

# A Learner's Guide to Academic Integrity



For learners enrolled in Further Education & Training programmes



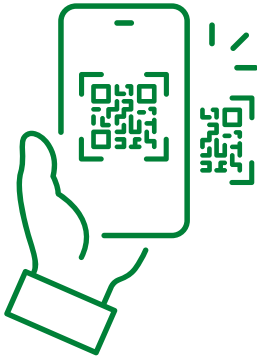
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# Development of this resource

This guide was developed as a result of discussions and research around academic integrity and what it means to the learner in the ETB (Education and Training Board) and FET (Further Education and Training) sectors. Through interactions among ETBs, facilitated by ETBI (Education Training Boards Ireland), and a survey involving ETBs, it was apparent that a resource was required to introduce the FET learner to principles of academic integrity.

This guide aims to introduce academic integrity principles to the learner, and can contribute to future learning and career progression. A working group was formed to carry out the writing, editing and production of this resource. This guide is the first of its kind; specifically focused on academic integrity for the FET learner. It is a useful resource to be used alongside the [\*Referencing Handbook for the Further Education and Training Sector\*](#) and the [\*Academic Writing Handbook for Learners in the Further Education and Training Sector\*](#).

This document has been designed in accordance with design principles to ensure access for all users. Accessibility has been considered in the choice of text, colour and contrast. Colour and white space are used to allow for the visibility and isolation of important points, headings and information on the page. Colour contrast has been used to ensure legibility. Typography throughout the guide is consistent and in line with best practices. Graphics are used to enhance the learning of the user.

# Acknowledgements

This Academic Integrity FET Learner Guide has been led by ETBI and developed by working group members from ETBs:

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## 1.1 Why this guide

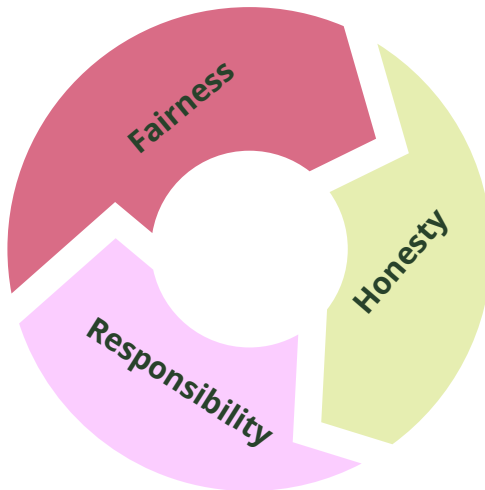
This guide is designed specifically for FET learners. It will give you support to:

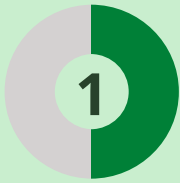
- ▶ understand the importance of being a responsible learner through your studies, work experience and any other learning as part of your FET course or training.
- ▶ prepare for future learning in various situations.
- ▶ develop lasting skills that would benefit you in your future career.



This guide includes three important areas that better explain academic integrity. You might think of these areas as the three important building blocks that make up academic integrity:

- ▶ Fairness
- ▶ Honesty
- ▶ Responsibility





# About This Guide



## 1.2 How to use this guide

The best way to use this guide is by going through the contents page and reading sections that are relevant or important to you. You can return to sections in this guide as you make progress in your learning. That way you can improve your knowledge of academic integrity skills that may help you in different ways and at different stages of your learning or training. Also, please see the 'Glossary' at the end of this guide for any terms you are not familiar with.






This is the third handbook written for the FET learner to support good academic practice and development. Use this handbook alongside the *Referencing Handbook For the FET Sector* and the *Academic Writing Handbook For Learners In The FET Sector*. These handbooks have been developed collectively by the ETB sector.

Your college/ centre/ campus or ETB may also have a local Learner Handbook and/or a Learner Charter, and this guide is developed as an extra support and resource.






