

Assessment Malpractice Policy

1. Purpose

Incidents of malpractice/maladministration can potentially lead to learners being disadvantaged, can require the conducting of costly and time-consuming investigations and may cause reputational damage to Shockout Academy. It is, therefore, desirable to prevent malpractice or maladministration from occurring, whenever possible. Where it is not possible to prevent this, cases of suspected or actual malpractice/maladministration should be dealt with quickly, thoroughly and effectively.

This policy has been prepared with reference to Pearson BTEC Quality Centre Guide.

2. Shockout Academy Aim:

- 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 centre and BTEC qualifications

In order to this:

- Seek to avoid potential malpractice by using the induction period and the learner handbook to inform learners of the centre's policy on malpractice and the penalties for attempted and actual incidents of malpractice
- Show learners the appropriate formats to record cited texts and other materials or information sources
- Ask learners to declare that their work is their own
- Ask learners to provide evidence that they have interpreted and synthesised appropriate information and acknowledged any sources used
- 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.

It will proceed through the following stages:

- Make the individual fully aware at the earliest opportunity of the nature of the alleged malpractice and of the possible consequences should malpractice be proven
- Give the individual the opportunity to respond to the allegations made
- Inform the individual of the avenues for appealing against any judgment made
- Document all stages of any investigation.

3. Definition of Malpractice by Learners

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

- Plagiarism of any nature (including AI)

- Collusion by working collaboratively with other learners to produce work that is submitted as individual learner work
- 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.

4. Definition of Malpractice by Centre Staff

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

- 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 centre 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, that is claiming for a certificate prior to the learner completing all the requirements of assessment.

5. Breakdown of Malpractice considerations:

- **Minor malpractice:** minor malpractice can be applied in some cases. This involves a meeting with the Programme Leader, the Tutor, and the Learner (and Principal of Programmes where appropriate). The concerns will be explained, and certain questions asked. For example, how the assessment was completed, and whether there are any mitigating circumstances that may have affected this performance. There should also be a discussion about avoiding the same errors in the future.
- **Outcomes of minor malpractice:** there are a variety of potential outcomes from the minor procedures. Examples include having no action taken, revising the assessed piece of work, or completely resubmitting it, and perhaps a recommendation to take up additional learning support. It may also be necessary for the Programme Leader to report the recommendation to the Principal of Programmes, or if it is felt that the malpractice is quite serious, it may be referred to major procedures.
- **Major malpractice:** major malpractice can be applied in more serious instances of

malpractice and will involve an investigation by the Programme Leader who will report and provide evidence to the Principal of Programmes. Investigating major malpractice: The Principal of Programmes and Programme Leader will chair a hearing; therefore, this will consist of the investigating officer (Programme Leader), the learner concerned and his/her representative (which may be a friend/parent, student representative or member of the teaching staff

- During the hearing, the learner will be asked various questions so that the Programme Leader and Principal of Programmes can decide if the person concerned has tried to gain an unfair advantage in the piece of work in question.

6. What learners should do if called to a hearing:

- Learners have the choice to bring a friend/parent/student representative with them to the hearing. The Programme Leader can talk the learner through the process and give them an idea of the type of questions that will be asked, together with the likely outcomes. However, these will only be suggestions and a list of options, as no outcome can be predicted until the hearing has been concluded and all the facts and evidence have been presented.

7. If malpractice is proven:

- If there is evidence of malpractice the learner is at risk of a failure grade with the recommendation for reassessment, with only a pass grade being achievable or in serious cases failing the assessment with no reassessment recommendation, and in extremely serious cases recommendation that the learner be excluded from college without receiving any part of the award or qualification.
- Wherever possible the hearing outcome will be conveyed to the learner on the same day, and everything will also be confirmed in a formal letter. The learner may be able to appeal against the penalty using the procedure outlines in the Assessment Policy relating to “appeals” writing to the Programme Leader who will then decide as to whether to grant such an appeal.

Policies linked

Assessment Policy