Malpractice and Maladministration Procedure

Policy Owner: Zubair Ahmad

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Address: 3rd Floor, 277 Cranbrook Road
Ilford, IG1 4TG

Tel: 0208 2617372
Email: info@londoncollege.co.uk
Web: https://londoncollege.co.uk/

Scope and Purpose of Procedure

This procedure applies to learners registered on programmes, courses, approved qualifications or units with AA London College and to staff involved in the delivery, assessment, internal quality assurance or administration of qualifications.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Define malpractice and maladministration.
- Provide examples of each.
- Explain how concerns should be reported.
- Set out how suspected cases will be investigated.
- Clarify responsibilities for managing allegations.
- Ensure that assessment and certification remain fair, valid and reliable.
- Ensure compliance with the requirements of relevant awarding organisations and regulatory bodies.

AA London College will follow the malpractice and maladministration procedures of the relevant awarding organisation in all applicable cases.

AA London College Responsibility

AA London College is responsible for ensuring that staff involved in the management, administration, assessment and internal quality assurance of qualifications understand this policy and their responsibilities.

The College will:

- Take reasonable steps to prevent malpractice and maladministration.
- Make this policy available to relevant staff and learners.
- Provide information and guidance through induction and training.
- Ensure assessors, tutors, IQAs and relevant quality staff understand awarding organisation requirements.
- Investigate suspected or alleged malpractice and maladministration fairly and promptly.
- Notify the relevant awarding organisation or regulatory body where required.
- Maintain appropriate records relating to investigations and outcomes.

Definition of Malpractice

Malpractice is any deliberate action, neglect, default or practice that compromises, or could compromise, the integrity of an assessment, qualification, result or certificate.

Malpractice may involve learners, staff, assessors, internal quality assurers, administrators or other persons involved in the delivery or assessment of qualifications.

It may compromise:

- Assessment processes.
- The integrity of a regulated qualification.
- The validity of a result or certificate.
- The reputation and credibility of AA London College.
- The requirements of the relevant awarding organisation.

Examples of Malpractice

Examples may include:

- Plagiarism or presenting another person's work as one's own.
- Collusion or allowing unauthorised collaboration.
- Copying from another learner.
- Providing or receiving unauthorised assistance during assessment.
- Falsifying learner evidence, assessment records or documentation.
- Making fraudulent or inaccurate certification claims.
- Deliberately failing to carry out assessment or internal quality assurance correctly.
- Deliberately withholding information required for quality assurance.
- Allowing learners to continue working towards a qualification after certification has been claimed.
- Forgery or alteration of assessment evidence or records.
- Misuse of Artificial Intelligence where submitted work does not represent the learner's own knowledge, skills and understanding.

Definition of Maladministration

Maladministration is any activity, practice, omission or persistent administrative failure that results in AA London College, its staff or learners failing to comply with administrative or regulatory requirements.

Maladministration is usually associated with poor administration, mistakes or failure to follow required procedures rather than deliberate misconduct.

Examples of Maladministration

Examples may include:

- Failure to maintain accurate learner or assessment records.
- Persistent late learner registrations.
- Failure to follow learner registration procedures.
- Failure to follow certification procedures.
- Unreasonable delays in responding to awarding organisation requests.
- Failure to retain required documentation.
- Administrative errors affecting learner records or certification.
- Repeated failure to follow approved administrative procedures.
- Failure to provide required information within specified timescales.

Where maladministration becomes deliberate, persistent or knowingly compromises the integrity of a qualification, it may be treated as malpractice.

Academic Malpractice

Learners must submit work that reflects their own knowledge, skills and understanding.

Academic malpractice occurs where a learner gains, or attempts to gain, an unfair advantage in an assessment or submits work that is not genuinely their own.

Examples include:

- Plagiarism.
- Collusion.
- Copying.
- Impersonation.
- Fabrication of information or evidence.
- Unauthorised assistance.
- Misuse of Artificial Intelligence.
- Submission of work completed by another person.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is presenting another person's words, ideas, research, data or work as one's own without appropriate acknowledgement.