## 1.3 How to use symbols in this guide

Symbol	Meaning
	This symbol is for things that are important and that you may want to bookmark for later.
	This symbol is for takeaway ideas that summarise the main points in a section.
	This symbol means the information is something to keep in mind while reading this guide.
	This symbol means appropriate actions (the right things to do) in certain situations.
	This symbol means actions you must never take (the wrong things to do) in certain situations.



## 1.3 How to use symbols in this guide

Symbol	Meaning
	This symbol is for QR Codes

## 1.4 Language used in this guide

Throughout this document, 'you' means the learner or student and the term 'teacher' means teacher, tutor, trainer, instructor, adult educator or learning practitioner.



## 2.1 What is academic integrity?

Academic Integrity means being honest and responsible in the work you do. No matter the level of your FET course or training, academic integrity is a very important step to help build the skills you need for study and professional life. The three items below help you to make sense of what academic integrity is about:



### Fairness

This means being fair to your classmates, teachers and everyone you work with during your learning journey.

It means that any work you do is treated fairly and grades are given based on the work and effort you put in. Fairness also means that you do your share of the course work when working with other people (group work) and follow the assessment (see glossary, part 4 in this guide, for 'assessment') and exam guidelines given to you.



## Responsibility

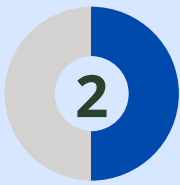
This means what's expected of you as a learner and doing the work you are supposed to do. It's also important to get advice from your college or centre when you are not sure about what's expected of you. The work might be tricky or difficult and it's ok to get help, but you must use that help to do your own work.



## Honesty

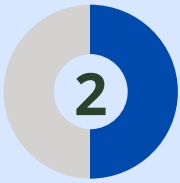
Honesty in academic integrity means that any assignments, projects, course work or exams you take part in are your own work. Your work should show that anything you do as a learner is done through your own efforts and in an honest way.





## 2.2 What are the main things to remember about academic integrity?

- ▶ Academic integrity is more than just plagiarism. Plagiarism is part of academic integrity. Think of it as an important item in academic integrity. Plagiarism is further explained in part 2.6 in this section.
- ▶ The term 'Academic Integrity' sounds complicated, but remembering the three main things that make up academic integrity helps you break down its meaning (fairness, honesty, responsibility).
- ▶ Academic integrity is not just about studying or course work. It is something we need in our working lives too. For example, when in college, you make sure a piece of homework or assignment is your own work, while in work-based training, you may be asked to do tasks in a professional capacity. Doing this with honesty and integrity and knowing where to get the right information shows your academic skills and knowledge. It shows that you are professional in the work you do.



# Academic Integrity



## 2.3 Why should you care about academic integrity?

Academic integrity helps you to understand...

- ▶ your role and responsibility as a learner
- ▶ the support your college, centre or ETB can give you

**and**

- ▶ how academic integrity skills can help prepare you for your future career





## Your Role and Responsibility

Being a learner means that you have responsibilities toward completing your work. The goal is to pass your module exams, assignments or projects and finally pass the course. This is a big responsibility. You, as a learner, are responsible for following academic integrity rules and guidelines (see 'Glossary' in part 4 in this guide for 'academic integrity guidelines').

## Support with Academic Integrity

Your college/ centre can help you to use the right tools so that you can be sure that you are following good academic practices. You will find examples of this as you make your way through this guide.

## Be Future Ready

Academic integrity is very important to your professional future. This means that academic integrity is not just about exams, assignments, essays and making sure the work you do is your own. Being professional is also a big part of academic integrity.



## Takeaway



Knowing about academic integrity can...

- ✓ make it more manageable for you to take on further studies and take responsibility for your learning, as your academic integrity skills and knowledge will be greater.
- ✓ improve the standard of your academic work which may lead to better grades.
- ✓ save you a large amount of time and stress.
- ✓ give you a skill that is always needed in your learning and training and can be valued by employers.
- ✓ make it easier for you in you future learning because you will know what's expected of you.







