

Malpractice & Maladministration Policy

Introduction

Apex Learning is committed to maintaining the highest standards of integrity, fairness, and compliance in the delivery of qualifications and assessments. This Malpractice & Maladministration Policy has been developed to prevent, identify, investigate, and address any actions or omissions that may compromise the quality or credibility of qualifications delivered by the centre.

The primary objective of this policy is to safeguard assessment validity, learner authenticity, and regulatory compliance.

Scope

This policy applies to all learners, assessors, Internal Quality Assurers (IQAs), trainers, invigilators, administrative staff, contractors, and any individual involved in the delivery, assessment, quality assurance, or administration of qualifications offered by Apex Learning.

Definition of Malpractice

Malpractice refers to any deliberate act, default, or practice that compromises, or attempts to compromise:

- The integrity of assessment
- The authenticity of learner work
- The validity of evidence
- The credibility of the qualification
- Compliance with awarding body or regulatory requirements

Examples of malpractice include, but are not limited to:

- Plagiarism
- Collusion
- Fabrication of evidence
- Contract cheating
- Impersonation
- Unauthorised use of AI-generated academic content
- Falsification of observation records
- Breach of examination or invigilation rules
- Deliberate misuse of confidential materials

Definition of Maladministration

Maladministration refers to unintentional errors, omissions, negligence, or failures in administration or processes which may adversely affect:

- Learner outcomes
- Assessment processes
- Regulatory compliance
- Certification accuracy

Examples include:

- Failure to follow awarding body procedures
- Inaccurate learner records
- Delayed registrations or certification claims
- Poor document retention

- Administrative processing errors
- Failure to implement reasonable adjustments correctly

Plagiarism and AI Content Controls

To protect academic integrity, Apex Learning may utilise recognised plagiarism and AI-detection tools as part of its quality assurance and assessment process.

Plagiarism Threshold

- A similarity score above 20% may trigger further review.
- Reports will be reviewed contextually.
- Proper referencing, quotations, templates, or common terminology will be considered.

Where plagiarism exceeds acceptable limits and is not properly referenced, the centre may:

- Inform the learner
- Request amendments or resubmission
- Escalate under malpractice procedures where necessary

AI Content Threshold

- AI-detection indicators above 20% may trigger further review.
- AI reports are indicative tools only and are not treated as conclusive evidence.
- Human academic judgement will always be applied.

Where concerns arise, the centre may:

- Review the submission in detail
- Seek clarification from the learner
- Request revision or resubmission
- Conduct authorship verification procedures

The centre must be satisfied that all submitted work reflects the learner's own understanding and intellectual contribution.

Use of Assistive Tools

The use of grammar, spelling, translation, or accessibility tools does not automatically constitute malpractice. However:

- The final work must remain the learner's own
- Assistive tools must not replace academic input
- Learners remain responsible for content accuracy and originality

Academic Integrity Review Process

Where concerns arise regarding authenticity, authorship, or integrity, Apex Learning will apply a fair and proportionate review process.

Stage 1 – Initial Review

- Review plagiarism/AI reports
- Review assessment evidence
- Consider academic judgement and learner profile

Stage 2 – Learner Notification

The learner may be informed in writing of the concern and invited to respond.

Stage 3 – Opportunity to Respond

The learner may be invited to:

- Explain authorship

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- Explain research methods or tool usage
- Amend and resubmit where appropriate

Stage 4 – Further Verification

Where necessary, the centre may arrange:

- Professional discussion
- Viva questioning
- Additional evidence checks
- Observation or reassessment activity

Stage 5 – Outcome

Following review, the centre may:

- Accept the submission
- Require amendments
- Require resubmission
- Escalate to formal investigation

Formal Malpractice Investigation Procedure

Where sufficient evidence suggests malpractice:

1. A formal case will be opened
2. Relevant parties will be notified
3. Evidence will be gathered
4. Opportunity to respond will be provided
5. A decision will be made by an authorised manager/panel
6. The awarding organisation will be informed where required

Possible outcomes include:

- Warning
- Resubmission requirement
- Assessment invalidation
- Suspension from programme
- Disqualification in serious cases

Sanctions will always be proportionate and consistent.

Documentation and Record Retention

The centre will securely retain relevant records, including:

- Reports and evidence reviewed
- Learner correspondence
- Investigation notes
- Decisions and rationale
- Awarding body communications

Records will be retained in line with data protection and centre retention policies.

Appeals

Learners have the right to appeal decisions made under this policy.

Appeals must:

- Be submitted in writing
- State clear grounds for appeal
- Include relevant supporting evidence

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Appeals will be reviewed by a manager not previously involved in the case.

Prevention Measures

Apex Learning will proactively reduce risk through:

- Clear policies and procedures
- Staff training and standardisation
- Internal quality assurance checks
- Secure assessment systems
- Learner induction on academic integrity
- Use of plagiarism/authenticity checks
- Continuous monitoring of compliance standards

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if:

- Awarding body requirements change
- Regulatory expectations change
- Operational experience identifies need for revision
- New risks emerge regarding AI or assessment security