

PRCA MALPRACTICE POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

Malpractice is a sensitive issue for all training providers. The vast majority of learners and delivery staff abide by awarding body regulations and work hard to ensure that assessment performance reflects the ability, knowledge, and competence of learners. It is important that the PRCA supports the majority of hardworking learners and delivery staff by being vigilant and identifying and disciplining learners and delivery staff who do not adhere to the regulations which govern the apprenticeship qualifications. Therefore, the PRCA takes appropriate action in respect of cases of malpractice to preserve the integrity of PRCA delivered qualifications.

2. MALPRACTICE

Malpractice is any **deliberate** activity, neglect, default or other practice that compromises the integrity of the assessment process and/or validity of certification. Maladministration is any activity, neglect, default, or other practice that results in the PRCA not complying with the awarding body specified requirements for delivery of units and qualifications.

Malpractice can occur at learner or PRCA level and may include a range of issues from the failure to maintain appropriate records or systems to the deliberate falsification of records in order to claim certificates.

- **Learner malpractice:** any action by the learner which has the potential to undermine the integrity and validity of the assessment of the learner's work. (Plagiarism, collusion, cheating, etc)
- **Assessor/Coach malpractice:** any deliberate action by an assessor which has the potential to undermine the integrity of the qualifications
- **Plagiarism:** taking and using another's thoughts, writings, inventions, etc as one's own, including using AI*
- **Maladministration:** any activity, neglect, default or other practice that results in the PRCA or candidate not complying with the specified requirements for delivery of the qualifications

3. PRCA RESPONSIBILITY

It is the responsibility of the PRCA to **identify, record and investigate** potential incidents of malpractice or maladministration.

The PRCA must:

- take reasonable steps to prevent malpractice
- ensure all staff and learners are fully aware of this malpractice policy
- ensure any member of staff with a personal interest in the outcome of a learner's assessment is not involved in their assessment or moderation
- be vigilant to possible occurrences
- implement a recording system for suspected instances

4. EXAMPLES OF MALPRACTICE

Malpractice may include:

- Impersonating another learner or arranging to be impersonated, for example arranging for another person to complete an assessment on one's behalf.

- Plagiarism: reproducing work from a published source (including the internet) and presenting it as one's own work.
- Submitting or plagiarising work that is not the apprentice's own original work (such as using a project writing service to buy work and submit it as their own, including the use of Artificial intelligence (AI)*).
- Copying the work of another learner or allowing one's own work to be copied by another learner.
- Falsifying evidence to demonstrate competence in relation to assessment criteria.
- Working together with another learner (or other learners) to produce the response for a task or assessment without acknowledgement.
- Learner work for an assessment or task is not original or authentic.
- Falsifying evidence of competence against the assessment criteria.
- Failure to disclose that work undertaken to demonstrate competence was undertaken collaboratively with one or more parties.
- Misleading delivery staff or PRCA representatives regarding competence against the assessment criteria.
- Altering or interfering with learner assessment documentation for example, prior examination results, results notifications or certificates.
- Assessment of a learner undertaken by person who has a personal interest in the result.
- Failure to adhere to regulation and/or EPAO stated requirements.
- Improper assistance to learners.
- Deliberate falsification of records to claim certificates.
- Inappropriate assessment decisions.

The above list of examples of malpractice is not an exhaustive list.

***Artificial intelligence (AI)**

PRCA recognises that the use of new technology and in particular generative AI tools is commonplace and becoming more widespread. Although apprentices may use AI as a tool within their organisations, PRCA has set out its own rules for proper, ethical use of these tools during training and end point assessment. These must be adhered to, along with the apprentice's employer guidance and guidance released by end point assessment organisations.

AI includes, but is not limited to, QuillBot, ChatGPT, Google BARD, Google Cloud AI Platform, etc. Apprentices may use AI tools when undertaking planning, research, generating ideas, or checking grammar, and must declare where these tools have been used. We remind apprentices that any work submitted must be their own, unless explicitly stated otherwise. Apprentices should not use AI to generate content that they will present as their own for coursework or assessment, or misrepresent material created by AI as their own work. Not following this rule is seen as malpractice, and this policy will apply. Coaches reserve the right to use plagiarism detection software to check for originality and detect any instances of plagiarism.

Security and privacy risks:

- Conversations are stored, reviewed, and used to improve the system. Use of unauthorised AI tools pose a security and safeguarding risk, as they require access to personal data or login credentials, and apprentices' personal information could be compromised (i.e. age, gender, address, contact information, etc). Much of this personal information is exposed unconsciously during the communication process. Like all technologies, users' privacy when using AI must be considered.
- Apprentices must stay vigilant in protecting the confidentiality of company and client information, including but not limited to business or campaign plans, PPTs or documents, analyst reports, market insights, confidential research data, and text related to sensitive internal employee communications.