## 2.4 Academic Integrity and conduct

Conduct is an important part of academic integrity. Conduct means being fair to classmates, teachers and yourself. See the definitions of 'conduct' and 'misconduct' in the glossary section in part 4 of this guide.



To understand fairness, honesty and responsibility in academic integrity, it's important to understand what *misconduct* is and when it happens. Your local ETB/college/centre will have assessment misconduct/ malpractice procedures in place. These procedures include 'rules' which explain the consequences of misconduct.



## What is misconduct?

Misconduct in academic integrity means inappropriate actions that break any rules in different kinds of assessment (e.g., exams, essays or course work) or any work you do as part of a course or your training. Think of misconduct as a “breach” or “offence” that can have bad consequences for you.

## Why is it important to avoid misconduct?

Think about the job of a doctor or social worker. You would expect these professionals to have gained their qualifications and skills in an honest, responsible and fair way. How would you feel if you found out the doctor you got to help you had cheated in their coursework/exams/training – would you use them again?



## What are examples of misconduct?



### Plagiarism:

Copying/ using work and passing it off as your own

Exam or assignment cheating

Essay mills  
(see glossary)

Helping or receiving help from others to complete assessment or pass exams

Contract cheating:  
paying someone to do your course work  
(see glossary)

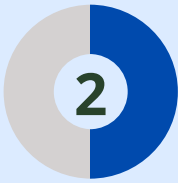


Collusion: Doing and handing in work with another learner when you are supposed to do it alone

Letting someone write your work or attend assessment instead of you (impersonate you)

Self-plagiarism: using work in more than one course or module without the college, centre or teacher's permission

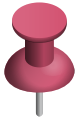
Falsifying any documents, assessments, records or information (see glossary)



# Academic Integrity






## 2.5 Examples of academic integrity Do's and Don'ts (including plagiarism)








This part of the guide explains some of the academic integrity misconduct categories.

See below for learner actions that are acceptable  or unacceptable 

Example	Academic integrity issue to avoid	 	Comments
You find this sentence in a book: <i>"people are increasingly aware of their eating habits today, yet many find the information available on dieting on the internet overwhelming"</i> . In your essay about 'Nutrition and Dieting', you write: "A lot of people are aware of the food they eat, but people find there is too much information about diets online".	Plagiarism		By changing a few words, you forgot to give the source of the information and the name of the author(s) (see glossary), website or publication where the sentence was taken from.



See below for learner actions that are acceptable   
or unacceptable 

Example	Academic integrity issue to avoid	 	Comments
<p>In a report on 'Solar Panels and Green Energy', you use an image found on a website. In your essay you paste the image with the caption: 'Image from: www.... (website)'. You also include the date when the image was taken from the website.</p>	<p>Plagiarism</p>		<p>You have avoided accidental plagiarism by showing you understand your responsibility to give the source (website) where you got the image. See Glossary for 'accidental plagiarism'.</p>
<p>Patchwork: you use pieces of information from different books, articles or websites and re-write them to include them in an assignment.</p>	<p>Exam or assignment cheating + Plagiarism.</p>		<p>Even if you re-word or paraphrase the information, this is still considered as cheating and plagiarism.</p>
<p>You have to hand in an essay that you find difficult. You ask a teacher or library support professional to help you with writing skills like paragraphing and organising ideas. You use their advice and guidance to draft your essay.</p>	<p>Helping or receiving help from others to complete assessment or pass exams.</p>		<p>If the work is your own and you used advice without copying or using someone else's work, this shows you are a responsible learner and you didn't break any academic integrity rules.</p>