Learners are expected to:

- Acknowledge sources used in assessed work.
- Use appropriate referencing where required.
- Avoid copying material without acknowledgement.
- Avoid closely paraphrasing another source without appropriate reference.
- Retain evidence of research where required.
- Ensure submitted work reflects their own understanding.

Suspected plagiarism will be investigated under this policy.

Artificial Intelligence and Assessment

AA London College recognises that Artificial Intelligence tools may have legitimate educational uses where their use is permitted.

However, learners must ensure that submitted assessment evidence remains their own work and demonstrates their own knowledge, skills and understanding.

AI use becomes malpractice where it prevents the learner from independently meeting the assessment requirements.

Acceptable Use of AI

Where permitted by the assessment requirements, learners may use AI tools for limited purposes such as:

- Supporting research.
- Generating ideas.
- Improving understanding of a topic.
- Checking grammar or structure.
- Supporting planning.

Any permitted use must comply with the instructions of the relevant awarding organisation and assessment requirements.

Examples of AI Misuse

Examples may include:

- Submitting AI-generated work as the learner's own.
- Copying or paraphrasing substantial AI-generated content without acknowledgement.
- Using AI to complete assessment tasks where this is not permitted.
- Using AI-generated analysis, evaluation or calculations instead of completing the work independently.
- Failing to acknowledge AI use where acknowledgement is required.
- Submitting false or misleading references produced by AI.
- Using AI in a way that prevents the learner from demonstrating their own attainment.

AI misuse will be treated as a form of malpractice.

Acknowledging AI Use

Where the use of AI is permitted, learners must clearly acknowledge how it has been used.

Learners should, where appropriate:

- Identify the AI tool used.
- Explain how it was used.
- Verify information generated by the tool.
- Reference the original sources relied upon.
- Retain evidence of AI-generated material where required by the assessor.

AI-generated content should not be relied upon without checking its accuracy.

Authenticity of Learner Work

Teachers and assessors must take reasonable steps to ensure that work submitted for assessment is authentic.

This may include:

- Comparing submitted work with previous learner work.
- Reviewing drafts or intermediate stages.
- Discussing work directly with the learner.
- Asking the learner to explain their analysis or conclusions.
- Reviewing references and sources.
- Considering significant changes in writing style or terminology.
- Checking whether the level of work is consistent with the learner's demonstrated ability.
- Using plagiarism or AI-detection tools as supporting evidence where appropriate.

Automated detection tools must not be relied upon as the sole basis for determining whether malpractice has occurred.

All available evidence must be considered.

Preventing Malpractice

AA London College will take reasonable steps to reduce the risk of malpractice.

These may include:

- Explaining assessment requirements clearly.
- Reinforcing the requirement for learners to submit their own work.
- Providing guidance on plagiarism and referencing.
- Providing guidance on acceptable and unacceptable AI use.
- Reviewing learner work during the assessment process.
- Monitoring progress through drafts and formative work.
- Conducting discussions with learners where authenticity concerns arise.
- Ensuring assessments are conducted under appropriate conditions.
- Providing appropriate staff training.
- Ensuring staff understand awarding organisation malpractice procedures.

Process for Making an Allegation of Malpractice or Maladministration

Any person who identifies or becomes aware of suspected malpractice or maladministration must notify the Head of Quality as soon as possible.

Reports should normally be made in writing and should include, where available:

- Learner name and registration number.
- Staff member's name and role, where relevant.
- Qualification or course affected.
- Nature of the suspected malpractice or maladministration.
- Relevant dates.
- Supporting evidence or documentation.

The Head of Quality will appoint an appropriate person to investigate where necessary.

The investigating officer should have no personal interest in the outcome of the investigation.

Responsibility for the Investigation

The Head of Quality is responsible for ensuring that allegations of malpractice and maladministration are examined promptly and fairly.

AA London College will:

- Acknowledge receipt of an allegation, where appropriate, within three working days.
- Review the available evidence.
- Appoint an investigating officer where required.
- Ensure the investigation follows relevant awarding organisation procedures.
- Take reasonable steps to prevent any further adverse effect.
- Maintain appropriate confidentiality.
- Keep relevant records.

Notifying Relevant Parties

AA London College will notify the relevant awarding organisation where required by its procedures.

