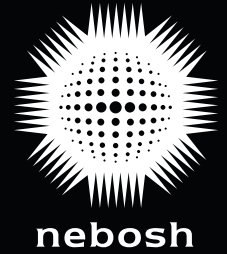


# NEBOSH Ethical Practice Report



New online verification platform launched

April-June 2021



# NEBOSH Ethical Practice Report

Welcome to the second edition of NEBOSH's Ethical Practice Report which publishes information about our approach to ethical practice and the outcomes of our activities.

NEBOSH's stance is clear: cheats are not welcome in our community. You have to study hard and demonstrate your knowledge and understanding via our assessments to gain a NEBOSH qualification. Unfortunately, some people try to take the easy route by cheating - and this happens with all types of qualifications, not just NEBOSH – so we employ a dedicated team of Ethical Practice experts who prevent and detect malpractice.

Any person or organisation caught engaging in such activities is penalised. 529 penalties were issued in the April to June 2021 reporting period, including 230 bans. A further 74 websites were taken down or had content removed and nearly 500 social media infringements were reviewed and removed.

## 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'

## Investigations

Every piece of information and intelligence we receive in relation to a potential malpractice incident is reviewed. Our expert team then determines whether a full investigation is required. When it is, they use a range of tools and techniques to gather evidence and information to determine whether malpractice has taken place, the extent of that malpractice, and what the appropriate penalties are.

600 potential malpractice incidents were identified in the quarter. And, from April to June, 206 investigations were concluded – 42% of which focused on paper-based exams or practical assessments. This included an IG2 cohort where 27 learners were found to have colluded and plagiarised in the production of their assignment – they each had their result voided and received a ban.

Investigations may include multiple learners or organisations, and some investigations may span several months/reporting periods. For example, a further 187 investigations are currently in progress.

The introduction of digital assessments in 2020 provided people from more countries with the ability to gain a NEBOSH qualification when they may have previously been unable to access an in-person training course or assessment. In this quarter we have recruited another colleague to our Ethical Practice team to assist us with the increased assessment numbers and the processing of allegations and investigations. This is complemented by an ongoing project to automate parts of our process to improve detection and investigation speed – more details to come in a future report.

# NEBOSH Ethical Practice Report

## A robust process

Alongside NEBOSH's expert Ethical Practice team, our Learning Partners and trained Examiners contribute to maintaining the integrity of NEBOSH's qualifications and rooting out would-be cheats.

In one case, 10 learners were identified by our Examiners as providing suspicious answers (identical content and phrases). Our investigation found evidence that they had shared an answer template – all 10 learners had their results voided and bans were issued.

229 potential incidents were flagged to us by Learning Partners. One such example was where two learners aroused suspicion during the closing interview stage of the assessment process – on further investigation we found extensive identical content in their answer papers. Both learners had their results voided and received three-year bans.

## 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.

## Learner penalties

From the 206 concluded investigations, 529 penalties were issued to 299 learners from April to June 2021. 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.

These penalties included 230 bans (a small increase on the previous quarter):

- 16 five-year bans
- 107 three-year bans
- 52 two-year bans
- 55 one-year bans

## Learning Partner penalties

Three Learning Partners are currently suspended due to malpractice allegations. Suspensions can be applied in response to serious allegations of malpractice, when an investigation is ongoing and evidence is being collected.

Where a Learning Partner is found to engage in malpractice its accreditation can be permanently revoked and NEBOSH terminated the accreditation of two organisations during the quarter. One was found to have used a tutor whose approval to deliver NEBOSH qualifications had been withdrawn and whose Lead Tutor had not fulfilled the strict requirements of the role.

In the other case, an organisation provided inaccurate and misleading data from the closing interview stage of our digital assessment process.

# NEBOSH Ethical Practice Report

## New verification platform launched

In the health and safety profession, where lives are at stake, it is crucial for employers to check that potential workers hold a genuine qualification. What's more, checking the authenticity of qualifications can help maintain the integrity of the health and safety profession around the world.

In April 2021 we launched a new, online verification platform - it was used 19,000 times in the first 24 hours of public launch! More than 47,000 verification requests were subsequently submitted to the platform in this quarter. Over 30 organisations have also signed the 'Safety in our hands' pledge, which commits them to using the platform during recruitment for health and safety professionals.

The online verification platform can be accessed via the NEBOSH website here:

[www.nebosh.org.uk/online-verifications](http://www.nebosh.org.uk/online-verifications)

## Taking action online

Our IPR (Intellectual Property Rights) expert monitors websites, blogs and social media content daily to identify any content that could jeopardise NEBOSH's reputation or integrity of our qualifications, for example sites that publish fraudulent content, falsely promote an association with NEBOSH and sell fake NEBOSH training or certificates. When we find such content, we work with the website owners and internet providers to remove it from the internet. As a result of our activities, 74 websites were taken down or had content removed from 1 April to 30 June 2021; an increase of 45% on the previous quarter.

## Social media

Fraudsters try to make money or personal gain off NEBOSH's reputation; they use social media sites to sell fraudulent certificates, claim to hold a NEBOSH qualification, advertise fraudulent courses and/or exams for sale, 'help to answer' videos, and counterfeit guides and papers. Some people who have been penalised by NEBOSH also spread false information to try and bring NEBOSH into disrepute.

During the quarter we closed 484 investigations into infringements from social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, eBay and YouTube. We also monitor WhatsApp groups to detect the presence of learners and gain intelligence about possible malpractice.

### Reporting malpractice to NEBOSH

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)

We review every piece of information and intelligence that is sent to us. Please note, for privacy reasons, we cannot provide an update on individual cases or investigations to you.

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

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

At a glance: April - June 2021



**299**  
learners  
identified  
engaged in  
malpractice

**529**  
penalties



**230**  
**BANS**

**3** LEARNING PARTNERS'  
ACCREDITATION  
**SUSPENDED**

**2** LEARNING PARTNERS'  
ACCREDITATION  
**TERMINATED**



Over 47,000  
qualification  
verification checks  
submitted to new  
online platform

**484**  
cases of fraudulent  
activity on social  
media resolved

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

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