



## **ASSESSMENT MALPRACTICE POLICY**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Malpractice consists of those acts which undermine the integrity and validity of assessment, the certification of qualifications and / or damage the authority of those responsible for conducting the assessment and certification.

This Policy applies to actions (or attempted actions) of malpractice by learners and College staff.

### **AIMS**

The policy on malpractice aims to: -

- define malpractice in the context of assessment and certification.
- reduce the risk of learners and staff being involved in malpractice.
- set out the rights and responsibilities, with regard to malpractice, of the learner and staff.

### **POLICY**

Attempting to or actually carrying out any malpractice activity is not permitted by University Academy Holbeach.

In all cases of suspected malpractice Awarding Body procedures and practices must be followed. Within the awarding body requirements University Academy Holbeach will respond effectively and openly to all requests for an investigation into an incident or a suspected incident of malpractice. In such cases the Head Teacher or an appropriate nominee will inform learners and centre staff of their responsibilities and rights.

Awarding bodies usually require that Heads of Centre or their nominees are expected to supervise investigations resulting from allegations of malpractice. Also they may reserve the right, in suspected cases of malpractice, to withhold the issuing of results / certificates while an investigation is in progress. Depending on the outcome of the investigation results / certificates may be released or withheld.

## **GUIDANCE ON ASSESSMENT MALPRACTICE**

- Assessors in centre should ask learners to declare that their work is their own.
- For internally assessed units, assessors are responsible for checking the validity of the learner's work.
- For externally assessed units the learner must sign a statement of authenticity.

## **POSITIVE STEPS BY ALL STAFF TO PREVENT OR REDUCE THE OCCURRENCE OF LEARNER MALPRACTICE**

These include: -

- using the induction period and the student handbook to inform learners of the centre's policy on malpractice and the penalties for attempted and actual incidents of malpractice.
- showing learners the appropriate formats to record cited texts and other materials or information sources including websites. Learners should not be discouraged from conducting research; indeed evidence of relevant research often contributes to the achievement of higher grades. However, the submitted work must show evidence that the learner has interpreted and synthesised appropriate information and has acknowledged any sources used.
- introducing procedures for assessing work in a way that reduces or identifies malpractice, eg plagiarism, collusion, cheating, etc. These procedures may
- include: -
  - periods of supervised sessions during which evidence for assignments / tasks / coursework is produced by the learner;
  - altering assessment assignments / tasks / tools on a regular basis;
  - the assessor assessing work for a single assignment / task in a single session for the complete cohort of learners;
  - using oral questions with learners to ascertain their understanding of the concepts, application, etc within their work;
  - assessors getting to know their learners' styles and abilities, etc;
  - ensuring access controls are installed to prevent learners from accessing and using other people's work when using networked computers.

## **POSITIVE STEPS TO PREVENT OR REDUCE THE OCCURRENCE OF STAFF MALPRACTICE**

These include: -

Senior Managers, Heads of Department, Leads, Course Coordinators and Internal Verifiers) will ensure resources are in place and all staff are aware of the need to keep mark schemes secure.

Departmental management will ensure that course academic activity (eg, teaching and learning and assessment) is carried out in an; open, transparent, team based and accountable way. All levels of the organisation should be made aware of their delegated responsibilities to be alert to possible malpractice and their collective accountability. This is connected with individual contracts and collective shared professional values. No single member of staff should be allowed to act in isolation of the course team or curriculum management to reduce the risk of unauthorised actions and possible malpractice.

Examples of malpractice may include: alteration of mark scheme, alteration of assessment and grading criteria, assisting learners in the production of work for assessment, where the support has the potential to influence the outcomes of assessment, for example where the assistance involves centre staff producing work for the learner, producing falsified witness statements, for example for evidence the learner has not generated, allowing evidence, which is known by the staff member not to be the learner's own, to be included in a learner's assignment / task / portfolio / coursework, misusing the conditions for special learner requirements, for example where learners are permitted support, such as an.

