

# Assessment Malpractice Policy

This policy on malpractice aims to define malpractice in the context of assessment and certification for QCF & NSAR qualifications; set out the rights and responsibilities, with regard to malpractice, of the learner and company.

**Malpractice means any act, default or practice (whether deliberate or resulting from neglect or default) which is a breach of SQA requirements including any act, default or practice which:**

- **compromises, attempts to compromise, or may compromise the process of assessment, the integrity of any SQA qualification, or the validity of a result or certificate; and/or**
- **damages the authority, reputation or credibility of SQA or any officer, employee or agent of SQA**

**Malpractice can arise for a variety of reasons:**

- **Some incidents are intentional and aim to give an unfair advantage or disadvantage in an examination or assessment (deliberate non-compliance).**
- **Some incidents arise due to ignorance of SQA requirements, or carelessness or neglect in applying the requirements (maladministration).**

Examples of candidate malpractice include:

- Breaching the security of assessment materials in a way which threatens the integrity of any exam or assessment – including the early and unauthorised removal of a question paper or answer booklet from the examination room.
- Collusion with others when an assessment must be completed by individual candidates.
- Copying from another candidate (including using ICT to do so) and/or working collaboratively with other candidates on an individual task.
- Misconduct — inappropriate behaviour in an assessment room that is disruptive and/or disrespectful to others. This includes talking, shouting and/or aggressive behaviour or language, and having a prohibited electronic device that emits any kind of sound in the assessment room.
- Frivolous content — producing content that is unrelated to the assessment.
- Offensive content — content in assessment materials that includes vulgarity and swearing that is out with the context of the assessment, or any material that is discriminatory in nature (including discrimination in relation to the protected characteristics identified in the Equality Act 2010). This should not be read as inhibiting candidates' rights to freedom of expression.
- Personation — assuming the identity of another candidate or a candidate having someone assume their identity during an assessment.
- Plagiarism — failure to acknowledge sources properly and/or the submission of another person's work as if it were the candidate's own.
- Prohibited items — items that candidates must not have with them at their allocated seat in the exam room because they can give an unfair advantage, including: mobile phones; electronic devices such as an MP3 player, iPod, tablet, smartwatch or any other device that is web-enabled or stores information; books, notes, sketches or paper; pencil case; calculator case; calculator or



dictionary (except in specified subjects) — unless any of these things have been approved by SQA or NSAR as part of an assessment arrangement.

Examples of Centre Malpractice include:

- managers or others exerting undue pressure on staff to pass candidates who have not met the requirements for an award
- deliberate falsification of records in order to claim certificates
- excessive direction from assessors to candidates on how to meet national standards
- failure to assess internally assessed unit or course assessment work fairly, consistently and in line with national standards
- failure to apply specified assessment conditions in assessments, such as limits on resources or time available to candidates to complete their assessments
- misuse of assessments, including repeated re-assessment contrary to requirements, or inappropriate adjustments to assessment decisions
- failure to apply appropriate processes to ensure fairness in the provision of assessment arrangements
- insecure storage, transmission or use of assessment instruments, materials and marking instructions, resulting in a breach of assessment security
- failure to comply with requirements for accurate and safe retention of candidate evidence, assessment and internal verification records
- failure to comply with SQA's procedures and Sentinel Scheme Rules for managing and transferring accurate candidate data
- failing to register candidates within a qualification's accreditation or Sentinel notification period
- making late registrations to the awarding body for qualifications or Sentinel in their lapsing period
- requesting late certification of learners after the certification end date
- for all Qualifications failure by a centre to notify, investigate and report allegations of suspected centre malpractice to awarding body or breaches of the Sentinel Scheme rules
- deliberately withholding information about circumstances which may compromise the integrity of any qualification and/or credibility
- failure to take action as required by the awarding body or to co-operate with an awarding body investigation in relation to concerns of malpractice

### **Reporting Suspected Malpractice**

Whether intentional or not, it is necessary to investigate and act upon any suspected instances of malpractice, to protect the integrity of the qualification and to identify any wider lessons to be learned. In the interest of learners and staff, Doctore On Track Training Services Ltd will respond effectively and openly to all requests for an investigation into an incident or a suspected incident of malpractice. Therefore, if any member of staff or candidate suspect an incident of malpractice, this must be reported to the Centre Manager in writing.