See below for learner actions that are acceptable ✓  
or unacceptable ✗

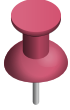
Example	Academic integrity issue to avoid	✓ ✗	Comments
<p>You are preparing a presentation which will be assessed by your teacher. A friend offers to write the presentation for you. All you have to do is understand what is included in the presentation and present it in front of a class.</p>	<p>Collusion: letting someone else write your course work or attend assessments instead of you.</p>	<p>✗</p>	<p>This is another example of misconduct. Your friend may read what you have prepared instead, and give you some advice on your work.</p>
<p>A classmate on your apprenticeship course is going to be late for work and asks you to sign the attendance sheet on their behalf.</p> <p>You are taking a multiple-choice exam online. You are not feeling well and a friend who previously did the same course offers to take it instead of you.</p>	<p>Falsifying any documents, assessments, records or information +</p> <p>Impersonating or being impersonated by another learner (see glossary).</p>	<p>✗  ✗</p>	<p>In both cases, falsifying any kind of information or completing any assessment on behalf of someone else is always a serious violation of academic integrity rules.</p>



See below for learner actions that are acceptable   
or unacceptable 

Example	Academic integrity issue to avoid	 	Comments
<p>Last year you received an excellent grade on an essay you wrote. You are now taking another course, so you get permission from the college/centre to use some of the information from your essay in another course work.</p>	<p>Self-plagiarism: handing in course work for more than one course or module.</p>		<p>You need to check this with your course provider or check the Referencing Handbook at your college/centre. In this case, you did the right thing by asking permission.</p>
<p>You are working on a group video project with another learner. The learner didn't do their share of the work, so you design the whole video and hand it in with both your names.</p>	<p>Collusion</p>		<p>Both you and your classmate committed misconduct. Group work means everyone must do their share of the work.</p>
<p>You are working on a PowerPoint presentation with two other learners. You divide the presentation up into three jobs and you each complete your section before putting your names on the presentation and sending it to your teacher.</p>	<p>Collusion</p>		<p>You and your three classmates avoided collusion by sharing the work fairly and equally.</p>





This guide explains only **one form of misconduct in detail**: plagiarism. You can learn more about the other forms of misconduct in part 3 of this guide, where we show you some examples of misconduct.

## 2.6 What is plagiarism?

Plagiarism is taking or copying someone else's work and passing it off as your own. It's a serious type of misconduct (see glossary). It's to do with works or information you may find in other sources.



When you use information that you find in other places, but you don't say where it came from, then this is plagiarism. Even if you just forgot to include the reference, it's still plagiarism!

**Sometimes people commit plagiarism accidentally because they don't know enough about it, or don't mean to commit it.**



## Examples of plagiarism in assessment

**Assessment completed by someone else:**

Handing in work you got from someone else (with or without their knowledge).

**Copying without saying where you got the information/ material:**

This is about referencing and saying where you got the information from.

**Copying from someone or other sources:**

Copying from the internet, books, papers or any other published works. Also downloading, copying or buying work from sources or people and using it as your own.

**Using ideas you heard or got from someone else without giving them credit:**

This includes summarising information, paraphrasing of quotes (see glossary) or re-wording/ re-arranging sentences or sections without saying where you got them from.



## Examples of plagiarism in assessment



### **Using materials and content other than texts, books etc**

Using images, videos, audio materials, graphics (including charts and figures) statistics and any other materials which you have not created, written or made and without saying where or who you got them from.



### **Sharing assessment materials with another learner**

Sharing your own work with another learner or having them share their own work with you as part of your assessment is a form of academic cheating/ misconduct.



### **Changing information, text or any work to use as your own work**

Moving and/ or changing some words, sentences, images or any other material to pass off as your own work.



### **Quotes and quotation marks**

Using stuff verbatim (a sentence or exact quote) and referencing it but not including it in quotation marks ("...").



## Academic Integrity is:



**not** just about plagiarism and cheating



**not** only for academic work such as essay-writing or assignments



**not** only important for learners studying at level 7 or above



## Takeaway

What is important to remember from this?

- ✔ Avoid plagiarism at all costs and ask your teacher, tutor, trainer or support staff when you are not sure.
- ✔ Do your course work, exams or assessments honestly.
- ✔ Only take or use help to guide you through your learning and training. It's okay to ask someone for help if you're having some problems, but you can't get them to do the work for you!
- ✔ Never help or take part in anything that results in falsifying documentation, records, information or facts.
- ✔ Always get permission and clarification before you 'recycle' or reuse any work you did in the past.





