



Assessment Malpractice and Maladministration Policy

Created: October 2017

Last Review: November 2019

Next Review: November 2020

Background

The policy was created to address issues with assessments.

Purpose

To provide guidance and support to staff (those employed by GBS, contractors, subcontractors or associates) and learners on Assessment Malpractice and Maladministration and maintain the integrity of our relationships with awarding organisations.

To ensure the integrity of the assessment and quality assurance process and academic progress undertaken.

This procedure will ensure consistency of approach by all staff and is supplemented by the documents listed in the related policies section of this document.

Scope

All internal and external formative and summative assessments undertaken in relation to GBS registered learners.

Definitions

There are no specific definitions defined in this document.

Policy Statements

Assessment Malpractice and Maladministration

- Centre Staff Malpractice
- Breach of Security
- Failing to keep examination material secure prior to an examination
- Discussing or otherwise revealing secure information in public, eg internet forums.
- Moving the time or date of a fixed examination beyond the agreed arrangements. Conducting an examination before the published date constitutes centre staff malpractice and clear breach of security.
- Failing to supervise adequately learner who have been affected by a timetable variation; this would also apply to learner subject to overnight supervision by centre personnel or where an examination is to be sat in an earlier or later session on the scheduled day.
- Permitting, facilitating or obtaining unauthorised access to examination material prior to any examination.
- Failing to retain and secure examination question papers after an examination in cases where the life of the paper extends beyond the particular session. For example, where an examination is to be sat in a later session by one or more learner due to a timetable variation.
- Tampering with learner scripts or controlled assessments or coursework after collection and before despatch to the awarding organisation/examiner/moderator.
- Failing to keep learner computer files which contain controlled assessments or coursework secure.

Deception

- Inventing or changing marks for internally assessed components (eg coursework) where there is no actual evidence of the learner achievement to justify the marks awarded.
- Manufacturing evidence of competence against national standards.
- Fabricating assessment and/or internal quality assurance records to authentication statements.
- Entering fictitious learner for examinations or assessments, or otherwise subverting the assessment or certification process with the intention of financial gain (fraud).
- Substituting one learner's-controlled assessment or coursework for another.

Improper assistance to learners

- Assisting learners in the production of controlled assessments or coursework, or evidence of achievement, beyond that permitted by the regulations.
- Sharing or lending learners'-controlled assessments or coursework with other learners in a way which allows malpractice to take place.
- Assisting or prompting learners with the production of answers.
- Permitting learners in an examination to access prohibited materials (dictionaries, calculators etc).
- Prompting learners in an examination/assessment by means of signs or verbal or written prompts.
- Assisting learners granted the use of an Oral Language Modifier, a practical assistant, a prompter, a reader, a scribe or a Sign Language Interpreter beyond that permitted by the regulations.

Maladministration

- Failing to ensure that learners' coursework or work to be completed under controlled conditions is adequately monitored and supervised.
- Failure to use current assignments for assessments.
- Failure to train invigilators adequately, leading to non-compliance.
- Failure to issue to learners the appropriate notices and warnings.
- Failure to inform the awarding body of alternative sites for examinations.

- Failing to post notices relating to the examination or assessment outside all rooms where examinations and assessments are held.
- Not ensuring that the examination venue conforms to the requirements as stipulated in the awarding body Instructions to conducting examinations.
- The introduction of unauthorised material into the examination room, either prior to or during the examination (NB this precludes the use of the examination room to coach learners or give subject-specific presentations, including power-point presentations, prior to the start of the examination).
- Failing to remind learners that any mobile phones or other unauthorised items found in their possession must be handed to the invigilator prior to the examination starting.
- Failure to invigilate examinations in accordance with the awarding body requirements for conducting examinations.
- Failure to keep accurate records in relation to very late arrivals and overnight supervision arrangements.
- Failure to keep accurate and up to date records in respect of access arrangements which have been processed electronically using the online system.
- Granting reasonable adjustments to learners who do not meet the requirements.
- Granting access arrangements to learners where prior approval has not been obtained from the online system or, in the case of a more complex arrangement, from an awarding organisation.
- Failure to supervise effectively the printing of computer-based assignments when this is required.
- Failing to retain learners' assessments or coursework in secure conditions after the authentication statements have been signed or the work has been marked.
- Failing to maintain the security of learner scripts prior to despatch to the awarding organisation or examiner.
- Failing to despatch learner scripts/controlled assessments/coursework to the awarding bodies or examiners or moderators in a timely way.
- Failing to notify the appropriate awarding organisation of an instance of suspected malpractice in examinations or assessments as soon as possible after such an instance occurs or is discovered.
- Failing to conduct a thorough investigation into suspected examination or assessment malpractice when asked to do so by an awarding organisation.
- The inappropriate retention or destruction of certificates.

