Malpractice, Maladministration and Plagiarism Policy

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Version Control

Version	Date	Author	Changes
1.0	05/08/2024	E Nicholson	Initial policy creation
1.1	26/08/2025	P Crocker	Reviewed for consistency
2.0	21/01/2026	S Gilmore	Major revision: comprehensive investigation procedures, AI guidance, timescales

Contents

1. Purpose

This policy establishes Hybrid Training Centre's (HTC) commitment to maintaining the integrity of qualifications and assessments by preventing, detecting, and addressing malpractice, maladministration, and plagiarism.

The policy aims to:

- Protect learners from being disadvantaged by the actions of others
- Maintain the quality, integrity, and reputation of HTC and its qualifications
- Ensure compliance with awarding body requirements and regulatory expectations
- Establish clear procedures for investigating and addressing suspected or actual incidents
- Create a culture where malpractice is understood, prevented, and reported

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All internal and external summative assessments
- On-programme assignments and coursework
- Portfolio evidence and witness testimonies
- Examinations (including online examinations)
- End-Point Assessment preparation and delivery
- Certification claims and reporting

The policy covers the conduct of:

- All learners and apprentices enrolled at HTC
- All HTC staff including tutors, assessors, IQAs, and administrative personnel
- Third parties including employers, witnesses, and subcontractors

3. Definitions

Term	Definition
Malpractice	Any deliberate activity, neglect, or default that compromises the integrity of assessment or certification. This includes actions that give unfair advantage to one or more learners, or disadvantage other learners.
Maladministration	Any activity, neglect, default, or other practice that results in HTC or a learner not complying with specified requirements for the delivery and award of qualifications.
Plagiarism	The presentation of another person's work, ideas, or creations as one's own, without appropriate acknowledgement or permission. This includes copying from published sources, other learners, or AI-generated content.

Collusion	Where two or more people work together to produce work that is then submitted as the work of one individual, or where a learner knowingly allows their work to be copied by another.
Contract Cheating	Where a learner commissions or obtains work from a third party (person, company, or AI service) and submits it as their own.

4. Regulatory Framework

This policy is informed by and supports compliance with:

Ofqual General Conditions of Recognition - requirements for managing malpractice and maladministration

JCQ Suspected Malpractice Policies and Procedures - guidance on investigation processes

ESFA Apprenticeship Funding Rules - requirements for programme integrity

IfATE (Institute for Apprenticeships) - standards for apprenticeship assessment integrity

Ofsted Education Inspection Framework - expectations for quality and integrity of assessment

5. Responsibilities

5.1 Head of Quality

- Overall responsibility for implementing and monitoring this policy
- Leading or overseeing all malpractice investigations
- Notifying awarding bodies of suspected or confirmed malpractice within required timescales
- Ensuring investigations are documented and records retained
- Reporting outcomes to the Senior Leadership Team
- Implementing preventive measures and staff training

5.2 Senior Leadership Team

- Ensuring adequate resources are available for investigation
- Making final decisions on sanctions for staff malpractice
- Monitoring the effectiveness of prevention measures
- Liaising with awarding bodies as required

5.3 Tutors, Assessors, and IQAs

- Being vigilant for signs of malpractice or plagiarism
- Reporting suspected incidents promptly to the Head of Quality
- Educating learners about academic integrity and the consequences of malpractice
- Ensuring their own practice complies with awarding body requirements

- Cooperating fully with any investigation

5.4 Learners and Apprentices

- Submitting only their own, authentic work
- Understanding what constitutes malpractice and plagiarism
- Properly referencing sources and acknowledging assistance
- Reporting any suspected malpractice they become aware of
- Cooperating with investigations

6. Prevention

HTC is committed to preventing malpractice through:

6.1 Learner Education

- Clear explanation of this policy during induction
- Guidance on referencing and acknowledging sources
- Information about acceptable use of AI tools (see Acceptable Use of IT Policy)
- Regular reminders about academic integrity
- Signed declarations confirming understanding of policy

