

Malpractice/Maladministration Procedure

The Vocational Academy Essex LTD will investigate instances of alleged or suspected malpractice or maladministration and will take appropriate action where required to maintain the integrity of units and qualifications.

Malpractice is defined as any deliberate activity, neglect, default or other practice that compromises the integrity of the assessment process, and/or the validity of certificates.

Maladministration is any activity, neglect, default or other practice that results in the centre not complying with the specified requirements for delivery of units and qualifications.

Should an alleged malpractice/maladministration arise on the part of the learners, centre staff, or others involved in providing an accredited qualification, The Vocational Academy Essex LTD will:

1. Report immediately to the awarding body any suspected case of malpractice/maladministration arising after learners have been registered.
2. Investigate and record full details of the nature of the suspected malpractice/maladministration issue, including personnel involved and any action taken.

Examples of learner misconduct could include:

- Non-compliance in observing the mandatory rules of conduct during an assessment
- Replication of another learner's work in either the practical, theoretical or portfolio aspect of assessment,

Misconduct procedure (learners)

Where an issue of misconduct occurs and is discovered or reported the following action will be taken:

- The Invigilator/Centre Contact is empowered to expel a learner from the assessment room
- The expelled learner's assessment paper will be securely retained and a report filed to the Centre Contact
- The report and assessment record will be available for submission to the awarding body and the regulatory authority (Ofqual) upon request

If any of the rules of external assessment are deemed to have been broken by a learner, invigilator or other person involved in the assessment process, then The Vocational Academy Essex LTD and the awarding body may declare the assessment void.

Malpractice/maladministration procedure (centres)

Where an issue of malpractice or maladministration occurs, is discovered or reported The Vocational Academy Essex LTD will:

- Report the issue to CYQ's Lead Quality Assurer who will investigate the suspected case of malpractice/maladministration
- Investigate the facts relating to allegation/complaints in order to determine whether any irregularities have occurred

Conclusions will be based on established evidence. A course of proposed actions will be identified, agreed, implemented and monitored in association with the awarding body. All relevant evidence will be considered without bias.

Non-compliance monitoring guidelines - malpractice

Malpractice Occurrence	Procedure/Rationale	Action and Sanctions
Non-compliance in observing the mandatory rules of conduct during an assessment, resulting in fraudulent claims for certification.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learner expelled from assessment • Assessment paper retained and report filed securely • Assessment paper and report file made available to the awarding body and regulatory authorities (Ofqual) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suspension of certification (tariff level 3) • Suspension of registration (tariff level 3) • Suspension of approval from the awarding body • Possible assessment void decision
Replication of another learner's work in either the practical, theoretical or portfolio aspect of assessment, resulting in fraudulent claims for certification.		

Malpractice/Maladministration Definition and Investigation Procedures Below:

Definition of Maladministration

Maladministration is essentially any activity or practice which results in non-compliance with administrative regulations and requirements and includes the application of persistent mistakes or poor administration.

Examples of maladministration

- Persistent failure to adhere to our learner registration and certification procedures.
- Persistent failure to adhere to our centre recognition and/or qualification requirements and/or
- associated actions assigned to the centre
- Late learner registrations (both infrequent and persistent)
- Unreasonable delays in responding to requests and/or communications from AoL
- Inaccurate claim for certificates
- Failure to maintain appropriate auditable records, e.g. certification claims and/or forgery of evidence
- Withholding of information, by deliberate act or omission, from us which is required to assure Active

Examples of centre malpractice/maladministration could include:

- Failure of The Vocational Academy Essex LTD to report any suspected malpractice reported to the awarding body from other sources
- Failure of The Vocational Academy Essex LTD to apply the awarding organisation's recommended invigilation procedures for external assessment, thus affecting the validity of the assessment process
- Failure of The Vocational Academy Essex LTD to apply the awarding organisation's recommended assessment paperwork and procedures for internal assessment, thus affecting the validity of the assessment process
- Failure of The Vocational Academy Essex LTD to apply the recommended security procedures as identified within the centre approval declaration
- Failure on behalf of The Vocational Academy Essex LTD to comply with CYQ guidance relating to reasonable assessment adjustments
- Claims for certification being submitted by The Vocational Academy Essex LTD for units and/or qualifications that have not been approved for delivery by the awarding body.