Any suspected cases of Centre malpractice will be reported to the awarding body. Where malpractice against a member of staff/learner is proven, Doctore On Track Training Services Ltd will have to



consider whether the integrity of its assessments/examinations/tests might be jeopardised if the learner in question were to be involved in future Doctore On Track Training Services Ltd assessments/examinations/tests. Doctore On Track Training Services Ltd may take action to protect the integrity of its assessments/examinations/tests in the future. This action may include for QCF, NSAR and CPCS qualifications.

### **Investigating Suspected Malpractice**

Candidate Malpractice shall be investigated by the Centre Manager and the Managing Director. In certain cases, an independent external consultant may be used to provide a second opinion. Doctore On Track Training Services Ltd may impose penalties and/or sanctions on learners or companies where incidents (or attempted incidents) of malpractice have been proven. We will be vigilant regarding assessment malpractice and where malpractice occurs it must be dealt with in an open and fair manner. The outcome of the investigation, including any applicable penalties and/or sanctions will be communicated in writing within 3 weeks of notification of malpractice. Only in certain circumstances will the Centre Manager need to inform the awarding body of Candidate malpractice:

- the concern came to the centre's attention after submission of internal assessment marks
- the concern relates to candidate malpractice for a qualification regulated by the awarding body
- any candidate affected by a centre's candidate malpractice decision, who having exhausted their right of appeal within the centre, wishes to exercise their right of appeal to the awarding body; or
- there are other exceptional circumstances, e.g. the centre believes that the malpractice case involves a criminal act

*The matter must also be reported to the police if the malpractice involves a criminal act.*

Doctore On Track Training Services Ltd reserves the right, in suspected cases of malpractice, to withhold the issuing of results/certificates while an investigation is in progress. Depending on the outcome of the investigation results/certificates may be released or withheld.

### **Appeals against Malpractice decisions**

Candidates and staff have the right to appeal any malpractice decision against them.

- Appeals must be made in writing to the Managing Director within 5 working days of receipt of a malpractice decision.
- The appeal will be dealt with by the Managing Director, supported by an external consultant to the Centre, with a view to provide an outcome within 2 weeks of the appeal being received.
- Centres have the right to appeal a decision where a case of reported malpractice by the centre has been confirmed through investigation by the awarding body.
- Centres also have the right to appeal a decision in the case of suspected malpractice by a candidate reported by the centre to the awarding body.

Candidates have the right to appeal to the awarding body where:



- the centre has conducted an investigation, the candidate disagrees with the outcome and has exhausted the centre's appeals process
- the awarding body has conducted an investigation and the candidate disagrees with the decision for regulated qualifications only:

Candidates and centres have the right to request a review by the appropriate regulator of the awarding body's process in reaching a decision in an appeal of a malpractice decision for qualifications subject to regulation.

Where an investigation of suspected malpractice is carried out, the centre must retain related records and documentation for three years for non-regulated qualifications and six years for regulated qualifications. Records should include any work of the candidate and assessment or verification records relevant to the investigation.

In the case of an appeal to the awarding body against the outcome of a malpractice investigation, assessment records must be retained for six years.

In an investigation involving a potential criminal prosecution or civil claim, records and documentation should be retained for six years after the case and any appeal has been heard. If the centre is any doubt about whether criminal or civil proceedings will take place, it should keep records for the full six year period.

This Malpractice Policy is made known to all our staff, whether employed or sub-contracted, including all Doctore On Track Training Services Ltd trainers, assessors and all QCF, NSAR candidates and course delegates.

The Malpractice Policy is the responsibility of the Managing Director to implement.

Signed

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "KAB", written over a horizontal line.

Managing Director

31<sup>st</sup> December 2024