Learner malpractice

- The alteration or falsification of any results document, including certificates.
- A breach of the instructions or advice of an invigilator, supervisor, or the awarding organisation in relation to the examination or assessment rules and regulations.
- Failing to abide by the conditions of supervision designed to maintain the security of the examinations or assessments.
- Collusion: working collaboratively with other learners, beyond what is permitted.
- Copying from another learner (including the use of IT to aid the copying).
- Allowing work to be copied e.g. posting written coursework on social networking sites prior to an examination/assessment.
- The deliberate destruction of another learner's work.
- Disruptive behaviour in the examination room or during an assessment session (including the use of offensive language).
- Exchanging, obtaining, receiving, passing on information (or the attempt to) which could be examination related by means of talking, electronic, written or non-verbal communication.
- Making a false declaration of authenticity in relation to the authorship of controlled assessments, coursework or the contents of a portfolio.
- Allowing others to assist in the production of controlled assessments, coursework or assisting others in the production of controlled assessments or coursework.
- The misuse or the attempted misuse, of examination and assessment materials and resources (e.g. exemplar materials).

- Being in possession of confidential material in advance of the examination.
- Bringing into the examination room notes in the wrong format (where notes are permitted in examinations) or inappropriately annotated texts (in open book examinations).
- The inclusion of inappropriate, offensive or obscene material in scripts, controlled assessments, coursework or portfolios.
- Impersonation: pretending to be someone else, arranging for another person to take one's place in an examination or an assessment.
- Plagiarism: unacknowledged copying from published sources or incomplete referencing.
- Theft of another learner's work.
- Bringing into the examination room or assessment situation unauthorised material, for example: notes, study guides and personal organisers, own blank paper, calculators (when prohibited), dictionaries (when prohibited), instruments which can capture a digital image, electronic dictionaries (when provided), translators, wordlists, glossaries, iPods, mobile phones, MP3/4 players, pagers or other similar electronic devices.
- The unauthorised use of a memory stick where learner uses a word processor.
- Behaving in a manner as to undermine the integrity of the examination

Procedures

1. Where GBS discovers or suspects an individual, or individuals, of assessment malpractice and maladministration it will investigate in a form commensurate with the nature of the assessment malpractice and maladministration allegation. In all cases of suspected assessment malpractice and maladministration reported, GBS will protect the identity of the 'informant' in accordance with its duty of confidentiality and/or any other legal duty. Allegations should normally be made in writing. Where an allegation is made orally, the receiver of the allegation should attempt to obtain written confirmation from the person(s) making the allegation, but if this is not possible should make a written record.
2. Such an investigation will be initially undertaken by the Head of Delivery who will interview all personnel linked to the allegation.
3. GBS will make the individual(s) aware in writing within 5 working days of the nature of the alleged assessment malpractice and maladministration and of the possible consequences should the assessment malpractice and maladministration be proven.
4. The investigation will proceed through the following stages:
 - i. Preliminary investigation conducted by the Head of Delivery into the allegation to determine whether a full investigation is necessary. If the allegation appears to have substance, then all assessments by this member of staff should be halted until the investigation is complete and the Head of Performance is notified.
 - ii. Should it be determined that a full investigation is necessary it shall be conducted by an independent investigation officer appointed by the Head of Performance. This investigation will include:
 - i. A statement of the facts.
 - ii. A detailed account of the circumstances.
 - iii. Names of all persons involved and their roles in the case.
 - iv. Copies of any written statements by learners and staff.
 - v. Details of the investigation carried out.
 - vi. A record of any hearing.
 - vii. Copies of any learner's work that is the subject of the allegation or suspicion of malpractice.
 - viii. Details of any unauthorised material found in the assessment room.
 - ix. A record of the decision.
 - x. A record of the proposed penalty imposed if the allegation or suspicion is upheld (and a record of the confirmed penalty once this is agreed).
5. The Head of Performance will notify the awarding organisation (and possibly any public funding provider eg ESFA) of the alleged assessment malpractice and maladministration in writing (by letter or e-mail whichever is appropriate involving centre staff to notify the awarding organisation of an incident of malpractice.

