

## ASSESSMENT MALPRACTICE POLICY

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Review Interval	
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Owner & Attached Governor	Nick Culley & Michael Dennison



# ASSESSMENT MALPRACTICE POLICY

This policy must be read in conjunction with the latest versions of the relevant Awarding Body guidance on Malpractice and in conjunction with the JCQ document “*Suspected Malpractice in Examinations and Assessments - Policies and Procedures*”. . In the case of Edexcel this includes the following “*Centre Guidance: Dealing with Malpractice; and the Edexcel Policy for Edexcel Vocational Qualifications*”.

## **Aim of this Policy:**

- To identify and minimise the risk of malpractice by staff or learners.
- To respond to any incident of alleged malpractice promptly and objectively.
- To standardise and record any investigation of malpractice to ensure openness and fairness.
- To impose appropriate penalties and/or sanctions on learners or staff where incidents (or attempted incidents) of malpractice are proven.
- To protect the integrity of this Academy and the qualifications we offer.

## **Definitions in this policy:**

**Malpractice:** Malpractice consists of those acts which undermine, the integrity and validity of assessment, the certification of qualifications and the authority of those responsible for conducting the assessment and certification

**Learner Malpractice:** any action by the learner which has the potential to undermine the integrity and validity of the assessment of the learner’s work for example;

- Plagiarism of any nature
- Collusion by working collaboratively with other learners to produce work that is submitted as individual learner work
- Cheating
- Copying (including the use of ICT to aid copying)
- Deliberate destruction of another’s work
- Fabrication of results or evidence
- False declaration of authenticity in relation to the contents of a portfolio or coursework
- 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.

This list is not exhaustive and other instances of Malpractice may be considered by the Academy at its discretion:

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**Staff Malpractice:** any deliberate action by a member of staff which has the potential to undermine the integrity of qualifications for example;

- Improper assistance to candidates
- Inventing or changing marks for internally assessed work (coursework or portfolio evidence) where there is insufficient evidence of the candidates' achievement to justify the marks given or assessment decisions made
- Failure to keep candidate coursework/portfolios of evidence secure
- Fraudulent claims for certificates
- Inappropriate retention of certificates
- 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 Academy 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
- Facilitating and allowing impersonation
- 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
- Falsifying records/certificates, for example by alteration, substitution, or by fraud
- Fraudulent certificate claims or claiming for a certificate prior to the learner completing all the requirements of assessment.
- Falsifying records or falsifying assessment information on Edexcel-online or equivalent awarding body online system.

This list is not exhaustive and other instances of malpractice may be considered by the Academy at its discretion:

**Cheating:** a form of Learner Malpractice, could include, but is not restricted to:

- Submitting another students work as one's own
- Copying from a fellow student
- Impersonating or allowing to be impersonated (not likely in our situation).

**Plagiarism:** Theft of someone else's work (published or otherwise) without proper acknowledgement, presenting materials as if they were one's own etc.

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## Responsibilities

**Academy:** seek proactive ways to promote a positive culture that encourages learners to take individual responsibility for their learning and respect the work of others.

**Assessor:** responsible for ensuring Learners are aware of what constitutes Malpractice and creates assessment opportunities which limit the opportunity for malpractice and provides for checking the validity of the learner's work. **All assessors are to provide students with a copy of the Academy's Malpractice/Plagiarism Statement that must be read, signed and dated to state that they understand it. The signed documents are to be kept by the Quality Nominee.**

**Internal verifier/lead internal verifier:** responsible for Malpractice checks when internally verifying work.

**Quality nominee:** required to inform Edexcel or other Awarding Body of any acts of Malpractice that have compromised assessment.

**Heads of Centre or their nominees:** responsible for any investigation into allegations of Malpractice.

## Preventing Learner Malpractice

**As an Academy we are all responsible for promoting positive and honest study practices.**

All staff involved with the assessment of work that is completed without direct supervision have a duty to be aware of the potential for Malpractice and should be vigilant for evidence of Learner Malpractice.

Colleagues with specific roles within the academy's management structure will have additional roles & responsibilities.

The programme team (including all assessors) will, under the lead of the Lead Internal Verifier, take the following positive steps to prevent or reduce the occurrence of Learner Malpractice;

- Inform learners of this Policy on Malpractice and the penalties for attempted and actual incidents of malpractice using the induction period and the student handbook;
- Give examples of what is acceptable and not acceptable, assessors to provide frequent reminders throughout programme;

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- Show learners the appropriate formats to record cited texts and other materials or information sources;
- Monitor learners work for Malpractice in particular cheating & plagiarism
- Ask learners to declare that their work is their own;
- Ask learners to provide evidence that they have interpreted and synthesized appropriate information and acknowledged any sources used
- 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 also acknowledged any sources used.
- Introduce procedures for assessing work in a way that reduces or identifies Learner Malpractice. These procedures may include:
  - i. Periods of supervised sessions during which evidence for assignments, tasks, coursework is produced by the learner
  - ii. Altering assessment assignments/tasks/tools on a regular basis
  - iii. The assessor assessing work for a single assignment/task in a single session for the complete cohort of learners
  - iv. Use of oral questioning with learners to ascertain their understanding of the concepts application, etc within their work
  - v. Assessors getting to know their learners' styles and abilities, etc.
  - vi. Assessors should ensure that access controls are installed to prevent learners from accessing and using other people's work when using networked computers.

