

## Malpractice Policy 2025/26

Centre: North Oxfordshire Academy

This policy is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current JCQ regulations.

Approved/reviewed by: Governors

Date of next review: September 2026

### Key Staff Involved

Role	Name
Head of Centre	Ellie Jacobs
SLT Exams Link	David Murphy
SLT NEA Link	Adam Leyburn
Exams Officer	Natasha Neal

### Introduction

This policy sets out the procedures to be followed in the event of any dispute or allegation regarding malpractice in the delivery and assessment of qualifications.

North Oxfordshire Academy follows JCQ's Suspected Malpractice: Policies and Procedures (2025/26) and the regulations outlined in the JCQ General Regulations, Instructions for Conducting Examinations (ICE), and NEA guidance.

Malpractice includes maladministration and non-compliance, meaning any act, default or practice which:

- Compromises, attempts to compromise or may compromise the assessment process, the integrity of any qualification, or the validity of a result/certificate.
- Damages the authority, reputation or credibility of the centre, awarding body or regulators.

### Examples of Malpractice

Examples of staff malpractice include (not exhaustive):

- Tampering with candidate assessments or NEA work.
- Assisting candidates beyond awarding body regulations.
- Fabricating assessment or verification records.
- Failing to keep assessment material secure.

Examples of candidate malpractice include (not exhaustive):

- Plagiarism (copying another's work and presenting it as one's own).
- Collusion (working with others and submitting as own work).
- Using unauthorised materials in exams or assessments.
- Falsifying results or documentation.
- Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) without acknowledgement, or presenting AI-generated work as their own.
- Disruptive behaviour or disobeying exam regulations.

### **Approaches to Ensure Authenticity of Student Work**

North Oxfordshire Academy employs a range of measures to ensure that work submitted for assessment is authentically produced by the student. These measures include, but are not limited to:

- Requiring students to sign declarations of authenticity for all internal assessments.
- Providing clear guidance to students on acceptable support, referencing expectations, and the consequences of malpractice.
- Using in-class, supervised activities to generate planning notes, drafts, and practical evidence.
- Comparing final submissions with known examples of the student's previous work to identify inconsistencies in style, quality, or technical ability.
- Using questioning or short verbal checkpoints to verify a student's understanding of the work they have produced.
- Using plagiarism-detection tools (where appropriate) and maintaining secure submission systems.
- Requiring teachers/assessors to document how they have assured authenticity as part of their assessment records.

Staff receive regular training on recognising potential malpractice indicators and the importance of authenticity in assessment.

### **Updating Assessment Records When Improper Assistance Is Identified**

Where evidence of improper assistance or potential malpractice is identified, the centre will record the details within the student's assessment records. This record will include:

- A description of the issue or suspected malpractice.
- The date and method by which the concern was identified.
- Actions taken by the assessor, including any investigations carried out.
- The outcome of the investigation and any impact on the student's assessment results.
- Any communication with the student, parent/guardian (where applicable), or relevant awarding organisations.
- These records will be securely stored in accordance with the centre's data retention policy and made available to awarding bodies upon request.

## **Staff Malpractice Procedure**

Investigations into staff malpractice will be coordinated by the Head of Centre (Ellie Jacobs) or a delegated SLT member.

The staff member will:

- Be informed of the allegation and evidence.
- Be allowed to respond, submit statements and seek advice.
- Be informed of possible consequences if malpractice is proven.
- Be advised of their right to appeal in line with the centre's Appeals Policy.

Where malpractice is confirmed, JCQ and awarding bodies will be informed and sanctions may include:

- Written warning.
- Training or mentoring.
- Restrictions on exam-related duties.
- Suspension or dismissal.

## **Candidate Malpractice Procedure**

Investigations into candidate malpractice will be coordinated by the Head of Centre (Ellie Jacobs) or delegated SLT member.

The candidate (and parents/carers) will:

- Be informed of the allegation and evidence.
- Be advised of possible consequences.
- Have the opportunity to respond and submit statements.
- Be advised of the appeals process.

Where suspected malpractice is confirmed, JCQ and the relevant awarding body will be informed. Sanctions may include:

- Loss of marks.
- Disqualification from a paper or qualification.
- Loss of certification.
- Restriction on future entries.

## **Use of AI in Assessments**

North Oxfordshire Academy adopts JCQ's 2025/26 guidance:

- Students must ensure all submitted work is their own.
- If AI is used, this must be acknowledged and referenced.
- Teachers must only accept work they consider authentic.
- Suspected AI misuse will be investigated under this malpractice policy.

## Appeals

- Staff: may appeal against malpractice decisions through the centre's Appeals Policy.
- Candidates: may appeal through the Internal Appeals Procedure.

## Policy References

This policy is informed by JCQ (2025/26):

- General Regulations for Approved Centres
- Instructions for Conducting Examinations
- Instructions for Conducting NEA
- Suspected Malpractice: Policies and Procedures
- AI Use in Assessments: Protecting the Integrity of Qualifications and Acknowledging AI Use

## Informing and Advising Candidates

North Oxfordshire Academy is committed to ensuring that all candidates are fully informed and advised on how to avoid committing malpractice.

Candidates will receive written and verbal guidance before examinations and assessments that will include:

- JCQ exam regulations and the 'Information for candidates' documents issued annually.
- Clear instructions on the use of resources, including referencing, citations and plagiarism avoidance.
- Training sessions delivered through assemblies, tutorials or lessons to explain expectations for NEA and coursework.
- Specific guidance on acceptable and unacceptable use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in assessments.
- Opportunities to ask questions to ensure understanding of malpractice risks and responsibilities.

## Escalation of Suspected Malpractice

Where suspected malpractice occurs, the following escalation process will apply:

1. The invigilator, teacher or staff member identifies and records the suspected malpractice.
2. The Exams Officer (Natasha Neal) is informed immediately.
3. The SLT examinations quality assurance lead (Adam Leyburn) will review the concern alongside the Exams Officer.
4. The quality assurance lead will decide whether to escalate the case to the awarding body in line with JCQ Suspected Malpractice procedures.
5. The candidate (and parents/carers) will be informed of the suspicion, given the opportunity to provide a statement, and advised of the potential consequences.
6. The incident will be formally logged and retained for reference by JCQ or awarding bodies.

## Artificial Intelligence (AI) Guidance

Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools may be used in research and preparation stages of assessment, provided their use is acknowledged and transparent. The following rules apply:

- Candidates must acknowledge any use of AI in their work, clearly stating the tool used and how it contributed (e.g., drafting, summarising, checking grammar).
- Directly copied AI-generated content must be properly referenced and not presented as original candidate work.
- Teachers and assessors must be satisfied that the final work submitted is authentic and represents the candidate's own ability.
- Candidates will be provided with guidance on referencing AI sources using appropriate academic conventions.

Risks of using AI include:

- Over-reliance leading to lack of demonstration of personal skills and knowledge.
- Unverified or inaccurate information being included in assessments.
- Failure to acknowledge AI use, which will be treated as plagiarism.

AI Misuse includes (but is not limited to):

- Submitting wholly or largely AI-generated work as the candidate's own.
- Using AI to generate answers during examinations or controlled conditions where it is not permitted.
- Failing to reference AI use where it has contributed to an assessment.

Any AI misuse will be treated as malpractice and investigated under the same procedures as plagiarism, collusion or other forms of academic dishonesty. Sanctions will follow JCQ regulations and may include loss of marks, disqualification or further penalties as deemed appropriate.