## Examples of academic integrity in action

### 3.1 Example 1: an apprentice's understanding of academic integrity



- ▶ Sean is doing an apprenticeship. He's an apprentice (see glossary for 'apprentice').
- ▶ In his training, Sean must complete on-the-job and off-the-job assessment.
- ▶ Sean knows that he must take assessments to test his learning when he does a task with the help of a mentor (see glossary for 'mentor'), teacher or instructor.



## What kind of examples apply to Sean in this case?



- ▶ Sean is a new apprentice, so he asks his mentor about academic integrity because he is not sure where it fits into his learning.
- ▶ Sean's mentor explains that academic integrity in this case could mean showing honesty and integrity when Sean takes an exam, fills out an assessment record sheet or records his daily experiences (or progress) in a workbook.

Sean asks for some examples of his responsibilities as an apprentice. Each course or programme is different and so academic integrity is shown in different ways. He is given the following four examples:

**1**

Completed workbooks are your own work and the result of your honesty and how responsible you are.

**2**

The records of your on-the-job assessment show that you followed industry rules, for example workplace safety.

**3**

Your rights and responsibilities are the same as those of a professional. Your ETB, centre or college will have their own Apprentice Rights and Responsibilities Charter (see glossary).









## 4

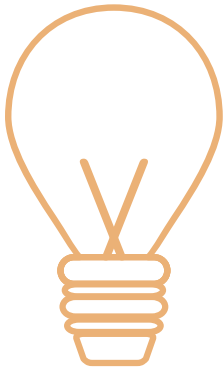
Off-the-job assessment and responsibilities like going to meetings or doing what is expected of you and doing anything that comes with the training you are taking.



## Takeaway

For work-based learning such as apprenticeships and traineeships (see glossary), here are some examples:

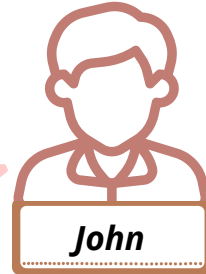
-  responsibility toward others (example: customers, communities or people you work with).
-  following a Code of Conduct (see glossary); rules, laws and procedures, for example: data protection, confidentiality etc.
-  handing in or doing work that involves the correct information, without falsifying or using someone else's work as your own.
-  following health and safety laws or workplace safety.





## 3.2 Example 2: misconduct (plagiarism) at NFQ level 3

John is a learner doing an NFQ level 3 course in Communications & Technology. For part of his communications assessment work, he must use and identify the risks and benefits of social networking technologies.



John has been using computers and technology as part of his course now for 3 months and already knows some of the dangers of social networking, but wants to use the internet to help him with the wording of his answers.



John starts his assessment work by doing the following:



John is working on his computer for his assessment.



He opens up a Word document and types his answers. He also uses the internet to search for information.



risks of social networking 🔍

John types '*risks of social networking*' into the search box using Google. He goes through several links until he finds what he needs.

John then copies text from the web pages and pastes it into his Word document. He adds a title to his document and spends some time making the page look nicer by changing colours, fonts and sizes.



John closes off his word file and is delighted with himself as he has learned some new things about the risks of social networking. He is also very pleased with himself as he has put a lot of time and effort into preparing this assessment. He is confident that he has done a good job.

## Reflecting Questions



- How did John commit plagiarism when working on his assessment?
- What would you do differently?

### What's wrong with this?

This is plagiarism, as John has copied directly from the internet source. He hasn't changed the wording and hasn't said where he got his information from.



### 3.3 Example 3: NFQ Level 4 assignment. Learners helping each other with assessment

#### Mary & Anne

Mary is a learner doing an NFQ level 4 course in Employment Skills. Mary has found her most recent assignment difficult and is unsure of how to complete it.