Amanuensis, this is permissible up to the point where the support has the potential to influence the outcome of the assessment, failing to keep learner computer files secure, falsifying records / certificates, for example by alteration, substitution, or by fraud, fraudulent certificate claims, that is claiming for a certificate prior to the learner completing all the requirements of assessment, failing to keep assessment / examination / test papers secure prior to the assessment / examination / test, obtaining unauthorised access to assessment / examination / test material prior to an assessment / examination / test.

## **EXAMPLES OF LEARNER ASSESSMENT MALPRACTICE**

The following are examples of malpractice by learners; this list is not exhaustive and other instances of malpractice may be considered by the College and awarding bodies at their discretion: -

- plagiarism by copying and passing off, as the learner's own, the whole or part(s) of another person's work, including artwork, images, words, computer generated work, thoughts, inventions and / or discoveries whether published or not, with or without the originator's permission and without appropriately acknowledging the source;
- collusion by working collaboratively with other learners to produce work that is submitted as individual learner work. Learners should not be discouraged from teamwork, as this is an essential key skill for many sectors and subject areas, but the use of minutes, allocating tasks, agreeing outcomes, etc are an essential part of team work and this must be made clear to the learners;
- impersonation by pretending to be someone else in order to produce the work for another or arranging for another to take one's place in an assessment / examination / test;
- fabrication of results and / or evidence;
- failing to abide by the instructions or advice of an assessor, a supervisor, an invigilator, or awarding body conditions in relation to the assessment / examination / test rules, regulations and security;
- misuse of assessment / examination material;
- introduction and / or use of unauthorised material contra to the requirements of supervised assessment / examination / test conditions, for example: notes, study guides, personal organisers, calculators, dictionaries (when prohibited), personal stereos, mobile phones or other similar electronic devices;
- obtaining, receiving, exchanging or passing on information which could be assessment / examination / test related (or the attempt to) by means of talking or written papers / notes during supervised assessment / examination / test conditions;
- behaving in such a way as to undermine the integrity of the assessment / examination / test;

- the alteration of any results document, including certificates;
- cheating to gain an unfair advantage.

### **EXAMPLES OF CENTRE STAFF ASSESSMENT MALPRACTICE**

The following are examples of malpractice by centre staff. The list is not exhaustive and other instances of malpractice may be considered by the College or awarding bodies at its discretion: -

- failing to keep mark schemes secure;
- alteration of mark scheme;
- alteration of assessment and grading criteria;
- assisting learners in the production of work for assessment, where the support has the potential to influence the outcomes of assessment, for example where the assistance involves centre staff producing work for the learner;
- producing falsified witness statements, for example for evidence the learner has not generated;
- allowing evidence, which is known by the staff member not to be the learner's own, to be included in a learner's assignment / task / portfolio / coursework;
- misusing the conditions for special learner requirements, for example where learners are permitted support, such as an amanuensis, this is permissible up to the point where the support has the potential to influence the outcome of the assessment;
- failing to keep learner computer files secure;
- falsifying records / certificates, for example by alteration, substitution, or by fraud;
- fraudulent certificate claims, that is claiming for a certificate prior to the learner completing all the requirements of assessment;
- failing to keep assessment / examination / test papers secure prior to the assessment / examination / test;
- obtaining unauthorised access to assessment / examination / test material prior to an assessment / examination / test.

## **INVESTIGATING ALLEGED MALPRACTICE**

When dealing with alleged malpractice in a centre, awarding bodies will deal primarily with the Head Teacher / Centre Coordinator or his / her nominated representative. As part of the investigation awarding bodies retain the right to: -

- involve the learner and others in the investigation process;
- deal with the learner (if aged 19 or above) and / or the learner's representative. This may occur, for example, when a learner's account of events is at variance with that of the centre. During the investigation period the release of results / certificate may be withheld, pending the outcome of the investigation.

