

Malpractice & Maladministration Policy

Introduction

This policy is aimed at our customers, including learners, who are delivering/registered on NTC programmes or courses, approved qualifications or units within or outside the UK and who are involved in suspected or actual malpractice/maladministration. It is also for use by our staff to ensure they deal with all malpractice and maladministration investigations in a consistent manner.

It sets out the steps our centre, and learners or other personnel must follow when reporting suspected or actual cases of malpractice/maladministration and our responsibilities in dealing with such cases. It also sets out the procedural steps we will follow when reviewing the cases.

Centre's responsibility

It is important that all staff involved in the management, assessment and quality assurance of our qualifications, and learners, are fully aware of the contents of the policy and we have arrangements in place to prevent and investigate instances of malpractice and maladministration.

Definition of Malpractice

Malpractice is essentially any activity or practice which deliberately contravenes regulations and compromises the integrity of the internal or external assessment process and/or the validity of certificates.

It covers any deliberate actions, neglect, default or other practice that compromises, or could compromise:

- the assessment process;
- the integrity of a regulated qualification;
- the validity of a result or certificate;
- the reputation and credibility of NTC; or,
- the qualification or the wider qualifications community.

Malpractice may include a range of issues from the failure to maintain appropriate records or systems, to the deliberate falsification of records in order to claim certificates.

For the purpose of this policy this term also covers misconduct and forms of unnecessary discrimination or bias towards certain or groups of learners.

Definition of Maladministration

Maladministration is essentially any activity or practice which results in non-compliance with administrative regulations and requirements and includes the application of persistent mistakes or poor administration.

Examples of maladministration

- Persistent failure to adhere to our learner registration and certification procedures.
- Persistent failure to adhere to our centre recognition and/or qualification requirements and/or
- associated actions assigned to the centre
- Late learner registrations (both infrequent and persistent)
- Unreasonable delays in responding to requests and/or communications.
- Inaccurate claim for certificates
- Failure to maintain appropriate auditable records, e.g. certification claims and/or forgery of evidence
- Withholding of information, by deliberate act or omission, from us which is required to assure Active

Examples of malpractice

- Failure to carry out internal assessment, internal moderation or internal verification in accordance with our requirements
- Deliberate failure to adhere to our learner registration and certification procedures.
- Deliberate failure to continually adhere to our centre recognition and/or qualification approval requirements or actions assigned to your centre
- Deliberate failure to maintain appropriate auditable records, e.g. certification claims and/or forgery of evidence
- Fraudulent claim(s) for certificates

- Intentional withholding of information from us which is critical to maintaining the rigor of quality assurance and standards of qualifications
- Collusion or permitting collusion in exams/assessments
- Learners still working towards qualification after certification claims have been made
- Plagiarism by learners/staff
- Copying from another learner (including using ICT to do so).
- Misuse of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools by students for academic dishonesty

Consequences of Malpractice and Plagiarism

For Learners:

- First offense: A formal warning and opportunity to resubmit the work or take the assessment again, depending on the severity of the malpractice or plagiarism.
- Second offense: A reduced grade or mark for the assignment, coursework, or exam, or disqualification from the assessment.
- Third offense: A formal disciplinary hearing and potential suspension or expulsion from the institution.

For Staff:

- First offense: A formal warning, retraining on academic integrity, or reassignment of duties, depending on the severity of the malpractice or plagiarism.
- Second offense: Suspension or termination of employment, depending on the severity of the offense.

Process for making an allegation of malpractice or maladministration

Anybody who identifies or is made aware of suspected or actual cases of malpractice or maladministration at any time must immediately notify the Academic Head. In doing so they should put them in writing/email and enclose appropriate supporting evidence.

- All allegations must include (where possible):
- Learner's name and NTC registration number
- NTC's staff members name and job role - if they are involved in the case
- Details of the course/qualification affected or nature of the service affected
- Nature of the suspected or actual malpractice and associated dates details and outcome of any initial investigation carried out by the centre or anybody else involved in the case, including any mitigating circumstances

The Academic Head will then conduct an initial investigation prior to ensure that staff involved in the initial investigation are competent and have no personal interest in the outcome of the investigation.

In all cases of suspected malpractice and maladministration reported we'll protect the identity of the 'informant' in accordance with our duty of confidentiality and/or any other legal duty.

Confidentiality and whistle blowing

If the malpractice or maladministration is reported against the Academic Head then, it must immediately be reported to the Board of Directors. Sometimes a person making an allegation of malpractice or maladministration may wish to remain anonymous. Although it is always preferable to reveal your identity

and contact details to us; however, if you are concerned about possible adverse consequences, you may request that the directors do not divulge your identity.

While we are prepared to investigate issues which are reported to us anonymously, we shall always try to confirm an allegation by means of a separate investigation before taking up the matter with those the allegation relates.

Investigation report

After an investigation, Academic head will produce a draft report for the parties concerned to check the factual accuracy. Any subsequent amendments will be agreed between the parties concerned and ourselves. The report will:

- Identify where the breach, if any, occurred.
- Confirm the facts of the case.
- Identify who is responsible for the breach (if any)
- Confirm an appropriate level of remedial action to be applied.

If it was an independent/third party that notified us of the suspected or actual case of malpractice, we'll also inform them of the outcome – normally within 15 working days of making our decision - in doing so we may withhold some details if to disclose such information would breach a duty of confidentiality or any other legal duty.

If it's an internal investigation against a member of our staff the report will be agreed by the Principal, along with the relevant internal staff and appropriate internal disciplinary procedures will be implemented.

Investigation outcomes

If the investigation confirms that malpractice or maladministration has taken place we will consider what action to take in order to:

- Minimise the risk to the integrity of certification now and in the future.
- Maintain public confidence in the delivery and awarding of qualifications.
- Discourage others from carrying out similar instances of malpractice or maladministration.
- Ensure there has been no gain from compromising our standards.

The action we take may include:

- Imposing actions in order to address the instance of malpractice/maladministration and to prevent it from reoccurring
- In cases where certificates are deemed to be invalid, inform the Awarding Organisation concerned and the regulatory authorities why they're invalid and any action to be taken for reassessment and/or for the withdrawal of the certificates.
We'll also let the affected learners know the action we're taking and that their original certificates are invalid and ask – where possible – to return the invalid certificates.
- Informing relevant third parties (e.g. funding bodies) of our findings in case they need to take relevant action in relation to the centre.

AI related malpractices :

Awarding bodies' guidance in respect of recent development in academic dishonesty i.e. use of artificial intelligence should be addressed :

- Students and faculty about be made aware of the ethical use of AI in academic settings.
- Clearly communicate to the students of the consequences of AI-assisted cheating, emphasizing the importance of academic integrity.
- Any suspected malpractice cases of AI-assisted cheating will be dealt with as per malpractice policy of the college.
- The policy will be reviewed from time to time in light of the changes occurring in the sector and regular feedback from the faculty and the students for preventing AI assisted cheating.

If the relevant party (ies) wishes to appeal against our decision to impose sanctions, please refer to our Complaints Procedure.

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