

Exams Malpractice Policy

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Introduction

What is malpractice and maladministration?

'Malpractice' and 'maladministration' are related concepts, the common theme being that they involve a failure to follow the rules of an examination or assessment. This policy and procedure use the word 'malpractice' to cover both 'malpractice' and 'maladministration' and it means any act, default or practice which is:

- a breach of the Regulations, and/or
- a breach of awarding body requirements regarding how a qualification should be delivered, and/or
- a failure to follow established procedures in relation to a qualification which:
- gives rise to prejudice to candidates, and/or
- compromises public confidence in qualifications, and/or
- compromises, attempts to compromise or may compromise the process of assessment, the integrity of any qualification or the validity of a result or certificate, and/or
- damages the authority, reputation or credibility of any awarding body or centre or any officer, employee or agent of any awarding body or centre (SMPP 1)

Candidate malpractice

'Candidate malpractice' normally involves malpractice by a candidate in connection with any examination or assessment, including the preparation and authentication of any controlled assessments, coursework or non-examination assessments, the presentation of any practical work, the compilation of portfolios of assessment evidence and the completion of any examination. (SMPP 2)

Centre staff malpractice

'Centre staff malpractice' means malpractice committed by:

- a member of staff, contractor (whether employed under a contract of employment or a contract for services) or a volunteer at a centre, or
- an individual appointed in another capacity by a centre such as an invigilator, a Communication Professional, a Language Modifier, a practical assistant, a prompter, a reader or a scribe (SMPP 2)

Suspected malpractice

For the purposes of this document, suspected malpractice means all alleged or suspected incidents of malpractice (regardless of how the incident might be categorized, as described in SMPP, section 19). (SMPP 2)

Purpose of the policy

To confirm Ancora House School:

has in place for inspection that must be reviewed and updated annually, a written malpractice policy which covers all qualifications delivered by the centre detailing how candidates are informed and advised to avoid committing malpractice in examinations/assessments, how suspected malpractice issues should be escalated within the centre and reported to the relevant awarding body; it must also acknowledge the use of AI (e.g. what AI is, when it may be used and how it should be acknowledged, the risks of using AI, what AI misuse is and how this will be treated as malpractice) (GR 5.3)

General principles

In accordance with the regulations Ancora House School will:

- take all reasonable steps to prevent the occurrence of any malpractice (which includes maladministration) before, during and after assessments have taken place (GR 5.11)
- inform the awarding body immediately of any alleged, suspected or actual incidents of malpractice or maladministration, involving a candidate or a member of staff, by completing the appropriate documentation (GR 5.11)
- as required by an awarding body, gather evidence of any instances of alleged or suspected malpractice (which includes maladministration) in accordance with the current JCQ document Suspected Malpractice - Policies and Procedures and provide such information and advice as the awarding body may reasonably require (GR 5.11)

Preventing malpractice

Ancora House School has in place:

Robust processes to prevent and identify malpractice, as outlined in section 3 of the JCQ document Suspected Malpractice: Policies and Procedures. (SMPP 4.3)

This includes ensuring that staff involved in the delivery of assessments and examinations understand the requirements for conducting these as specified in the following JCQ documents and any further awarding body guidance:

- General Regulations for Approved Centres 2025-2026
- Instructions for conducting examinations (ICE) 2025-2026
- Instructions for conducting coursework 2025-2026

- Instructions for conducting non-examination assessments
 - Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments 2025-2026
 - A guide to the special consideration process 2025-2026
 - Suspected Malpractice: Policies and Procedures 2025-2026 (this document)
 - Plagiarism in Assessments
 - AI Use in Assessments: Protecting the Integrity of Qualifications
 - Post Results Services June 2026 and November 2025
 - A guide to the awarding bodies' appeals processes 2025-2026
- (SMPP 3.3.1)

Additional information

If a member of centre staff involved in the management, administration and/or conducting of examinations (such as exams officer, exams assistant or invigilator), a student or a member of the public (such as a parent/carer) has a concern or reason to believe that malpractice has or will occur in an examination or assessment, concerns should normally be raised initially with the Headteacher.

However, there may be times when it may be more appropriate to refer the issue direct to the governing board, most often when the allegation is against the head of centre.

