

## Organisational and Learner Malpractice Policy

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### 1. Introduction

The integrity of our assessment processes and the validity of the qualifications we offer are of paramount importance. This policy outlines Step into Learning's commitment to identifying and minimizing the risk of malpractice by both staff and learners. It also provides clear guidance on responding to any allegations of malpractice promptly and effectively.

### 2. Scope

This policy applies to all staff and learners involved in any aspect of assessment and examination processes at Step into Learning. It covers actions that may compromise the integrity of assessments, qualifications, and certificates, whether deliberate or accidental, by any individual associated with our organisation.

### 3. Definition

**Malpractice** is defined as any deliberate activity, neglect, default, or other practice that compromises the assessment process, the validity of certificates, and the integrity of the qualification. It may involve the actions of staff or learners and can occur in a variety of contexts, including but not limited to examinations, assessments, and the handling of coursework.

#### Examples of Organisational Malpractice:

- Alteration of assessment and grading criteria.

- Assisting learners in producing work where the support influences the assessment outcomes.
- Falsifying entries or records.
- Allowing evidence not belonging to the learner to be included in assessments.
- Failing to secure learner files or examination materials.
- Unauthorised access to examination materials.

**Examples of Learner Malpractice:**

- Misuse of examination material.
- Disruptive behaviour during examinations.
- Unauthorised material in examination rooms.
- Copying, plagiarism, collusion, or impersonation.
- The destruction or theft of another learner's work.

### **3.1. Investigatory and process model for Malpractice and Maladministration**

Any cases of suspected or actual malpractice or maladministration will be investigated and reported to the appropriate awarding organisation. This will be completed in writing via the appropriate form.

**Investigating suspected or actual malpractice or maladministration**

All investigations will be conducted in a fair, reasonable and legal manner, ensuring that all relevant evidence is considered without bias. The objective/s: The Lead IQA will undertake the following actions

- To establish the facts relating to allegations/complaints to determine whether any irregularities have occurred.
- To identify the cause of the issue and those involved.
- To establish the extent of the issue raised.
- To evaluate any action already taken.
- To interview any parties

In any case of Maladministration or Malpractice an initial investigation will also collate evidence to determine scope and impact of practice, impact on learner or learners and



assurance integrity of the qualification remains intact. Any outcomes and evidence will be submitted to the awarding body for due consideration.

## 3.2. Staff development

All staff to undertake training on what is considered good practice.

Key elements of staff training to prevent maladministration:

### **Policy awareness:**

- Thorough review of our maladministration policy, including definitions of maladministration, examples of potential breaches, and reporting procedures.
- Clarifying the roles and responsibilities of staff members in upholding the policy.

### **Ethical conduct:**

- Discussion on ethical principles applicable to the workplace, including impartiality, fairness, transparency, accountability, and conflict of interest management.
- Scenarios and role-playing exercises to practice ethical decision-making in challenging situations.

### **Procedural compliance:**

- Detailed training on specific procedures related to their role, including document handling, record-keeping, decision-making processes, and approval protocols.
- Emphasize the importance of following established procedures even when faced with time pressure.

### **Identifying potential issues:**

- Training on red flags and warning signs that could indicate potential maladministration, such as unusual requests, conflicts of interest, or discrepancies in information.
- How to assess situations with a critical eye and raise concerns proactively.

### **Reporting mechanisms:**

- Clear instructions on how to report suspected maladministration, including who to report to, the appropriate channels, and the process for submitting complaints.
- Importance of confidentiality and protection against retaliation for reporting concerns.

### **Case studies and scenarios:**

- Real-life examples of maladministration cases to illustrate potential consequences and best practices for prevention.
- Discussion of ethical dilemmas and decision-making processes in relevant scenarios.

### **Regular updates and refreshers:**



- Periodic training sessions to reinforce key concepts, address policy changes, and incorporate new information regarding maladministration.
- Opportunity for staff to ask questions and raise concerns.

### 3.3. Plagiarism and submissions

Our college plagiarism policy outlines the rules regarding the act of presenting someone else's work as your own, without proper attribution, and the consequences students face if Learners violate those rules, which can include failing a specific assignment, receiving a lower grade, or even disciplinary action like suspension depending on the severity of the plagiarism.

#### Key points

- **Definition of plagiarism:**  
We clearly define what constitutes plagiarism, including copying text directly, paraphrasing without citation, using someone else's ideas without proper acknowledgement, and submitting work that is substantially similar to another source.
- **Proper citation practices:**  
Learner support Documents specify the correct way to cite sources based on the academic discipline, including the use of quotation marks, in-text citations, and reference lists.
- **Penalty structure:**  
Depending on the severity of the plagiarism, penalties can range from receiving a failing grade on an assignment to disciplinary action like probation or suspension.
- **Investigative process:**  
If plagiarism is suspected, we will investigate the matter, which may include interviews with the student, review of the submitted work, and potentially consulting with faculty members.
- **Access to plagiarism detection software:**  
We will look to utilize software like Turnitin to scan submitted work for potential plagiarism. This will come into place on a trial basis for the academic year 24-25.

## 4. Policy Statement

Step into Learning is committed to maintaining the highest standards of integrity in all aspects of its educational provision. This includes:

**Preventing Malpractice:** All staff are responsible for identifying and reporting any malpractice. Proactive steps will be taken to ensure that all assessments are fair and unbiased.

**Investigating Allegations:** Allegations of malpractice by staff or learners will be promptly and thoroughly investigated by the appropriate authorities within the



organization. This includes the Head of Adult Education or the Executive Director of Business Services, depending on the nature of the allegation.

**Responding to Malpractice:** Any staff or learner found to have engaged in malpractice will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action. Staff will be informed in writing of the alleged malpractice and the process, and they will have the opportunity to respond. Learners will be notified, along with their parents or guardians where appropriate, and informed of their right to appeal.

**Reporting Outcomes:** A full report of the investigation and outcomes will be submitted to the relevant Awarding Organisation. In cases of serious malpractice, this may include sharing information with regulatory authorities and other awarding bodies.

## 5. Conclusion

Step into Learning is dedicated to upholding the integrity of its qualifications and ensuring that all assessments are conducted fairly and transparently. Through this policy, we seek to protect the credibility of our educational programs and support all learners and staff in achieving success through honest and ethical practices.