### **Procedure and Sanctions in the case of suspected or actual Learner Malpractice**

#### **Minor cases of Plagiarism:**

**Definition:** few sentences, short paragraph etc - student unlikely to be aware of consequences of plagiarism - likely to be first offence

**Procedure:** Handled in curriculum area, discussion with the Learner, review examples of acceptable and not acceptable practice with the learner, **recording of incident in Sleuth**

**Sanctions:** refusal to accept for marking, advise learner of policy and procedures, learner resubmits work.

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**If an Assessor is in any doubt about whether the Malpractice is a minor case of Plagiarism or more serious they must seek the advice of the Lead IV, Faculty Director or Quality Nominee.**

### **Major cases of Plagiarism or any other form of Learner Malpractice such as cheating**

**Definition:** extensive copying etc, second or subsequent offence, serious cases and/or blatantly committed and inappropriate for assessor to deal with, any case regardless of extent where it is inappropriate for assessor to deal with.

**Sanctions:** Refusal to accept for marking, zero mark for that part of work (with or without allowing resubmission), disciplinary contract, or possible exclusion.

**All cases of Learner Malpractice must be recorded on Sleuth** so that records are kept on each individual student so that we have evidence of any repetition and in order that programme teams and Pastoral leaders are aware of all examples of Learner Malpractice. This also enables Lead IV and the QN to monitor the nature and type of Learner Malpractice that is occurring so that work can be done to prevent this occurring.

### **Procedure for dealing with alleged Learner Malpractice**

If Learner Malpractice is alleged in whatever form the Academy will conduct an investigation in a form commensurate with the nature of the Malpractice allegation. Such an investigation will be supported by the Principal and all personnel linked to the allegation.

For **Minor Cases of Plagiarism** this will be handled by the Assessor using the procedure referred to above. (**Procedure:** Handled in curriculum area, discussion with the Learner, review examples of acceptable and not acceptable practice with the learner, recording of incident in Sleuth)

For any other issues of Learner Malpractice will follow the following procedure:

1. Where an Assessor marking an assessment, or otherwise associated with the presentation of an assessment, suspects Learner Malpractice the matter will be reported to the relevant Faculty Manager or Lead IV via a written report (could be email).
2. The written report must include the appropriate details, including the nature of the alleged offence and the evidence for suspecting it.
3. The Lead IV of Faculty Director will make the Learner and their parents or guardians fully aware in writing at the earliest opportunity of the nature of the alleged malpractice and of the possible consequences should malpractice be proven. The

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letter will also inform the individual of their right to appeal the decision of Malpractice is proven

4. The individual will have the opportunity to respond to the allegations made within 7 days of notification of the nature of the alleged malpractice.
5. The Faculty Director or Lead IV will investigate the alleged Malpractice and will inform the QN of the findings of their investigation making recommendations as to the appropriate sanctions.
6. If Malpractice is shown to exist the QN, and if required the Principal or designated nominee, will decide the nature of the sanctions to be imposed and report this in a meeting with the Learner and the Lead IV or Faculty Director.
7. The Lead IV will keep a record of all stages of any investigation.
8. If the allegations are shown a record must be made in Sleuth.
9. The QN together with the Principal or designated nominee will decide if the relevant awarding body will be contacted. They will inform the Awarding Bodies of any Malpractice or attempted Malpractice which have compromised assessment.

### **Procedure for dealing with Staff Malpractice**

As an Academy we have what amounts to delegated authority from our Awarding Bodies to act in their name as an awarding body for a large range of vocational qualifications. Some of these qualifications allow students to gain entry into university and have a high “currency”. It is important that all centers including our own protect the integrity of all awards that are made; otherwise there is a danger of the qualifications losing their currency nationally and being of reduced or no value to the learner in the future.

Part of that integrity demands the highest professional standards that are demanded by ULT and the Academy are applied unfailingly in all aspects of our work relating to the award of all vocational qualifications. Because the Academy assesses and reports all the marks (or in the case of NQF qualifications the majority of marks) that contribute to the award of a qualification, potential for Staff Malpractice does exist at a number of stages.

ULTs disciplinary code defines and gives examples of staff behaviour which would be considered either as misconduct or as gross misconduct. Staff Malpractice detected or suspected in connection with the administration of vocational qualifications will be treated in the same way as any other allegations of misconduct made against staff and the same procedures will apply.

Everyone working at NOA is given a copy of the ULT terms and conditions at the start of their employment. The disciplinary procedures are well documented and are available through our HR manager.

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Those procedures will be applicable in the context of vocational qualifications in instances of alleged Staff Malpractice

The QN together with the Principal or designated nominee will decide if the relevant awarding body will be contacted. They will inform the Awarding Bodies of any Malpractice or attempted Malpractice which have compromised assessment