Informing and advising candidates how to avoid committing malpractice in examinations/assessments

All candidates that are entered for exams through Ancora House School receive an examinations pack prior to the series, a member of SLT goes through each section with the candidates drawing their attention to pertinent information including malpractice. Prior to the examination series SLT will hold an assembly for candidates running through key information such as malpractice, in addition students are provided with the exam room posters and exam handbook which covers this.

AI use in assessments

Artificial Intelligence (AI) refers to the development of computer systems capable of performing tasks that typically require human intelligence. These tasks include reasoning, decision-making, problem-solving, and understanding natural language. AI encompasses a wide range of technologies, including machine learning, deep learning, and natural language processing (NLP).

Ancora House School expects students to complete assessments and NEA without the use of AI, Ancora House School does not permit the use of AI in any coursework or NEA assessments. a) Use of AI can constitute a number of forms of academic misconduct. It could be:

- plagiarism (because you are relying on a source that you have not identified)
- commissioning (because you are relying on work produced by another person - the company who owns the AI software)
- fabrication (if the AI makes up data or experiences that you then rely on)
- In the context of online exams, use of generative AI will be treated as cheating and malpractice.
- We will assume that, by submitting a piece of work for summative assessment, you are representing that work as your own and not the product of generative AI use. We reserve the right to treat generative AI use as malpractice.

We advise students to avoid using generative AI to write assessments to avoid an accusation of malpractice. As well as keeping draft work and notes, and saving work in different stages so that staff can see the progression of the work. Students should be ready to explain understanding of the answer and how you produced it. If there is a suspicion or malpractice students may be requested to submit a statement detailing how they produced the work.

Ancora House School teaching staff will reduce the risk of AI use by monitoring the progress of students work at regular intervals and the school has smoothwall and internet usage monitoring on all of its devices so they can regulate which websites can be accessed by students.

In the event that is suspected that AI has been used, this will be referred to SLT and exam boards will be alerted.

It is the role of the teacher who oversees the NEAs to ensure steps have been taken to mitigate the risks of the use of AI in assessments, they must report any suspected AI use to the exams officer and head of centre.

Identification and reporting of malpractice

In order to help identify suspected malpractice in relation To NEA's, the class teacher will observe the candidates completing the assessment components over time and checking the assessments at regular intervals to observe indicators of plagiarism such as:

- Spelling, grammar and vocabulary used in the document – a mixture of English and American could be an indication of work not being the candidates own
- Varying quality of the work
- Varying writing style, not in keeping with the candidates usual writing style
- Irregular punctuation
- Lack of referencing to source material

In order to identify suspected malpractice in written examinations, the school will ensure appropriate invigilation ratios are in place and candidates are being observed in line with JCQ regulations. Ancora House school ensures all invigilation staff receive appropriate training annually and are reminded to be vigilant in the exam room in order to identify any instances of malpractice.

Once suspected malpractice is identified, any member of staff at the centre can report it using the appropriate channels. (SMPP 4.3)

In the event that malpractice is suspected the staff member will make the exams officer aware, the exams officer will ask for a written detailed account of the malpractice which will be reported to the head as well as members of SLT. The exams officer will then contact the relevant awarding body regarding the suspected malpractice and take advice from the awarding body about how to proceed.

Assessment records will be updated with details of any improper assistance by the staff member who has noted the suspected malpractice. The staff member will print a hard copy of the assessment and hand mark the assessment in pen to highlight where the improper assistance has been identified, listing the original source of the plagiarized text, this will then be signed and passed to the head of centre.

Appeals against decisions to reject a candidate's work on the grounds of malpractice

The JCQ Information for candidates documents (Coursework, Non-examination assessments, Social media) which are distributed to all candidates prior to relevant assessments taking place, inform candidates of the things they must and must not do when they are completing their work.

The JCQ Information for candidates - AI (Artificial Intelligence and assessments) or similar centre document is issued to candidates prior to assessments taking place (and prior to a candidate signing the declaration of authentication which relates to their work).

Ancora House School ensures that staff delivering/assessing coursework, internal assessments and/or non-examination assessments are aware of centre procedures relating to the authentication of learner work and have robust processes in place for identifying and reporting plagiarism (including AI misuse) and other potential candidate malpractice.