- Delivery and assessment of units and/or qualifications that have not been approved by the awarding body
- Claims for certification being submitted by The Vocational Academy Essex LTD for learners that have not been registered with the awarding body.
- Unauthorised replication of (or other tampering with) externally assessed theory papers and/or e-assessment
- The Vocational Academy Essex LTD or any part (if a consortium group) becomes bankrupt or insolvent or goes into liquidation, or undergoes a voluntary or compulsory winding up procedure
- There is any significant change in control of The Vocational Academy Essex LTD (or a change of membership if a consortium group). The awarding body should be informed immediately if this occurs.
- Failure to carry out internal assessment, internal moderation or internal verification in accordance with our requirements
- Deliberate failure to adhere to our learner registration and certification procedures.
- Deliberate failure to continually adhere to our centre recognition and/or qualification approval requirements or actions assigned to your centre
- Deliberate failure to maintain appropriate auditable records, e.g. certification claims and/or forgery of evidence
- Fraudulent claim(s) for certificates
- Intentional withholding of information from us which is critical to maintaining the rigour of quality assurance and standards of qualifications
- Collusion or permitting collusion in exams/assessments
- Learners still working towards qualification after certification claims have been made
- Plagiarism by learners/staff
- Copying from another learner (including using ICT to do so).

Process for making an allegation of malpractice or maladministration

Anybody who identifies or is made aware of suspected or actual cases of malpractice or maladministration at any time must immediately notify the Directors of The Vocational Academy Essex LTD In doing so they should put them in writing/email and enclose appropriate supporting evidence.

- All allegations must include (where possible):
- Learner's name and The Vocational Academy registration number

- The Vocational Academy staff members name and job role - if they are involved in the case
- Details of the course/qualification affected or nature of the service affected
- Nature of the suspected or actual malpractice and associated dates details and outcome of any initial investigation carried out by the centre or anybody else involved in the case, including any mitigating circumstances

The Directors will then conduct an initial investigation prior to ensure that staff involved in the initial investigation are competent and have no personal interest in the outcome of the investigation.

In all cases of suspected malpractice and maladministration reported we'll protect the identity of the 'informant' in accordance with our duty of confidentiality and/or any other legal duty.

Confidentiality and whistle blowing

Sometimes a person making an allegation of malpractice or maladministration may wish to remain anonymous. Although it is always preferable to reveal your identity and contact details to us; however if you are concerned about possible adverse consequences you may request that the Directors do not divulge your identity.

While we are prepared to investigate issues which are reported to us anonymously we shall always try to confirm an allegation by means of a separate investigation before taking up the matter with those the allegation relates.

Responsibility for the investigation

In accordance with regulatory requirements all suspected cases of maladministration and malpractice will be examined promptly by The Vocational Academy to establish if malpractice or maladministration has occurred and will take all reasonable steps to prevent any adverse effect from the occurrence as defined by Ofqual.

We will acknowledge receipt, as appropriate, to external parties within 48 hours.

Our Director will be responsible for ensuring the investigation is carried out in a prompt and effective manner and in accordance with the procedures in this policy and will allocate a relevant member of staff to lead the investigation and establish whether or not the malpractice or maladministration has occurred, and review any supporting evidence received or gathered by The Vocational Academy

Notifying relevant parties

Where applicable, our Director will inform the appropriate regulatory authorities if we believe there has been an incident of malpractice or maladministration which could either invalidate the award of a qualification or if it could affect another awarding organisation.