The College may also notify appropriate regulatory authorities where the suspected malpractice or maladministration:

- Could invalidate the award of a qualification.
- Could affect the validity of learner results or certificates.
- Could affect another awarding organisation.
- Could compromise the integrity of regulated qualifications.
- Requires notification under regulatory requirements.

Where another awarding organisation may be affected, AA London College will inform that organisation in accordance with applicable requirements.

Investigation Timescales

AA London College will aim to complete investigations promptly.

Where reasonably practicable:

- Allegations will be acknowledged within three working days.
- Investigations will normally be completed within ten working days from receipt of the allegation.
- More complex cases may require additional time.

Where an investigation cannot be completed within the expected timescale, relevant parties will be informed where appropriate.

Investigation Principles

All investigations will be conducted in a fair, reasonable, objective and lawful manner.

The investigation will aim to:

- Establish the facts.
- Determine whether an irregularity occurred.
- Identify who was involved.
- Establish the cause of the issue.
- Determine the scale and impact of the irregularity.
- Review any action already taken.
- Determine whether corrective action is required.
- Protect current learners.
- Protect the integrity of qualifications and certification.
- Identify any patterns or recurring issues.

The investigation may include:

- Requests for further information.

- Review of assessment evidence.
- Interviews with relevant individuals.
- Review of learner records.
- Review of registration or certification records.
- Examination of relevant policies and procedures.
- Review of internal quality assurance records.

Confidentiality and Records

All information gathered during an investigation will be handled appropriately and securely.

AA London College will ensure that:

- Investigation records are kept secure.
- Information is only shared with persons who need access.
- Confidentiality is maintained where reasonably possible.
- Records are retained in accordance with applicable requirements.

Where an investigation results in certificate invalidation, regulatory action, civil proceedings or criminal proceedings, relevant records may be retained for the period required by the awarding organisation, regulator or applicable legal requirements.

Interim Measures

Where necessary, AA London College may take interim action while an investigation is ongoing.

This may include:

- Withholding learner results.
- Withholding certification claims.
- Preventing further assessment activity where appropriate.
- Increasing monitoring or supervision.
- Reallocating responsibilities.
- Taking appropriate employment action in accordance with HR procedures where staff are involved.

Any interim action will be proportionate to the circumstances of the case.

Investigation Report

Following an investigation, the Head of Quality or investigating officer will produce an appropriate record or report.

The report may include:

- Details of the allegation.
- Evidence reviewed.
- Findings.
- Whether malpractice or maladministration was established.
- Recommended actions.
- Any required reporting to external bodies.
- Measures to prevent recurrence.

The report will be shared with relevant internal or external parties where required.

Investigation Outcomes

Where malpractice or maladministration is confirmed, AA London College will consider appropriate action to:

- Protect the integrity of assessment and certification.
- Maintain confidence in the qualification.
- Prevent recurrence.
- Remove any unfair advantage.

- Protect current and future learners.
- Ensure compliance with awarding organisation requirements.

Actions may include:

- Requiring corrective action.
- Reassessment of learner work.
- Additional staff training.
- Additional internal quality assurance.
- Changes to procedures or controls.
- Disciplinary action where appropriate.
- Notification to the relevant awarding organisation.
- Withdrawal or correction of invalid certification where required.
- Reporting to a regulatory body where necessary.

The Head of Quality will record recommendations arising from investigations and ensure that relevant actions are monitored.

Appeals

Where the relevant awarding organisation or AA London College procedures provide a right of appeal, affected individuals will be informed of the appropriate appeals process.

Appeals must be considered separately from the original investigation wherever reasonably practicable.

Monitoring and Review

AA London College will monitor malpractice and maladministration cases to identify:

- Repeated concerns.
- Patterns or trends.
- Weaknesses in assessment arrangements.
- Administrative weaknesses.
- Training needs.
- Areas requiring additional controls.

Lessons learned from investigations will be used to strengthen assessment, quality assurance and administrative arrangements.

This policy will be reviewed periodically and when there are significant changes to awarding organisation requirements, regulatory guidance or assessment practice.

Location and Access to the Procedure

This policy will be made available to relevant staff and learners through the AA London College website, staff systems, learner induction or other appropriate channels.

Printed copies may become outdated. The current approved version should therefore be checked before use.