disqualification from the programme	The most serious cases of repeated or egregious plagiarism, contract cheating or collusion. Applied only with the Director's approval. The learner is removed from the programme.

Sanctions will be applied in accordance with NTA's Sanctions Policy. The Director's approval is required for the most serious sanctions (invalidation without resubmission and disqualification).

Where a delivery partner's staff are found to have aided, facilitated or colluded with a learner in committing plagiarism, sanctions may also be applied to the delivery partner under NTA's Sanctions Policy.

8. Appeals

Learners have the right to appeal against any sanction imposed under this policy. Appeals must be submitted in writing, stating the grounds on which the appeal is based. Please refer to NTA's Enquiries and Appeals Policy for full details of the appeals process.

9. Record Keeping

NTA will retain records of all plagiarism investigations and outcomes securely and in accordance with GDPR requirements. Records will include:

- The original concern and how it was identified.
- Copies of the learner's submitted work and any comparator material.
- Platform evidence trail data.
- The learner's response.
- The investigation findings and outcome.
- Any sanction applied.

Records will be retained for the period set out in the NTA Data Retention Schedule.

10. Related Policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following NTA policies:

- Malpractice and Maladministration Policy.
- Sanctions Policy.
- Enquiries and Appeals Policy.
- Internal Quality Assurance Procedure.
- Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy.
- Complaints Policy.

11. Contact Information

If you have any queries about the contents of this policy, or wish to report suspected plagiarism, please contact National Talent Academy:

Email: hello@nationaltalent.org

Website: www.nationaltalent.org

Address: 3rd Floor, 1 Ashley Road, Altrincham, Cheshire, WA14 2DT

Appendix A: Declaration of Authenticity

This declaration is presented to learners on the NTA platform before the submission of assessment evidence.

I confirm that:

- The work I am submitting is my own.
- Where I have used the work or ideas of others, I have clearly acknowledged the source.
- I have not used artificial intelligence tools to generate content that I am presenting as my own work, unless I have clearly acknowledged this and have demonstrated my own understanding.
- This work has not been previously submitted for assessment for any other qualification, unless this has been declared and approved.
- I understand that NTA may use plagiarism detection and AI detection tools to check the authenticity of my work.
- I understand that if I submit work that is not my own, this may be treated as plagiarism and may result in sanctions being applied, which could include the invalidation of my assessment results or disqualification from the programme.

Learner name:

Programme / qualification:

Delivery partner / centre:

Date:

Signature (or digital confirmation on platform):

This declaration is embedded within the NTA platform and is confirmed digitally by the learner. A paper version may also be used by delivery partners where required.