The report will contain the following:

- i. GBS name, address and number.
- ii. The learner's name and registration number (where relevant).
- iii. GBS's or awarding organisation's person's details (name, job role) if they are involved in the case.
- iv. Details of the course or qualification affected, or nature of the service affected.
- v. The nature of the suspected or actual malpractice and associated dates.
- vi. Details and outcome of any initial investigation carried out by the college or anybody else involved in the case, including any mitigating circumstances.

The Head of Performance will consider any evidence that the awarding organisation may provide.

Subject to agreement it may be appropriate for a member of staff from the awarding organisation to give evidence at any hearing called as part of the investigation.

6. During the investigation GBS will give the individual the opportunity to respond to all the allegations made. The individual whether a learner or a member of staff, accused of malpractice must:

- Be informed (preferably in writing) of the allegation made against him/her.
 - Know what evidence there is to support that allegation.
 - Know the possible consequences should malpractice be proven.
 - Have the opportunity to consider their response to the allegations (if required).
 - Have the opportunity to submit a written statement.
 - Be informed that he/she will have the opportunity to read the submission and make an additional statement in response, should the case be put to the Malpractice Committee.
 - Have the opportunity to seek advice (as necessary) and to provide a supplementary statement (if required).
 - Be informed of the applicable appeals procedure, should a decision be made against him or her.
 - Be informed of the possibility that information relating to a serious case of malpractice may be shared with other awarding bodies, the regulators, the Police and/or professional bodies.
7. All stages of the investigation shall be documented by the investigating officer leading the investigation.
8. The individual(s) will be informed of the avenues for appealing against any judgements made. The individual(s) concerned has/have the right to appeal against any decision(s) or sanction(s) imposed. An appeal must be made in writing to the Head of Performance within 30 working days from the receipt of the written notification of the reported incident. The individual(s) concerned have the right of access to all the evidence, used by the investigation officer to make its decision, in order to provide a full response. Head of Performance will acknowledge receipt of an appeal within five working days. All appeals will be dealt with by the Managing Director or his delegated representative in accordance with the awarding organisation requirements.
9. The investigating officer shall produce a report of their findings for the attention of the Head of Performance. This report must be submitted to the relevant awarding organisation and should contain the following facts:
- A statement of facts, a detailed account of the circumstances of the alleged malpractice, and details of any investigations carried out by the centre.
 - Written statement(s) from the invigilator(s), assessor, internal verifier(s) or other staff who are involved.
 - Written statement(s) from the learner(s).
 - Any mitigating factors.
 - Information about the centre's procedures for advising learners of the awarding organisations' regulations.
 - Seating plans showing the exact position of learners in the examination room.
 - Unauthorised material found in the examination room.
 - Any work of the learner and any associated material (eg source material for coursework) which is relevant to the investigation.
- The awarding organisation 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 Managing Director will be informed accordingly.
10. For cases of staff malpractice, the Head of Performance will decide whether to invoke the Discipline (Staff). Where the assessment malpractice or maladministration appears to involve a criminal offence, GBS will consult with the awarding organisation whether it is appropriate for GBS to report the case to the police.
11. For cases of learner assessment malpractice, reference should be made by the investigating officer to the other relevant procedures: Examinations/Admissions procedure, Assessment (including Appeals Against Assessment) procedure and Plagiarism procedure.
12. Where the investigation officer report indicates that the learner assessment is suspect or flawed, then the relevant procedures in 11 should be consulted for appropriate penalties.

