



Acceptable Use of IT Policy

For Apprentices and Learners

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1. Purpose

This policy establishes the acceptable use of Information Technology (IT) resources provided by Hybrid Training Centre (HTC). It aims to:

- Ensure IT resources are used responsibly, ethically, and in accordance with HTC's educational mission
- Protect the security, integrity, and confidentiality of HTC's IT infrastructure and data
- Comply with relevant legislation, regulatory requirements, and awarding body expectations
- Create a safe digital learning environment for all learners and apprentices
- Support learners in developing professional digital skills for their careers

2. Scope

This policy applies to all apprentices and learners enrolled on any HTC programme, including apprenticeships, Skills Bootcamps, and commercial training courses.

The policy covers all HTC-owned or HTC-managed IT resources, including but not limited to:

- Desktop computers, laptops, tablets, and mobile devices
- Network infrastructure including wired and wireless connections
- Software applications and learning platforms (including e-portfolio systems)
- Email accounts and communication tools
- Internet access provided through HTC facilities
- Cloud storage and file-sharing services provided by HTC

3. Definitions

Term	Definition
IT Resources	All hardware, software, networks, and services provided or managed by HTC for educational purposes
Learner	Any individual enrolled on a Skills Bootcamp or commercial training programme
Apprentice	Any individual enrolled on an apprenticeship programme delivered by HTC
Personal Data	Information relating to an identified or identifiable individual, as defined by UK GDPR
Malware	Malicious software designed to damage, disrupt, or gain unauthorised access to computer systems

4. Regulatory Framework

This policy is informed by and supports compliance with:

- **Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR** – governing the processing and protection of personal data
- **Computer Misuse Act 1990** – prohibiting unauthorised access to computer systems

- **Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988** – protecting intellectual property rights
- **Equality Act 2010** – ensuring equitable access to IT resources
- **Ofsted Education Inspection Framework** – expectations for safe and effective use of technology in learning
- **ESFA Funding Rules** – requirements for appropriate use of funded resources
- **City & Guilds Centre Approval Requirements** – awarding body expectations for technology use in assessment

5. Responsibilities

5.1 Learner and Apprentice Responsibilities

All learners and apprentices must:

- Read, understand, and comply with this policy
- Use IT resources solely for legitimate educational and professional development purposes
- Protect their login credentials and never share them with others
- Report any security incidents, suspicious activity, or policy violations immediately
- Treat all users with respect in digital communications

5.2 HTC Responsibilities

HTC will:

- Provide appropriate IT resources to support learning and assessment
- Maintain reasonable security measures to protect systems and data
- Provide guidance and support for appropriate IT use
- Respond promptly to reported security incidents
- Review and update this policy regularly

6. General Principles

Respectful Use: Use IT resources in a manner that is respectful to others and consistent with HTC's educational mission and professional standards.

Compliance: Adhere to all relevant laws, regulations, and HTC policies when using IT resources.

Security: Protect the integrity, availability, and confidentiality of HTC's IT resources and data.

Professional Conduct: Recognise that your digital behaviour reflects on you professionally and on HTC as an organisation.

7. Acceptable Use

7.1 Educational Purposes

IT resources should primarily be used for:

- Accessing and completing coursework, assignments, and assessments
- Research related to your programme of study

- Communication with tutors, skills coaches, and assessors
- Accessing e-portfolio systems and learning management platforms
- Preparing evidence for End-Point Assessment

7.2 Professional Development

The following professional development activities are encouraged, provided they do not interfere with learning responsibilities:

- Accessing online tutorials, webinars, and industry resources
- Researching career development opportunities
- Developing technical skills relevant to your qualification
- Networking with industry professionals through appropriate platforms

8. Unacceptable Use

The following activities are strictly prohibited:

8.1 Excessive Personal Use

- Using IT resources for personal purposes (gaming, social media, streaming) during teaching or learning time
- Activities that consume excessive bandwidth or system resources

8.2 Unauthorised Access

- Attempting to access systems, data, or resources without authorisation
- Bypassing or attempting to bypass security measures
- Accessing another person's account without explicit permission
- Using tools designed to probe or test system vulnerabilities

8.3 Illegal Activities

- Downloading, distributing, or storing pirated software, music, videos, or other copyrighted material
- Engaging in any activity that violates UK law
- Distributing malware or participating in cyberattacks

8.4 Inappropriate Content

- Accessing, downloading, creating, or sharing content that is offensive, obscene, pornographic, or violent
- Content that is discriminatory, harassing, or promotes hatred based on protected characteristics
- Extremist or radicalising material

8.5 Commercial Activities

- Using HTC IT resources for personal financial gain
- Operating a business or conducting commercial activities using HTC resources

