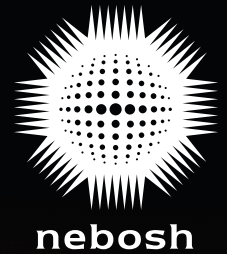


# NEBOSH Ethical Practice Report

July – September 2021



# NEBOSH Ethical Practice Report

Welcome to NEBOSH's Ethical Practice Report which publishes information about our approach to ethical practice and the outcomes of our activities in July-September 2021.

We employ a dedicated team of Ethical Practice experts who prevent and detect malpractice. They ensure that only people who demonstrate sufficient knowledge and understanding in their NEBOSH assessments receive a NEBOSH qualification. Cheats are caught and penalised; they do not have a place in the health and safety profession.

## What is malpractice?

Malpractice means 'any deliberate activity, neglect, default or other practice that compromises or could compromise the assessment process, the integrity of a qualification, the validity of a result or certificate, the reputation and credibility of NEBOSH, or the qualification or the wider qualifications community'

553 penalties were issued in the July-September 2021 reporting period, including 213 bans. A further 66 websites were taken down or had content removed and 197 social media infringements were reviewed and removed.

## Investigations

Our expert Ethical Practice team use a range of tools and techniques to gather evidence and information to determine if a full investigation is required and whether malpractice has taken place. They also review every piece of information and intelligence we receive from third parties in relation to a potential malpractice incidents.

When it is found that malpractice has taken place, they also determine what the appropriate penalties are.

In the April-June 2021 report we mentioned a project to automate parts of our process to improve detection and investigation speed. That project has now been completed and we automated our plagiarism checking using Turnitin software. This means that learner answer papers are now checked at the point of submission instead of afterwards. This makes the process of identifying malpractice much quicker and, as a result, 1,811 cases of potential plagiarism are currently underway.

194 investigations were concluded in the quarter, of which 56% were related to paper-based or project assignments. These resulted in 287 learners receiving penalties. A further 141 investigations remain ongoing.

Some fraudulent organisations and people try to buy and sell answers to our assessments. In one example someone had registered as a learner, written answers and then posted them on a messaging app. He was banned from NEBOSH assessments for life. Where these answers – or parts thereof – were identified as having been submitted by other learners, the learners' results were declared void and sanctions applied where appropriate.

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## Working together

Our Learning Partners and trained Examiners also contribute to maintaining the integrity of NEBOSH's qualifications and rooting out would-be cheats. 56% of the concluded investigations this quarter related to paper-based or project assignments, many of which were noticed by our trained Examiners during the marking process.

Learning Partners also reported 202 potential malpractice instances to us where they had concerns about the conduct of a learner during the assessment process.

## Penalties and sanctions

The penalties applied for malpractice activity will depend on the severity of the offence and the evidence collected during the investigation process. Sanctions can range from results being voided to lifetime bans. The number of penalties is greater than the number of learners punished, as one learner can receive multiple penalties. For example, if a learner has two units voided and receives a ban, that equates to three penalties.

From the concluded investigations, 553 penalties were issued to 287 learners in this reporting period. They included:

- 6 lifetime bans
- 10 five-year bans
- 62 three-year bans
- 39 two-year bans
- 96 one-year bans

One Learning Partner was also investigated and penalised in July to September. The organisation was found to be offering an 'exam-only' service which is prohibited. Learning is a key part of our qualifications and NEBOSH Learning Partners must provide quality learning before a learner is permitted to take any of our assessments. The Learning Partner in this instance had its accreditation terminated.

## Removing fraudulent online content

NEBOSH monitors websites, blogs and social media content daily to identify any content that could jeopardise NEBOSH's reputation or the integrity of our qualifications, for example content that:

- Falsely promotes an association with NEBOSH
- Sells fake NEBOSH certificates
- Sells training from an unaccredited organisation
- Helps learners to answer a live assessment
- Sells or distributes pre-written answers

When we find such content, we work with the website owners and internet providers to remove it from the internet. 66 websites were closed down or had content removed as a result of our investigations in the reporting period. We also closed 197 investigations into infringements from social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, eBay, WhatsApp and YouTube. When learners are found to be engaging in such activities – such as offering assessment assistance in a WhatsApp group – they will be penalised, usually with a lifetime ban from NEBOSH assessments.

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## Reporting malpractice to NEBOSH

We review every piece of information and intelligence that is sent to us. Information we received from one person led us to find 68 learners who had shared an answer template written by a third party. When we compared the learners' answers – many of which were handwritten – there was clear evidence that copying had taken place. All of the results were voided and 54 people received a ban. In a change to our processes, we now only accept electronic document digital assessment submissions – this means that we can much more quickly and easily check for similar/identical answers.

If you have any evidence about possible malpractice, please report it to NEBOSH's dedicated team of experts at [postassessment@nebosh.org.uk](mailto:postassessment@nebosh.org.uk). Please note, for privacy reasons, we cannot provide an update on individual cases or investigations to you.

Together we can stamp out malpractice and protect the integrity of the health and safety profession.

A copy of NEBOSH's Malpractice Policy is also available to read on our website [here](#).

At a glance: July - September 2021



**287**  
learners  
identified  
engaged in  
malpractice

**553**  
penalties



**6** LIFETIME  
BANS

**1** LEARNING PARTNERS'  
ACCREDITATION  
TERMINATED

**213**  
BANS

**197**  
cases of fraudulent  
activity on social  
media resolved

**66** websites  
shut  
down or  
had content removed

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