Reporting Suspected Cases of Malpractice During an Examination

In all cases where a learner is suspected of malpractice during an examination, he/she will first be warned by the invigilator that his/her actions are in breach of regulations and therefore might constitute malpractice. The learner will also be informed that the invigilator is obliged to report his/her (the learner's) action.

The learner concerned has the right to provide a statement explaining his/her conduct that will be included in the invigilator's written report. The learner is however not obliged to provide a statement before leaving the assessment venue. In such cases, the invigilator will note this in the report. In cases where a learner is discovered to be in possession of any unauthorised materials during an examination/assessment, the invigilator will confiscate the materials, and record the time and point within the script at which the discovery was made, along with a list of the confiscated materials which the learner will be asked to sign to confirm its accuracy.

Learners will be allowed to continue working for the remainder of the assessment without prejudice to the final outcome.

In communicating/collaborating the invigilator will note on each suspected learner's assessment script the time and point within the script at which the discovery was made. Any written evidence relevant to the incident, e.g. confiscated materials, statements from other individuals involved, must accompany the report.

Suspected Malpractice by Assessment Staff/Invigilators

Suspected cases of malpractice by a staff member or invigilator may be reported by the learners, other assessment staff, other assessment invigilators or a member of the public. Written reports should be submitted to the Head of Quality and Compliance and the Head of Performance along with the assessment name, location, the date and title of the assessment, the time the assessment took place, the learner's name, if applicable and the name of the member of staff in question.

Right of Appeal

The individual(s) concerned has/have the right to appeal against any decision(s) or sanction(s) imposed. An appeal must be made in writing to the Managing Director within 30 working days from receipt of the written notification of the reported incident. The individual(s) concerned have the right of access to all the evidence used to make the decision, in order to provide a full response.

Action upon Receipt of an Appeal

The Head of Performance will acknowledge receipt of an appeal within five working days. All appeals to malpractice decisions will be dealt with fairly and in accordance with the relevant awarding organisation by the Managing Director or his designated representative.

Sanctions for centre staff

In cases of centre staff malpractice, the role of the awarding organisation is confined to considering whether the integrity of its examinations and assessments has been placed in jeopardy, and whether the integrity might be jeopardised if an individual is found to have indulged in assessment malpractice and maladministration were to be involved in the future conduct, supervision or administration of the awarding organisation's examinations or assessments.

It is not the role of the awarding organisation to be involved in any matter affecting the member of staff's or contractor's contractual relationship with his/her employer or engager. Awarding organisations recognise that each centre may take a different view of an allegation to that determined by the awarding organisation or its Malpractice Committee. The centre may wish to finalise its decision after the awarding organisation or its Malpractice Committee has reached its conclusion.

Where a member of staff or contractor has been found guilty of malpractice, an awarding organisation may impose the following sanctions or penalties:

1. **Written warning**
Issue the member of staff with a written warning that if the offence is repeated within a set period, further specified sanctions will be applied.
2. **Special conditions**
Impose special conditions on the future involvement in its examinations and/or assessments by the member of staff, whether this involves the internal assessment, the conduct, supervision or administration of its examinations and assessments.
3. **Training**
Require the member of staff, as a condition of future involvement in its examinations, to undertake specific training or mentoring, within a particular period of time, and a review process at the end of the training.
4. **Staff Barring**
Bar the member of staff from all involvement in the delivery of its examinations and assessments for a set period of time. Other awarding bodies and the regulators will be informed when a suspension is imposed.

These sanctions will be notified to the Head of Performance who will be required to ensure that they are carried out. If a member of staff moves to another centre/provider while being subject to one of the above sanctions, the Head of Performance will notify the awarding organisation of the move. Each awarding organisation reserves the right to inform the centre/provider to which the staff member is moving of the nature of, and the reason for, the sanction.

After investigating an alleged assessment malpractice and maladministration the Managing Director or his/her nominee must submit a full written report of the case to the awarding organisation who will refer this to a panel or committee composed of external members experienced in examination and assessment procedures.

