

PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH MALPRACTICE AND MALADMINISTRATION

GRADED QUALIFICATIONS ALLIANCE acknowledges its responsibility to deal with any issues of malpractice or maladministration on the part of candidates, centre staff or any others involved in providing their qualifications.

1. What is malpractice?

Malpractice is defined as any activity or practice which deliberately contravenes regulations and compromises the integrity of the assessment process and/or the validity of certificates. For the purpose of this policy this term also covers misconduct.

The categories listed below are examples of potential malpractice. Please note that this is not an exhaustive list.

- Failure to adhere to our candidate registration and certification procedures
- Failure to comply with centre approval criteria (where these apply) or examination requirements
- Failure to maintain auditable records, eg certification claims
- Fraudulent claim for certificates
- Intentional withholding of information from us which is critical to maintaining the rigour of quality assurance
- Deliberate misuse of our logo
- Plagiarism of any nature by candidates.
- Submission of false information to gain a proxy or a qualification
- Disruptive behaviour by candidates
- Failure to adhere to the requirements of our *Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations Policy*.

2. What is maladministration?

Maladministration is defined as any activity or practice, which results in non-compliance with regulations. Anybody identifying cases of maladministration should report them to the General Secretary.

We are obliged to investigate all cases of maladministration in liaison with the parties concerned. If an investigation results in evidence of maladministration, we will need to impose the appropriate sanction and take the necessary steps to ensure that the candidates' interests are protected as far as is reasonably possible. This may include making arrangements for re-assessment or certification, as appropriate.

3. How to notify us of suspected or actual cases of malpractice

Anybody who identifies or is made aware of suspected or actual cases of malpractice at any time must immediately report their findings to The General Secretary by post, telephone or e-mail. Reports must include:

- Centre name (where a centre is approved by GQAL) or teacher name
- candidate's name and registration number
- title and number of the qualification affected
- date(s) suspected or actual malpractice occurred

- full nature of the suspected or actual malpractice
- contents and outcome of any investigation carried out by the centre or anybody else involved in the case, including any mitigating circumstances
- written statements from those involved in the case, eg witness statements
- date of the report and the informant's name, position and signature.

We would expect centres approved by GQAL to carry out their own initial investigations into any suspected malpractice. We will provide guidance and support to centres to put arrangements in place to prevent and investigate malpractice.

4. Investigating suspected or actual cases of malpractice

4.1 The review timescales at each stage of the process

Your report will be acknowledged by the General Secretary within 5 days of receipt.

The General Secretary will review the report and decide whether to recommend further investigation. Should the General Secretary decide to conduct an investigation, they will appoint a team of personnel selected from the Examinations Standards Committee who have no personal interest in the case or have had any previous dealings with those involved in it. We will endeavour to finish our investigations no longer than 30 working days from the receipt of the report. Please note that in some cases the investigation may take longer for example if GQAL deems it necessary to carry out site visits. In such instances, we'll advise all parties concerned of the likely revised timescale.

We will advise all interested parties of the outcome of our investigation within 10 working days of making our decision.

4.2 The investigation process

We expect all parties, who are either directly or indirectly involved in the investigation, to fully co-operate with us. In instances where a centre or its candidates do not co-operate, we may have no alternative but to take action against those involved. Our possible actions for non-compliance can be found in our Sanctions policy.

During the investigation the review process may involve:

- a request for further information from those involved
- interviews (face to face or by telephone) with those involved in the investigation
- arranging for authorised personnel to carry out a site visit

Where a decision is referred to the Examination Standards Committee or the Governing Council, the majority vote will apply.

Where applicable, we will inform the appropriate regulatory authorities of any investigation into suspected or actual cases of serious malpractice and will agree the

appropriate course of remedial action with them. Please note that in exceptional cases, the regulatory authorities may lead the investigation.

In cases where certificates for qualifications approved by the regulatory authorities are deemed to be invalid, we will inform the centre and the candidate and the regulatory authorities of the reasons why they are invalid and provide details of action to be taken for reassessment and/or certification.

Either at notification of a suspected or actual case of malpractice or at any time during the investigation, we reserve the right to suspend any claims for candidate certification submitted by the centre involved.

4.3 The outcome of the investigation

We will consider all factors put forward by the centre or the candidate in determining the appropriate sanctions. Please see our Sanctions policy for information about the range and degree of sanctions that we may impose. These will be determined in proportion to the scale and type of malpractice.

Candidate malpractice

If the investigation confirms that candidate malpractice has taken place, we will have to impose one or more of the following sanctions on the candidate.

- Disallowing all or part of the candidate's external assessment marks
- Not issuing the candidate's certificate(s)
- Disqualification from the qualification.

Teacher or centre malpractice

If the investigation confirms that centre or teacher malpractice has taken place, we will have to impose one or more of the following sanctions on the centre

- Suspension of centre approval status or teacher membership status for all our qualifications
- Suspension of candidate registration and/or certification service for the qualification

Examiner malpractice

If an examiner is reported to be colluding with candidates the evidence will be passed to the General Secretary and will be closely monitored. If collusion is corroborated then the examiner will be dismissed from the examining panel and the candidates in question will be re-examined.

4.4 Reporting the outcome

After an investigation, we will produce a draft report for the centre/candidate to check for factual accuracy. Any subsequent amendments will be agreed between the centre/candidate and us.

We will make the final report available to the centre/candidate and to the regulatory authorities and other external agencies as required.

If an independent/third party notified us of the suspected or actual case of malpractice, we will inform them of the outcome.

5. Appeals against our decision to impose sanctions

If you wish to appeal against our decision to impose sanctions, you may do so by writing to the General Secretary who will consider your appeal and refer it to our appeals panel for a final decision.

