

Malpractice Policy (Exams)

Malpractice Policy (Exams): document provenance

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Related policies and documents	

Unless there are legislative or regulatory changes in the interim, the policy will be reviewed as per the review cycle. Should no substantive change be required at this point, the policy will move to the next review cycle.

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 What are malpractice and maladministration?

'Malpractice' and 'maladministration' are distinct but related concepts, the common theme being that they involve a failure to follow the rules of an examination or assessment. This policy and procedure use the word 'malpractice' to cover both 'malpractice' and 'maladministration' and it means any act, default or practice.

which is:

- a breach of the Regulations, and/or
- a breach of awarding body requirements regarding how a qualification should be delivered, and/or
- a failure to follow established procedures in relation to a qualification which:
 - gives rise to prejudice to candidates, and/or
 - compromises public confidence in qualifications, and/or
 - compromises, attempts to compromise or may compromise the process of assessment, the integrity of any qualification or the validity of a result or certificate, and/or
 - damages the authority, reputation or credibility of any awarding body or centre or any officer, employee or agent of any awarding body or centre (SMPP 1)

1.2 Candidate malpractice

'Candidate malpractice' normally involves malpractice by a candidate in connection with any examination or assessment, including the preparation and authentication of any controlled assessments, coursework or nonexamination assessments, the presentation of any practical work, the compilation of portfolios of assessment evidence and the completion of any examination. (SMPP 2)

1.3 Centre staff malpractice

'Centre staff malpractice' means malpractice committed by:

- a member of staff, contractor (whether employed under a contract of employment or a contract for services) or a volunteer at a centre, or
- an individual appointed in another capacity by a centre, such as an invigilator, a Communication Professional, a Language Modifier, a practical assistant, a prompter, a reader or a scribe (SMPP 2)

1.4 Centre malpractice

'Centre malpractice' normally involves malpractice where there is an element of systemic failure, a breach in policies or widespread malpractice such that a centre-level sanction is appropriate (SMPP 2).

1.5 Suspected malpractice

For the purposes of this document, suspected malpractice means all alleged or suspected incidents of malpractice (regardless of how the incident might be categorised, as described in SMPP, section 1.9). (SMPP 2)

2.0 Purpose of the policy

To confirm Dixons Allerton Academy:

- has in place for inspection that must be reviewed and updated annually, a written malpractice policy which covers all qualifications delivered by the centre detailing how candidates are informed and advised to avoid committing malpractice in examinations/assessments, how suspected malpractice issues should be escalated within the centre and reported to the relevant awarding body; it must also acknowledge the use of AI (e.g. what AI is, when it may be used and how it should be acknowledged, the risks of using AI, what AI misuse is and how this will be treated as malpractice) (GR 5.3)

3.0 General principles

In accordance with the regulations Dixons Allerton Academy will:

- take all reasonable steps to prevent the occurrence of any malpractice (which includes maladministration) before, during and after assessments have taken place (GR 5.11)
- inform the awarding body immediately of any alleged, suspected or actual incidents of malpractice or maladministration, involving a candidate or a member of staff, by completing the appropriate documentation (GR 5.11)
- as required by an awarding body, gather evidence of any instances of alleged or suspected malpractice (which includes maladministration) in accordance with the current JCQ document Suspected Malpractice - Policies and Procedures and provide such information and advice as the awarding body may reasonably require (GR 5.11)



4.0 Preventing malpractice

Dixons Allerton Academy has:

- Robust processes to prevent and identify malpractice, as outlined in section 3 of the JCQ document Suspected Malpractice: Policies and Procedures. (SMPP 4.3)
- This includes ensuring that staff involved in the delivery of assessments and examinations understand the requirements for conducting these as specified in the following JCQ documents and any further awarding body guidance:
 - General Regulations for Approved Centres 2025-2026
 - Instructions for conducting examinations (ICE) 2025-2026
 - Instructions for conducting coursework 2025-2026.
 - Instructions for conducting non-examination assessments 2025-2026.
 - Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments 2025-2026
 - A guide to the special consideration process 2025-2026
 - Suspected Malpractice: Policies and Procedures 2025-2026 (this document)
 - Plagiarism in Assessments
 - AI Use in Assessments: Protecting the Integrity of Qualifications
 - Post Results Services June 2025 and November 2025
 - A guide to the awarding bodies' appeals processes 2025-2026.
 - Guidance for centres on cyber security

4.1 Informing and advising candidates how to avoid committing malpractice in examinations/assessments.

1. Start by Explaining What Malpractice Is

Candidates should clearly understand what counts as malpractice. We explain that it includes:

- Plagiarism: Copying work from others, websites, AI tools, or previously submitted work.
- Collusion: Working with others on an individual task.
- Cheating in exams: Using notes, mobile phones, smartwatches, or talking.
- Impersonation: Someone else completing the work on their behalf.
- Improper use of AI: Submitting content generated by AI as their own without permission or referencing.
- Fabrication: Inventing data, sources, or evidence.