Following investigation if the alleged assessment malpractice and maladministration is upheld the following sanctions and penalties apply:

Sanctions for GBS staff assessment malpractice and maladministration

Awarding organisations may, at their discretion, impose the following penalties and special conditions against GBS. The penalties and special conditions may be applied individually or in combination. Awarding organisations will determine the appropriateness of a sanction depending on the evidence presented, the nature and circumstances of the malpractice, and the type of qualification involved.

Written warning

A letter to the Managing Director advising of the breach (including the report) and advising of the further action that may be taken (including the application of penalties and special conditions) should there be a recurrence of this breach, or subsequent breaches at the centre.

1. **Review and report (action plans)**
The Managing Director will be required to review GBS's procedures for the conduct or administration of a particular examination/assessment, or all examinations/ assessments in general, and to report back to the awarding organisation on improvements implemented by a set date. Alternatively, an action plan will be agreed between the awarding organisation and GBS and will need to be implemented as a condition of continuing to accept entries from the GBS.
2. **Approval of specific assessment tasks**
The approval by the awarding organisation of specific assessment tasks in situations where these are normally left to the discretion of GBS.
3. **Additional monitoring or inspection**
The awarding organisation may increase, at the GBS's expense, the normal level of monitoring that takes place in relation to the qualification(s).

4. Removal of direct claims status
Direct claims status may be removed from the GBS in which case all claims for certification must be authorised by the awarding organisation. (This sanction applies only to vocational qualifications and similarly assessed qualifications).
5. Restrictions on Examination and Assessment Materials
For a specified period of time the college will be provided with examination papers and assessment materials shortly before such papers and materials are scheduled to be used. These papers will be opened and distributed under the supervision of the awarding organisation officer (or appointed agent) responsible for the delivery. GBS might also be required to hand over to an awarding organisation officer (or appointed agent) the completed scripts and any relevant accompanying documentation as opposed to using the normal script collection or posting procedures. These measures may be applied for selected subjects or all subjects.
6. Independent Invigilators
The appointment of, for a specified period of time and at GBS's expense, independent invigilators to ensure the conduct of examinations and/or assessments is in accordance with the regulations.
7. Suspension of learner registrations or entries
An awarding organisation may, for a time, or until a specific matter has been rectified, refuse to accept learner entries or registrations from GBS. This may be applied for selected subjects/occupational areas or all subjects/occupational areas.
8. Suspension of certification
An awarding organisation may, for a period of time, or until a specific matter has been rectified, refuse to issue certificates to learners from GBS. (This applies to vocational qualifications and similar types of qualifications only).
9. Withdrawal of approval for a specific qualification(s)
An awarding organisation may withdraw the approval of GBS to offer one or more qualifications issued by that awarding organisation.
10. Withdrawal of centre recognition
The awarding organisation may withdraw recognition or approval for GBS. This means as a result that the GBS will not be able to deliver or offer the learners the respective awarding organisation's qualifications. Other awarding organisations will be informed of this action. At the time of withdrawal of centre recognition GBS will be informed at the earliest date at which it can reapply for registration and any measures it will need to take prior to this application.
11. Any expense incurred in ensuring compliance with the penalties and or special conditions will be incurred by GBS.

Sanctions and penalties against learners

Awarding organisations may, at their discretion, impose the following sanctions and penalties against learners found guilty of assessment malpractice and maladministration. Not all the sanctions and penalties are appropriate to every type of qualification or circumstance.

1. Penalty 1 – Warning
The learner is issued with a warning that if the offence is repeated within a set period of time, further specified sanctions will be applied.
2. Penalty 2 – Loss of marks for a section
The learner loses all the marks gained for a discrete section of the work. A section may be part of a component, or a single piece of coursework if this consists of several items.
3. Penalty 3 – Loss of marks for a component
The learner loses all the marks gained for a component. A component is more often a feature of linear qualifications than a unitised qualification, and so this penalty can be regarded as an alternative to penalty 4. Some units also have components, in which case a level of penalty between numbers 2 and 4 is possible.
4. Penalty 4 – Loss of all marks for a unit
The learner loses all the marks gained for a unit. The penalty can only be applied to qualifications

which are unitised. For linear qualifications, the option is penalty 3. This penalty usually allows the learner to aggregate or request certification in that series, albeit with a reduced mark or grade.