9. Security and Privacy

9.1 Password Management

- Use strong, unique passwords for all HTC accounts (minimum 8 characters, including uppercase, lowercase, numbers, and symbols)
- Never share your passwords with anyone, including staff or fellow learners
- Change passwords immediately if you suspect they have been compromised
- Log out of systems when leaving a workstation unattended

9.2 Data Protection

- Respect the privacy of others; do not access, use, or share personal data without authorisation
- Handle personal and sensitive information in accordance with UK GDPR requirements
- Do not store personal data on unsecured devices or locations
- Report any data breaches or potential data protection issues immediately to your tutor or the Head of Operations

9.3 Reporting Security Incidents

Report immediately to your tutor or HTC staff if you:

- Suspect your account has been compromised
- Notice suspicious activity on any system
- Receive suspicious emails (phishing attempts)
- Accidentally access inappropriate content
- Discover a vulnerability in HTC systems

10. Use of Networks and Devices

10.1 Network Access

- Connect to HTC networks only using approved devices and credentials
- Do not use personal routers, mobile hotspots, or VPNs without explicit authorisation
- Do not attempt to modify network settings or infrastructure

10.2 Device Management

- HTC-owned devices must be used responsibly and maintained in good condition
- Do not install unauthorised software on HTC devices
- Do not make hardware modifications or remove security software
- Report any damage or malfunction immediately

10.3 Internet Use

- Use the internet in a manner consistent with HTC's educational mission
- Avoid websites known to host malware, inappropriate content, or illegal material
- Be aware that HTC may filter internet content to maintain a safe learning environment

11. Email and Communication Tools

- Use your HTC-provided email address for all official communications related to your programme
- Maintain professional and respectful language in all digital communications
- Do not send or forward spam, chain letters, or unsolicited messages
- Do not use email to send or receive large attachments that may impact system performance
- Be aware that HTC email and communication tools may be monitored for compliance and security purposes

12. Social Media

- Be mindful of your association with HTC when using social media, both during and outside learning hours
- Do not post content that could negatively impact HTC's reputation or violate its values
- Do not share confidential information about HTC, staff, or fellow learners on social media
- Manage your privacy settings carefully, recognising that even 'private' posts can become public
- Do not engage in cyberbullying, harassment, or discriminatory behaviour online

13. Artificial Intelligence Tools

The use of AI tools (such as ChatGPT, Copilot, or similar) is subject to the following guidelines:

- **Assessment Work:** AI tools must not be used to complete assessed work unless explicitly permitted by your tutor. Using AI to generate work submitted as your own constitutes academic malpractice.
- **Learning Support:** AI tools may be used as a learning aid to understand concepts, provided you do not submit AI-generated content as your own work.
- **Data Privacy:** Never input personal data, confidential information, or sensitive business information into AI tools.
- **Critical Thinking:** Always verify AI-generated information, as these tools can produce inaccurate or misleading content.

14. Monitoring and Compliance

To ensure the security of its IT infrastructure and compliance with this policy, HTC reserves the right to:

- Monitor network traffic and system usage
- Review email and communications sent using HTC systems
- Inspect files stored on HTC devices and systems
- Filter and block access to inappropriate websites
- Conduct audits of IT resource usage

Monitoring is conducted in accordance with relevant legislation and HTC policies. Learners and apprentices have no expectation of privacy when using HTC IT resources.

15. Breach and Disciplinary Action

15.1 Consequences of Policy Violation

Violations of this policy may result in:

- Verbal or written warning
- Temporary or permanent suspension of IT access privileges
- Disciplinary action under HTC's Learner Disciplinary Policy
- Dismissal from the apprenticeship or learning programme
- Referral to law enforcement for illegal activities

15.2 Appeal Process

Learners and apprentices have the right to appeal any disciplinary action through HTC's Appeals and Complaints Procedure. Appeals must be submitted in writing within 10 working days of the disciplinary decision.

16. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed:

- Annually, or sooner if required by changes in legislation, technology, or regulatory requirements
- Following any significant IT security incident
- As part of HTC's continuous improvement process

Learners and apprentices will be informed of any significant changes to this policy.

17. Related Policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Safeguarding Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Learner Disciplinary Policy
- Appeals and Complaints Procedure
- Assessment Malpractice Policy

Appendix A: Acknowledgement Form

By signing below, I confirm that I have:

- Read and understood the Acceptable Use of IT Policy
- Had the opportunity to ask questions about any aspects I did not understand
- Agreed to comply with this policy throughout my time at Hybrid Training Centre
- Understood the consequences of breaching this policy
- Agreed that HTC may monitor my use of IT resources as outlined in this policy

**Name of
Learner/Apprentice:**

Programme:

Signature:

Date:

This policy supports a secure, productive, and respectful digital environment that benefits all learners, apprentices, and the Hybrid Training Centre community.

Policy Approval

Signature:

Date:

Sophie Gilmore
Group CEO