2. Set Out Clear Expectations for Conduct

Make expectations explicit and easy to follow:

Inside an Exam

- Bags, phones, and smart devices must be stored away as instructed.
- No notes, paper, or unapproved materials.
- No communication with other candidates.
- Follow all invigilator instructions promptly.

For Coursework / Controlled Assessment

- All work must be your own.
- Use quotation marks and citations when using others' ideas.
- Keep drafts and planning notes as evidence of development.
- Report any accidental breaches immediately.

3. Explain the Consequences Clearly

Outline the formal consequences in a non-threatening but honest way:

- Marks may be reduced or cancelled.
- The assessment may be voided.
- Entry for the qualification may be withdrawn.



- Repeated breaches can lead to exclusion from future exams.

Always phrase this as protecting the integrity of qualifications—not as punishment.

4. Encourage an “Ask First” Culture

Let candidates know:

“If you’re unsure whether something is allowed—ask before you do it.”

This prevents most unintentional malpractice.

4.2 How and when candidates are informed

The centre will brief candidates on malpractice and acceptable use of technology (including AI) via (a) pre-exam assemblies each season, (b) the Candidate Handbook issued each autumn term, and (c) exam-room notices and invigilator reminders on the day of assessment. Copies of the JCQ *Information for candidates – AI (Artificial Intelligence) and assessments* and our centre summary will be distributed and published on the academy website. Records of briefings are retained by the Exams Officer.

4.3 AI use in assessments

Definition: For the purposes of this policy, “AI” refers to software or online services that generate text, images, data, code, or outputs in response to prompts (e.g., generative AI or large language models).

Assessments: In line with JCQ regulations, work submitted for assessment must be the candidate’s own knowledge, skills and understanding. Use of AI to generate any part of assessed work is not permitted and will be treated as malpractice where the final product is not genuinely the candidate’s own.

Acknowledgement (non-assessed learning): Teachers may, at their discretion, allow AI tools to support non-assessed learning activities (research planning, idea generation, explanation). Where such use is allowed, students must (a) keep drafts, (b) state tools used and prompts at the top/bibliography of any learning task, and (c) verify facts with reliable sources. AI must not be used in any controlled conditions, NEA, coursework or exam scripts.

AI misuse (examples): Submitting AI-generated content as one’s own; translating or paraphrasing AI output to mask origin; fabricating references/data via AI; using AI during controlled assessments; using AI to circumvent word limits or content originality; or failing to acknowledge permitted non-assessed use when required.

Risks of AI use: Hallucinated or incorrect information; fabricated citations; bias or offensive content; privacy and data protection risks when entering personal/sensitive data; intellectual property infringement; and over-reliance reducing personal authorship and skill development.

Classification and handling: Alleged AI misuse will be investigated under this policy and JCQ SMPP. Where evidence indicates malpractice, the centre will report to the awarding body using the appropriate JCQ form and apply sanctions in line with JCQ outcomes.

Awareness and training: Staff will receive an annual update (September INSET) on acceptable AI use, detection indicators, and the centre’s authentication checks. Students are briefed each term and before assessment windows; guidance is provided in the Candidate Handbook and on the academy website. Records of staff and student briefings are maintained.

4.4 Authenticity checks

To ensure that work accepted for assessment is authentically the candidate’s own, the centre uses a proportionate combination of:

- Draft development evidence (plans, outlines, annotated drafts, version histories).
- Supervised task components where required by specifications.
- Teacher questioning to probe understanding and decision-making.
- Source checks (bibliographies, spot checks of references and data).
- Text-matching and integrity tools (e.g., plagiarism detection and document forensics) as indicators, not sole proof.
- Consistency review against a candidate’s known standard of work.

Outcomes of checks are logged with the NEA/coursework file.