The assignment is due in a couple of days, and Mary is feeling very stressed. Her fellow learner, Anne, notices that Mary is struggling and shows her a copy of her completed assignment.



Later when their teacher is correcting the assignments, she notices that both Mary and Anne's assignments are identical and asks to speak to both learners.



The teacher explains that while it's OK to help each other, the assignment was meant to be completed individually. She requests that both learners review the assessment and do the work again.





Anne feels frustrated as she didn't intend for Mary to copy her work.



## Reflecting Questions



- What did Mary do wrong?
- What could she have done differently?
- Was Anne right in showing her work to Mary?
- What would you do differently?



## 3.4 Example 4: NFQ Level 5 course in Animal Care

PLC learners in NFQ levels 5 or 6 courses may be assessed in different ways throughout the course. Teachers encourage learners at levels 5 and 6 to take responsibility for their own learning. With the amount of self-directed learning involved in these levels, academic integrity would help you a great deal. It's a big part of your college work and assessment activities.



**Lucy**

Lucy is on an NFQ Level 5 course in Animal Care and the assessment tasks in her various modules involve skills demonstrations, exams, keeping a learner journal and writing assignments and projects.





- Lucy loves animals and has shown an aptitude for working with dogs in her course. Her calm manner reassures nervous dogs, and she has scored well in her skills demonstrations to date.



- Lucy also has a part-time job working in a dog shelter, which she loves. She sometimes misses classes to attend work and can end up being behind with her learner journal.



- Lucy's journal is not finished but she needs to show this to her teacher in a few days. She has not had the time to write anything in it in weeks and her job and home responsibilities don't leave her much time.







- Lucy stays up late one night and finds a few journal examples online. She relies on her memory to fill in some journal sections and copies the rest from the journal examples she found online. Lucy then hands in her journal without saying that some of the information is not her own.



- Lucy's teacher notices that something is not quite right in the journal. The teacher does an internet search and finds the templates Lucy used.



- Lucy is asked to do the journal again but this causes issues for her and the teacher because she now needs an extension to finish her journal.

## Reflecting Questions



- Lucy signs the plagiarism declaration on each of her assessment briefs but does she understand what plagiarism is?



- Lucy sometimes rushes her assessments to make the assessment deadline. She also may have missed some critical instruction in class. Is she more likely to cut and paste stuff from other sources if she's in a hurry or does she need help with the information in the assessment brief?
- Could Lucy benefit from support with academic writing and research skills from the learning support unit in her PLC?
- How do you think Lucy could be supported in her academic work?
- What would you do differently to make sure you would not be in danger of falsifying documents (like journals) or plagiarising?



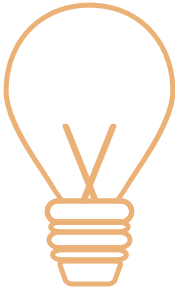
By combining examples from different learner journals in her own journal, Lucy is technically falsifying records. Journals must always be done with honesty and should show that the learner is taking them seriously by recording information regularly and accurately.

Lucy has also committed plagiarism because she copied information from online sources but didn't reference it in her journal.



## Final Takeaway



- 
- ✓ Ask your teacher, college or centre when you're not sure about academic integrity conduct/ misconduct.
  - ✓ Check referencing guidelines, Code of Conduct and any rights and responsibilities documents to make sure you're following academic integrity practices.
  - ✓ Always make sure your work is completed with fairness, honesty and responsibility and that it's done through your own efforts.

## Final Reflecting Questions



- What are the consequences of misconduct for yourself, your classmates, teachers and course provider?
- Which examples in this guide do you find to be the most useful? Why?
- How can academic integrity help you in your future learning and career?

**Academic integrity guidelines**

A set of rules and advice on how to complete your course work and work with others with fairness, honesty and responsibility.

**Accidental Plagiarism**

Copying or stealing someone's work without meaning to: by accident.

**Apprenticeship**

A programme in which someone learns a trade or profession by training and working under those already skilled in that trade or profession.