If malpractice is discovered by an awarding body representative (eg EV, examiner, moderator, etc) or has been reported directly to the awarding body by a third party, the awarding body will conduct an investigation in a form commensurate with the nature of the malpractice allegation. Such an investigation will require the full support of the Head of Centre / Head Teacher and all personnel linked to the allegation. In suspected cases of malpractice that involve the awarding body representative (eg EV, etc) the awarding body will conduct an investigation appropriate to the nature of the allegation.

## **MALPRACTICE DISCOVERED BY A CENTRE**

This policy on malpractice is based on awarding body policy statements. Any malpractice or attempted acts of malpractice, which has influenced the assessment outcomes, must be reported by the centre to the awarding body. Guidance on the procedure for reporting malpractice incidents to the awarding body can be found in the particular awarding bodies Operating Manual for Centres notes, eg in I.M.I Awards case also at [www.imiawards.org.uk](http://www.imiawards.org.uk), where any alleged incident of malpractice brought to I.M.I Awards attention after the issue of certificates will result in a full investigation by I.M.I Awards. Depending on the outcome of the investigation, certificates may be recalled and declared invalid.

## **DEALING WITH MALPRACTICE**

It is the responsibility of the Head Teacher or nominees to carry out an investigation into allegations of malpractice. Investigations into alleged malpractice against the Principal will normally be conducted by the Chair of the Governing Body or an appointed nominee. The alleged incident must be reported to the awarding body following the process described in their documentation at the earliest opportunity. Awarding bodies may reserve the right to carry out an independent investigation in full and full

cooperation from the College will be given in such cases. If the College discovers or suspects anyone of malpractice, the College will make the accused fully aware (preferably in writing) at the earliest opportunity of the nature of the alleged malpractice and of the possible consequences should malpractice be proven. If a learner is under 19 years of age, the learner's guardian must also be informed. If the College is accusing anyone of malpractice, the College must give the accused the opportunity to respond (preferably in writing) to the allegations made. The College will also inform anyone accused of malpractice of the avenues for appealing should a judgment be made against them.

Awarding bodies reserve the right to access any documents held by the centre in relation to alleged malpractice. Also, as required by the regulator, awarding bodies may report to the regulatory authorities certain cases (eg where members of staff are found to have committed malpractice) and include details of the action taken by the Head of Centre / Principal, the Governing Body or the responsible employer. It may be necessary during this process to notify the funding authorities and for awarding bodies to share information and may have to notify the police in some cases of malpractice.

## **PENALTIES AND SANCTIONS APPLIED BY AN AWARDING BODY**

Where malpractice against a centre / member of staff / learner is proven, awarding bodies will consider whether the integrity of its assessments / examinations / tests might be jeopardised if the centre / member of staff / learner in question were to be involved in future assessments / examinations / tests with that awarding body. Awarding bodies may take action to protect the integrity of its assessments / examinations / tests in the future.

This action may include: -

- refusing to accept assessment / examination entries from a centre in cases where malpractice is established;
- reserving the right to withdraw programme approval from centres where malpractice has been identified.

## **APPEALS**

Awarding bodies have established procedures for centres that are considering appeals against penalties and sanctions arising from malpractice. Eg appeals against a decision made by Edexcel will normally be accepted only from Heads of Centres / Principals (on behalf of learners and / or members of staff) and from individual

members of centre staff (in respect of a decision taken against them personally).

Further information on appeals may be found in the qualification policy statement on Appeals.

## **REFERENCES**

JCQ Malpractice Site

For policy on malpractice relating to GCSE, AS, GCE, AVCE, GNVQ and Key Skills qualifications see the JCQ publication Guidance for dealing with instances of suspected malpractice in examinations, the latest issue ([www.jcq.org.uk](http://www.jcq.org.uk)). Assessment malpractice Issue Code MAL 04-06 2

[http://www.jcq.org.uk/qualifications/exam\\_documents/regulations\\_guidelines/index.cfm?option=6](http://www.jcq.org.uk/qualifications/exam_documents/regulations_guidelines/index.cfm?option=6)