5.0 Identification and reporting of malpractice

5.1 Escalating suspected malpractice issues.

Once suspected malpractice is identified, any member of staff at the centre can report it using the appropriate channels. (SMPP 4.3)

When a malpractice concern arises, you must escalate it in line with JCQ Suspected Malpractice: Policies and Procedures (SMPP), ensuring that alleged or suspected incidents are reported promptly to the awarding body using the correct JCQ forms and following



the established investigation and notification process. As staff, you should always refer cases directly to the Head of Centre so that they can oversee the internal review and ensure full compliance with JCQ requirements; however, if the allegation relates to the Head of Centre, you must escalate it immediately to the school and trust leader link, to maintain independence and avoid any conflict of interest, as JCQ requires centres to ensure impartiality in all malpractice investigations and escalation routes

5.2 Reporting suspected malpractice to the awarding body.

- The head of centre will notify the appropriate awarding body immediately of all alleged, suspected or actual incidents of malpractice, using the appropriate forms, and will conduct any investigation and gathering of information in accordance with the requirements of the JCQ document Suspected Malpractice: Policies and Procedures (SMPP 4.1.3)
- The head of centre will ensure that, where a candidate is a child or an adult at risk and is the subject of a malpractice investigation, the candidate's parent/carer/ appropriate adult is kept informed of the progress of the investigation (SMPP 4.1.3)
- Form JCQ/M1 will be used to notify an awarding body of an incident of candidate malpractice. Form JCQ/M2 will be used to notify an awarding body of an incident of suspected staff malpractice/maladministration (SMPP 4.4, 4.6)
- Candidate malpractice offences relating to the content of work (i.e. inappropriate/offensive content, copying/collusion, plagiarism (including AI misuse) and/or false declaration of authentication) which are discovered in a controlled assessment, coursework or non-examination assessment component prior to the candidate signing the declaration of authentication, do not need to be reported to the awarding body. Instead, they will be dealt with in accordance with the centre's internal procedures.
- Malpractice by a candidate discovered in a controlled assessment, coursework or non-examination assessment where the offence does not relate to the content of candidates' work (e.g. possession of unauthorised materials, breach of assessment conditions) or where a candidate has signed the declaration of authentication, must be reported using a JCQ M1 to the relevant awarding body. If, at the time of the malpractice, there is no entry for that candidate (who the centre intended to enter), the centre is required to submit an entry by the required deadline. (SMPP 4.5)
- If, in the view of the investigator, there is sufficient evidence that an individual may have committed malpractice, that individual (the candidate or the member of staff) will be informed of all the required information and the accused individual informed of their rights and responsibilities (SMPP 5.33-3.4)
- Once the information gathering has concluded, the head of centre (or other appointed information gatherer) will submit a written report to the relevant awarding body summarising the information obtained and actions taken, accompanied by the information obtained during the course of their enquiries (5.35)
- Form JCQ/M1 will be used when reporting candidate cases; for centre staff, form JCQ/M3 will be used (SMPP 5.37)
- The awarding body will decide on the basis of the report, and any supporting documentation, whether there is evidence of malpractice and if any further investigation is required. The head of centre will be informed accordingly (SMPP 5.40)

5.3. Communicating malpractice decisions

Once a decision has been made, it will be communicated in writing to the head of centre as soon as possible. The head of centre will communicate the decision to the individuals concerned and pass on details of any sanctions and action in cases where this is indicated. The head of centre will also inform the individuals if they have the right to appeal. (SMPP 11.1)

5.4 Appeals against decisions made in cases of malpractice

Dixons Allerton Academy will:

- Provide the individual with information on the process and timeframe for submitting an appeal, where relevant
- Refer to further information and follow the process provided in the JCQ document A guide to the awarding bodies' appeals processes.

5.5 Internal appeal against a decision to reject work

Where a member of staff determines that a candidate's work should be rejected on the grounds of malpractice prior to submission to the awarding body, the candidate will be informed in writing of the reason and the evidence. The candidate may submit an internal appeal in writing to the Head of Centre within 5 working days of notification. An independent senior leader not previously involved will review the evidence and decide to uphold, amend, or overturn the decision within 10 working days where possible. Outcomes will be recorded and communicated in writing. This internal appeal does not replace any awarding body appeals process where applicable.

5.6 Recording of improper assistance

Where any improper assistance is identified, the centre will update assessment records to include: (a) a factual summary of the concern, (b) date/time, (c) people involved, (d) evidence collected, and (e) actions taken. For coursework/NEA, the log will be stored with the candidate's authentication and version history; for examinations, the incident log will be stored by the Exams Officer. Records are retained for the relevant JCQ retention period.