Candidate malpractice offences relating to the content of work (i.e. inappropriate/offensive content, copying/collusion, plagiarism (including AI misuse) and/or false declaration of authentication) which are discovered in a controlled assessment, coursework or non-examination assessment component prior to the candidate signing the declaration of authentication do not need to be reported to the awarding body but will be dealt with in accordance with the centre's internal procedures.

Malpractice by a candidate discovered in a controlled assessment, coursework or non-examination assessment where the offence does not relate to the content of candidates' work (e.g. possession of unauthorised materials, breach of assessment conditions) or where

a candidate has signed the declaration of authentication, must be reported to the awarding body.

If there are doubts about the authenticity of the work of a candidate or irregularities are identified in a candidate's work before the candidate has signed the declaration of authentication/authentication statement (where required) and malpractice is suspected, Ancora House School will:

- follow the authentication procedures and/or malpractice instructions in the relevant JCQ document (Instructions for conducting non-examination assessments/Instructions for conducting coursework) and any supplementary guidance that may be provided by the awarding body. Where this may lead to the decision to not accept the candidate's work for assessment or to reject a candidate's coursework on the grounds of malpractice, the affected candidate will be informed of the decision.

If a candidate who is the subject of the decision disagrees with the decision:

- a written request, setting out as clearly and concisely as possible the grounds for the appeal including any further evidence relevant to supporting the appeal, should be submitted via the internal appeals form
- an internal appeals form should be completed and submitted within 10 calendar days of the decision being made known to the appellant

The appellant will be informed of the outcome of the appeal within 10 calendar days of the appeal being received and logged by the centre.

Reporting suspected malpractice to the awarding body

The head of centre will notify the appropriate awarding body immediately of all alleged, suspected or actual incidents of malpractice, using the appropriate forms, and will conduct any investigation and gathering of information in accordance with the requirements of the JCQ document Suspected Malpractice: Policies and Procedures (SMPP 4.1.3)

The head of centre will ensure that, where a candidate is a child or an adult at risk and is the subject of a malpractice investigation, the candidate's parent/carer/ appropriate adult is kept informed of the progress of the investigation (SMPP 4.1.3)

Form JCQ/M1 will be used to notify an awarding body of an incident of candidate malpractice. Form JCQ/M2 will be used to notify an awarding body of an incident of suspected staff malpractice/maladministration (SMPP 4.4, 4.6)

Malpractice by a candidate discovered in a controlled assessment, coursework or non-examination assessment component prior to the candidate signing the declaration of authentication does not need to be reported to the awarding body but will be dealt with in accordance with the centre's internal procedures. The only exception to this is where the awarding body's confidential assessment material has potentially been breached. The breach will be reported to the awarding body immediately (SMPP 4.5)

If plagiarism is detected by the centre and the declaration of authentication has been signed, the case must be reported to the Awarding Body. The procedure is detailed in JCQ Suspected Malpractice Policies and Procedures (www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/malpractice/).

If, in the view of the investigator, there is sufficient evidence to implicate an individual in malpractice, that individual (the candidate or the member of staff) will be informed of the rights of accused individuals (SMPP 5.33)

Once the information gathering has concluded, the head of centre (or other appointed information-gatherer) will submit a written report summarising the information obtained and actions taken to the relevant awarding body, accompanied by the information obtained during the course of their enquiries (5.35)

Form JCQ/M1 will be used when reporting candidate cases; for centre staff, form JCQ/M3 will be used (SMPP 5.37)

The awarding body 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 head of centre will be informed accordingly (SMPP 5.40)

Additional information:

In the event any transferred candidates are suspected of malpractice the staff will report in the same way as if the candidate was entered with us. The exams officer will then contact the entering centre and submit a written report / JCQ/M1 form to the entering centre who will then submit the findings to the awarding bodies.

Communicating malpractice decisions

Once a decision has been made, it will be communicated in writing to the head of centre as soon as possible. The head of centre will communicate the decision to the individuals concerned and pass on details of any sanctions and action in cases where this is indicated. The head of centre will also inform the individuals if they have the right to appeal. (SMPP 11.1)

Appeals against decisions made in cases of malpractice

Ancora House School will:

Provide the individual with information on the process and timeframe for submitting an appeal, where relevant and refer to further information and follow the process provided in the JCQ document A guide to the awarding bodies' appeals processes.