5. Penalty 5 – Disqualification from a unit
The learner is disqualified from the unit. The penalty is only available if the qualification is unitised. For linear qualifications the option is penalty 7. The effect of this penalty is to prevent the learner aggregating or requesting certification in that series, if the learner has applied for it.
6. Penalty 6 – Disqualification from all units in one or more qualifications
If circumstances suggest, penalty 5 may be applied to other units taken during the same examination or assessment series. (Units which have been banked in previous exam series are retained). This penalty is only available if the qualification is unitised. For linear qualifications see option in penalty 8.
7. Penalty 7 – Disqualification from a whole qualification
The learner is disqualified from the whole qualification taken in that series or academic year. The penalty can be applied to unitised qualifications only if the learner has requested aggregation. Any units banked in a previous series are retained, but the units taken in the present series and the aggregation opportunity are lost. If a learner has not requested aggregation the option is penalty 6. It may also be used with linear qualifications
8. Penalty 8 – Disqualification from all qualifications taken in that series
If circumstances suggest, penalty 7 may be applied to other qualifications. This penalty can be applied to unitised qualifications only if the learner has requested aggregation. Any units banked in a previous series are retained, but the units taken in the present series and the aggregation opportunity are lost. If a learner has not requested aggregation the option is penalty 6. It may also be used with linear qualifications.
9. Penalty 9 – Learner debarred
The learner could be barred from entering for one or more examinations for a set period of time. This penalty is applied in conjunction with any of the other penalties above, if the circumstances warrant it.

When awarding organisations are applying sanctions and penalties, they will take into account that not all of the above penalties set out may be appropriate to every type of qualification and circumstance.

Unless a penalty is accompanied by a bar on future entry, all learners penalised by loss of marks or disqualification, make retake the component(s), unit(s), or qualification(s) affected in the next examination series or assessment opportunity.

GBS may take further action in cases of assessment malpractice and maladministration as deemed appropriate.

Communication decisions

The awarding organisation will inform the GBS of its decision in writing as soon as possible after the decision is made. It is the responsibility of the Managing Director or his/her nominee to communicate the decision to the individuals concerned, and to pass on warnings in cases where this is indicated.

The majority of cases of assessment administration and maladministration are confidential between the individual awarding organisation and GBS, but in cases of serious malpractice, where the threat is to the integrity of the examination or assessment outweigh a duty of confidentiality, it will normally be necessary for information to be exchanged amongst the regulators and the awarding organisations and other centres where the malpractice may affect the delivery of an awarding organisation's qualification.

It is the responsibility of the Managing Director to inform the accused individual that the awarding organisation may share information in accordance with the paragraph above.

Appeals

The awarding organisations have established procedures for considering appeals against penalties arising from assessment malpractice and maladministration decisions. The following individuals have a right to appeal against decisions of the Malpractice Committee or officers acting on its behalf.

- The Managing Director may appeal against sanctions imposed on GBS, as well as on behalf of learners entered or registered through GBS.

- GBS staff, or examining personnel contracted to GBS, who may appeal against sanctions imposed on them personally.
- Private learners.
- Third parties who have been barred from examinations of the awarding organisation.

Awarding organisations will provide the college with information on the process for submitting an appeal on any assessment malpractice and maladministration decisions which will be made available to the relevant parties involved.

PROCEDURE REVIEW

This procedure will be reviewed annually and revised as necessary in response to customer and learner feedback, changes in its practices, advice from the regulatory authorities or external agencies, changes in legislation, or trends identified from previous instances of assessment malpractice or maladministration. In addition, this procedure may be updated in light of operational feedback to ensure our arrangements for dealing with suspected cases of assessment malpractice and maladministration remain effective.

Awarding Body Reports

Any suspected malpractice will be reported to the awarding bodies immediately, and a statement that makes it clear that any individual can report suspected malpractice directly to the awarding body using their Whistleblowing policy.

Related Policies

Discipline (Staff) procedure

Discipline – Learner procedure

Plagiarism procedure

Assessment (Appeals Against Assessment) procedure

References / Citations

No references or citations have been listed for this policy

End.