6.2 Staff Training

- Training on identifying signs of malpractice and plagiarism
- Understanding of awarding body requirements
- Use of plagiarism detection tools
- Verification techniques for authenticating learner work

6.3 Systems and Controls

- Robust learner registration processes (registration before assessment)
- Secure storage of assessment materials
- Authentication of learner identity for assessments
- Regular internal quality assurance sampling
- Clear record-keeping and audit trails

7. Examples of Malpractice and Maladministration

7.1 Learner Malpractice

- Plagiarism: copying from books, websites, other learners, or AI tools without acknowledgement
- Collusion: working with others on individual assessments or allowing work to be copied

- Contract cheating: commissioning work from essay mills or other services
- Fabrication: inventing data, evidence, or references
- Impersonation: having someone else complete assessments
- Bringing unauthorised materials into examinations
- Obtaining or sharing examination content before the assessment
- Falsifying workplace evidence or witness testimonies

7.2 Staff Malpractice

- Falsifying learner records or assessment outcomes
- Providing excessive assistance that compromises assessment validity
- Breaching confidentiality of assessment materials
- Claiming certification for learners who have not completed requirements
- Changing assessment decisions without proper authorisation
- Failing to declare conflicts of interest
- Assessing learners who were not registered at the time of assessment

7.3 Maladministration

- Failing to keep assessment records securely
- Not following awarding body procedures for examinations
- Late or incorrect learner registrations
- Inadequate invigilation arrangements
- Failure to report suspected malpractice
- Not maintaining appropriate audit trails
- Failure to apply approved access arrangements correctly

8. Identification and Reporting

8.1 Signs of Potential Malpractice

- Work that is inconsistent with the learner's normal standard or style
- Work containing content beyond what was taught or expected
- Identical or very similar work submitted by multiple learners
- Work that matches online sources or AI-generated patterns
- Evidence that cannot be verified or authenticated
- Unusual patterns in assessment submissions or results

8.2 Reporting Requirements

Anyone who suspects malpractice must:

- Report immediately to the Head of Quality (within 24 hours of discovery)
- Not discuss the suspected malpractice with the individual(s) involved

- Preserve all evidence related to the suspected incident
- Document the concerns in writing

8.3 Notification to Awarding Bodies

The Head of Quality must notify the relevant awarding body:

- Immediately for serious cases that could affect other centres or learners
- Within 10 working days for other suspected malpractice
- Using the awarding body's prescribed reporting format

9. Investigation Procedure

9.1 Stage 1: Preliminary Investigation (1-5 working days)

The Head of Quality will:

- Review the initial report and evidence
- Determine whether the allegation has sufficient substance to warrant full investigation
- Secure all relevant evidence and records
- For staff allegations: suspend assessment activities pending investigation if appropriate
- Notify the individual(s) in writing of the allegation and potential consequences

9.2 Stage 2: Full Investigation (5-20 working days)

If a full investigation is required:

- An independent Investigation Officer will be appointed by the Head of Quality
- The Investigation Officer will gather and examine all relevant evidence
- Interviews will be conducted with all relevant parties
- The individual(s) will have the opportunity to respond to the allegations
- For staff allegations: examine potential impact on current and historical learner assessments
- All stages will be documented in writing

9.3 Stage 3: Investigation Report (within 5 working days of completing investigation)

The Investigation Officer will produce a written report including:

- Summary of the allegation
- Evidence examined
- Interviews conducted and responses received
- Findings of fact
- Conclusion: whether malpractice occurred on the balance of probabilities
- Recommendations for sanctions and remedial action

9.4 Stage 4: Outcome and Notification

The Head of Quality will:

- Review the investigation report
- Make a decision on the outcome and any sanctions
- Notify the individual(s) in writing within 5 working days of the decision
- Inform them of their right to appeal
- Report the outcome to the awarding body as required
- Implement any remedial actions