Using AI in EPA Assessments:

- If AI is used in the apprentice's role or project, this can be showcased in the portfolio. AI must not be presented as the apprentice's own work. If this is not clear in the portfolio, apprentices must make their role clear in accompanying text, in the same way they do when showing their part in teamwork or referencing external sources.

5. ALLEGATIONS OF SUSPECTED LEARNER MALPRACTICE

Allegations of suspected malpractice may be made by assessors, internal verifiers, learners, and others involved in the delivery and assessment of apprenticeship qualifications. The PRCA normally requests that all allegations are made in writing to the Head of Apprenticeships. In some cases, an allegation of malpractice may be made anonymously or can be made directly to the awarding body.

6. INVESTIGATIONS INTO SUSPECTED MALPRACTICE

All allegations of suspected malpractice are investigated by the Head of Apprenticeships.

The scope and activities undertaken as part of each malpractice investigation will depend on the nature of suspected malpractice. In each case investigations will involve the gathering of evidence relating to the suspected malpractice which may include but not be limited to the conduct of a full investigation, contacting potential witnesses, and collecting witness reports, conducting interviews with witnesses, reviews of learner work and consideration of other work the learner or delivery staff member has undertaken.

Allegations of suspected malpractice can be reported to the AIM Awards Head of Standards and Regulation (HSR) where the process and subsequent actions / sanctions identified will be agreed with the awarding body.

The PRCA reserves the right to withhold a learner's / learners' assessment results until the investigation has been concluded and subject to the Head of Apprenticeships / AIM Awards decision.

As part of the investigation the learner or member of delivery staff accused of malpractice will be contacted and advised that an investigation is being undertaken and provided with the opportunity to provide a response.

7. RIGHTS OF LEARNERS OR DELIVERY STAFF ACCUSED OF MALPRACTICE

Following the investigation into a case of malpractice, the learner or member of staff will be sent written confirmation of the allegation as follows:

- Details of the allegation
- Evidence relating to the allegation (including witness reports if provided)
- A copy of the PRCA Malpractice Policy.

All accused of malpractice are invited to provide a written response to the allegation and evidence presented. They will normally be given 14 days from the date of the PRCA letter setting out the allegation and evidence to provide their written response.

8. THE DECISION: HEAD OF APPRENTICESHIPS

Investigations into learner malpractice are reported to the Head of Apprenticeships who will then report them to the AIM Awards Head of Standards and Regulation (HSR) and the process and subsequent actions / sanctions identified will be agreed with the awarding body.

The Head of Apprenticeships is provided with the following information in respect of each case of learner malpractice:

- Report from PRCA Delivery Staff
- Evidence in support of the allegation
- The learner's written response/s to the allegation.

Depending on the process agreed with the awarding body, the Head of Apprenticeships considers all the information and evidence relating to the investigation which has been presented. The Head of Apprenticeships must be satisfied on the balance of probabilities in order to decide that malpractice has been proven. The Head of Apprenticeships provides reasons for their decision in respect of each case of malpractice considered.

9. PENALTIES

In the event that the Head of Apprenticeships determines that malpractice is proven, it determines the penalty to be applied in discussion with the awarding body (where applicable) and sets out any action to be taken to protect the integrity of the assessment/qualification.

The Head of Apprenticeships will write to learners accused of malpractice within 5 working days to confirm their decision any penalties imposed.

10. APPEALS

Learners and delivery staff are entitled to appeal against malpractice decisions. Learners or delivery staff must make a written request for an appeal within 15 working days of receipt of the correspondence from the PRCA confirming the decision and penalties to be applied. The deadline for requesting an appeal is set out in the PRCA letter confirming the decision of the Head of Apprenticeships/AIM Awards. Learners and delivery staff must provide a reason for requesting an appeal.

11. Certificates

In the event that AIM Awards has awarded a certificate (credit certificate or qualification certificate) to a learner who is subsequently found to have committed malpractice for the unit or qualification for which the certificate/s has/have been awarded, AIM Awards may revoke the relevant certificate/s.

12. RETENTION OF MATERIALS

The PRCA retains all documentation and records in relation to a malpractice investigation which resulted in penalties being imposed on a learner for five years following the decision and confirmation of penalties.

12. REPORTING CASES OF MALPRACTICE

The Head of Apprenticeships will report all cases of suspected malpractice to the AIM Awards Head of Standards and Regulation (HSR), including at annual reviews.

Date	Status/Summary of Changes	Approved By	Signature	Next Review
August 2024				August 2025