**Apprentice**

Someone in a programme to learn a trade or profession by learning under those already skilled in that trade or profession.

**Apprentice Rights Responsibilities Charter**

A document that outlines what is expected of the apprentice (learner), their duties and what their entitlements (rights) are.

**Assessment**

A method by which teachers and trainers evaluate, measure and grade the academic ability, learning progress or skill levels of their learners.

**Author**

The writer of a work such as a book, report, document, assignment etc.

**Charter**

An official document that outlines the rights and responsibilities of a group of people or organisations.

**Code of conduct**

A set of written rules that explains the standards and ethical behaviour required by a group of people in given situations or places, like a college or workplace.

**Collusion**

When two or more learners work together on assignments or projects that were meant to be completed by one person only.

**Conduct**

The way a person behaves. In this guide, 'conduct' means the way a person follows academic integrity rules and principles.

**Confidentiality**

A set of rules intended to keep certain information secret.

**Contract cheating**

When a learner pays someone to complete an assignment or course work for them.

**Course work**

Written or practical work that has to be completed during a course of study, separate from an exam, but counting towards the final grade.

**Essay Mills**

A company that will write an essay or piece of course work for money.

**Falsifying data or information**

Deleting, changing or manipulating data or information in order to misrepresent that information.

**Group projects**

A project or piece of course work where you work together with other people and submit a single piece of work.

**Impersonating**

An individual passing themselves off as another in order to complete an exam on their behalf.

**Health and Safety or workplace safety**

A set of rules and guidelines to prevent accidents, injuries and other forms of harm or danger in a work, public or shared environment.

**Mentor**

A professional whose job is to train, advise and support someone new to a trade, a job, a course or training programme.

**Misconduct**

Any action that gives you an unfair advantage or merit as a result of cheating or breaking academic integrity rules.

**Paragraphing**

The practice of dividing text into paragraphs, with a paragraph being a short collection of related sentences and a way of organising your text.

**Paraphrasing**

Rewriting and expressing someone else's ideas in your own words.

**Patchwork**

When an author takes small pieces from different sources and puts them together in one work without referencing them.

**Plagiarism**

Plagiarism is taking work done by someone else and passing it off as your own work without giving credit or referencing the work.

**Quoting/  
quotations**

Using someone else's exact words in your work. If you do quote someone, you must use quotation marks (" ") to mark the beginning and end of the quote and reference the source of the quote.

**Reference**

A reference means when you mention or insert the source where you got information in a piece of writing or course work. Examples of works that are not your own and must be referenced include images and other media material, ideas and facts you found in books, articles, websites, social media, TV... etc. and any other information that is not your own.



**Referencing handbook/ guide**

A book, document or webpage that provides information on how to correctly reference sources in a specific referencing style or styles.

**Reference list**

A list of all the sources that you included in a written piece of work, presentation, project etc. Any sources mentioned in a piece of work are put together in a reference list, in alphabetical order. This list is usually inserted at the end of your course work.

**Sensitive data**

Very personal data that must never be shared, like people's names, addresses and telephone numbers and which must be protected.

**Source (of reference/ information)**

The place (book, article, website etc.,) where you found the information that you are using.



<b>Support</b>	Provide assistance; a range of functions and services assisting learners.
<b>Traineeship</b>	Traineeships are training programmes where people learn as well as train in a college, centre or training setting. Traineeships also involve learning and training in the workplace and with employers.
<b>Work experience</b>	Spending a short-term period of time with a business or employer to gain practical skills, training and experience of a work environment.
<b>Work-based learning</b>	Work-based learning is a set up where learning happens in real-life environments and where learners can practice academic as well as technical and practical skills.











# Feedback

Your feedback is welcome. If there are parts of this guide that you don't understand or if you have ideas as to how it can be improved or any other queries, you can email [QualityETBI@etbi.ie](mailto:QualityETBI@etbi.ie) at any time or give us your thoughts by scanning the QR code below:



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