10. Penalties and Sanctions

10.1 Learner Sanctions

Depending on the severity of the malpractice, sanctions may include:

- Written warning
- Requirement to resubmit work
- Nullification of specific assessment(s)
- Disqualification from a unit or qualification
- Barring from future assessments for a specified period
- Removal from the programme

10.2 Staff Sanctions

For staff malpractice or maladministration:

- Formal disciplinary action under HTC's Staff Disciplinary Policy
- Removal from assessment or IQA duties
- Requirement for additional training
- In serious cases: dismissal

10.3 Awarding Body Sanctions

Awarding bodies may impose additional sanctions including:

- Voiding of learner certificates
- Special conditions on centre approval
- Suspension or withdrawal of centre approval
- Barring of individuals from involvement in regulated qualifications

11. Appeals

Individuals subject to sanctions have the right to appeal.

- Appeals must be submitted in writing within 10 working days of the outcome notification
- Appeals should state the grounds: procedural irregularity, new evidence, or disproportionate sanction
- Appeals will be heard by a senior manager not involved in the original investigation
- The appeal outcome will be communicated in writing within 15 working days
- Further appeal may be made to the awarding body where applicable

Full details are set out in HTC's Appeals and Complaints Procedure.

12. Record Keeping

HTC will maintain records of all malpractice investigations including:

- Initial reports and evidence
- Investigation documentation and interview notes
- Investigation reports and findings
- Correspondence with individuals and awarding bodies
- Outcome decisions and any appeals
- Remedial actions taken

Records will be retained for a minimum of 3 years after certification, or longer if required by the awarding body. Records are stored securely and handled in accordance with UK GDPR.

13. Review and Continuous Improvement

This policy will be reviewed:

- Annually, or sooner if required by changes in awarding body or regulatory requirements
- Following any significant malpractice incident
- When directed by an awarding body or Ofsted

Lessons learned from investigations will be used to improve prevention measures and staff training.

14. Related Policies

- Internal Quality Assurance and Internal Verification Policy
- Appeals and Complaints Procedure
- Learner Disciplinary Policy
- Staff Disciplinary Policy
- Acceptable Use of IT Policy
- Data Protection Policy

- Whistleblowing Policy

Appendix A: Malpractice Investigation Flowchart

Stage	Actions and Timescales
1. Discovery	Malpractice suspected or identified. Report to Head of Quality within 24 hours. Preserve all evidence.
2. Preliminary Review	Head of Quality reviews within 1-5 working days. Notify awarding body if required. Decide if full investigation needed.
3. Notification	Individual notified in writing of allegation and potential consequences. Opportunity to respond.
4. Full Investigation	Investigation Officer appointed. Evidence gathered. Interviews conducted. 5-20 working days.
5. Report	Investigation report produced within 5 working days of completing investigation. Findings and recommendations.
6. Decision	Head of Quality makes decision. Individual notified in writing within 5 working days. Right to appeal stated.
7. Appeal (if applicable)	Appeal submitted within 10 working days. Appeal heard and outcome within 15 working days.
8. Closure	Awarding body notified of outcome. Remedial actions implemented. Records retained. Lessons learned reviewed.

Appendix B: Investigation Report Template

The following information should be included in all malpractice investigation reports:

Section	Content
Case Reference	Unique reference number, date opened
Individual(s) Involved	Names, learner IDs, programme details
Allegation Summary	Clear description of the suspected malpractice
Evidence Examined	List of documents, records, and materials reviewed
Interviews Conducted	Who was interviewed, dates, summary of responses
Findings of Fact	What the investigation established happened
Conclusion	Whether malpractice occurred (balance of probabilities)
Recommendations	Proposed sanctions and remedial actions
Investigation Officer	Name, signature, date

Policy Approval

Signature: S Gilmore

Date: 21.01.2026

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