Where the allegation may affect another awarding organisation and their provision we will also inform them in accordance with the regulatory requirements and obligations imposed by the regulator Ofqual. If we do not know the details of organisations that might be affected we will ask Ofqual to help us identify relevant parties that should be informed.

Investigation timelines and summary process

We aim to action and resolve all stages of the investigation within 10 working days of receipt of the allegation.

The fundamental principle of all investigations is to conduct them in a fair, reasonable and legal manner, ensuring that all relevant evidence is considered without bias. In doing so investigations will be based around the following broad objectives:

- To establish the facts relating to allegations/complaints in order to determine whether any irregularities have occurred.
- To identify the cause of the irregularities and those involved.
- To establish the scale of the irregularities.
- To evaluate any action already taken
- To determine whether remedial action is required to reduce the risk to current registered learners and to preserve the integrity of The Vocational Academy and the qualification.
- To identify any adverse patterns or trends.

The investigation may involve a request for further information from relevant parties and/or interviews with personnel involved in the investigation. Therefore, we will:

- Ensure all material collected as part of an investigation must be kept secure.
- If an investigation leads to invalidation of certificates, or criminal or civil prosecution, all records and original documentation relating to the case will be retained until the case and any appeals have been heard and for five years thereafter.
- Expect all parties, who are either directly or indirectly involved in the investigation, to fully co-operate with us.

Either at notification of a suspected or actual case of malpractice or maladministration and/or at any time during the investigation, we reserve the right to withhold a learner's, and/or cohort's, results.

Where a member of The Vocational Academy staff or an associate is under investigation we may suspend them or move them to other duties until the investigation is complete.

Throughout the investigation our Director will be responsible for overseeing the work of the investigation team to ensure that due process is being followed, appropriate evidence has been gathered and reviewed and for liaising with and keeping informed relevant external parties.

Investigation report

After an investigation, we'll produce a draft report for the parties concerned to check the factual accuracy. Any subsequent amendments will be agreed between the parties concerned and ourselves. The report will:

- Identify where the breach, if any, occurred.
- Confirm the facts of the case.

- Identify who is responsible for the breach (if any)
- Confirm an appropriate level of remedial action to be applied.

We'll make the final report available to the parties concerned and to the regulatory authorities and other external agencies as required.

If it was an independent/third party that notified us of the suspected or actual case of malpractice, we'll also inform them of the outcome – normally within 10 working days of making our decision - in doing so we may withhold some details if to disclose such information would breach a duty of confidentiality or any other legal duty.

If it's an internal investigation against a member of our staff the report will be agreed by the Managing Director, along with the relevant internal managers and appropriate internal disciplinary procedures will be implemented.

Investigation outcomes

If the investigation confirms that malpractice or maladministration has taken place we will consider what action to take in order to:

- Minimise the risk to the integrity of certification now and in the future.
- Maintain public confidence in the delivery and awarding of qualifications.
- Discourage others from carrying out similar instances of malpractice or maladministration.
- Ensure there has been no gain from compromising our standards.

The action we take may include:

- Imposing actions in order to address the instance of malpractice/maladministration and to prevent it from reoccurring
- In cases where certificates are deemed to be invalid, inform the Awarding Organisation concerned and the regulatory authorities why they're invalid and any action to be taken for reassessment and/or for the withdrawal of the certificates. We'll also let the affected learners know the action we're taking and that their original certificates are invalid and ask – where possible – to return the invalid certificates to The Vocational Academy
- Informing relevant third parties (e.g. funding bodies) of our findings in case they need to take relevant action in relation to the centre.

In addition, to the above the Director will record any lessons learnt from the investigation and pass these onto relevant internal colleagues to help prevent the same instance of maladministration or malpractice from reoccurring.

If the relevant party (ies) wishes to appeal against our decision to impose sanctions, please refer to our Complaints Procedure.



Signed 

Director: Michael Rickards

Date updated: Thursday 3rd August 2017

