Malpractice and Plagiarism Policy
Atlas Star IT Centre

Purpose of the Policy
This policy outlines Atlas Star IT Centre's approach to managing incidents of malpractice and plagiarism involving staff and learners. It ensures the integrity of academic and professional standards and provides clear guidance on the investigation and consequences of such behaviour.

1. Definitions

Malpractice
Malpractice refers to any act that compromises the integrity of assessments, teaching, or the reputation of the Centre. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Cheating during examinations or assessments.

- Falsification or fabrication of data, records, or results.

- Collusion with others to gain unfair advantage.

- Misuse of assessment procedures or resources.

- Tampering with the work of others.

Plagiarism
Plagiarism is the presentation of someone else's work, ideas, or intellectual property as one's own without proper acknowledgement. This includes:

- Copying or using text, data, or images without citation.

- Submitting work purchased or acquired from a third party.

- Misrepresentation of AI-generated content as original work.

2. Use of AI Tools

Atlas Star IT Centre recognizes the growing use of AI tools for learning and assessment purposes. While AI tools may assist in understanding and content creation, the misuse of such tools to generate unoriginal work without acknowledgement constitutes plagiarism.
Policy on AI Usage:

- Any use of AI tools must be explicitly acknowledged.

- Learners and staff must ensure the originality and critical analysis in their work, supported by proper citations.

- Submitting fully AI-generated assessments as original work is strictly prohibited.

3. Reporting and Investigation Process

Raising a Concern

Concerns about malpractice or plagiarism may be raised by:

- Learners or staff directly involved.

- Whistleblowers who wish to remain anonymous.

- External reviewers or assessors.

Reports can be submitted via email to **admin@atlasstar.com.np** or in person to the Director.

Investigation Steps and Timelines:

1. **Initial Review (Within 5 Working Days):**

   - The Academic Integrity Officer reviews the report to determine its validity.

2. **Formal Investigation (Within 10 Working Days):**

   - If valid, a formal investigation is initiated, including interviews with involved parties and evidence collection (e.g., Turnitin reports, AI tool usage logs).

3. **Decision and Outcome (Within 15 Working Days):**

   - A decision is made based on collected evidence, and the outcome is communicated to all relevant parties.

4. Consequences of Malpractice/Plagiarism

Depending on the severity and recurrence, the consequences for malpractice/plagiarism may include:

- **For Learners:**

  - Warning or probation.

  - Resubmission of work with penalties.

  - Disqualification from assessments or programs.

- **For Staff:**

  - Formal warning.

  - Additional training or supervision.

  - Dismissal in severe cases.

Appeals Process:

Any party has the right to appeal the decision within 10 working days of the outcome notification. Appeals must be submitted in writing to the Appeals Committee.

5. Preventive Measures

- **Training:** All staff and learners will receive training on academic integrity and the appropriate use of AI tools.

- **Resources:** Plagiarism detection tools (e.g., Turnitin) and AI detection systems will be used to evaluate submissions.

- **Clear Guidelines:** Detailed guidance on referencing, citation, and acceptable AI tool usage will be provided during induction.

6. Whistleblowing

Atlas Star IT Centre encourages a culture of accountability and integrity. Individuals who report malpractice or plagiarism in good faith are protected under the Centre's whistleblowing policy. Retaliation against whistleblowers is strictly prohibited.

This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure compliance with evolving academic and technological standards.