

# MALPRACTICE & MALADMINISTRATION POLICY

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Associated documents/ procedures:	QFI Centre Handbook QFI Malpractice process (internal document)

## Policy statement

QFI takes allegations of malpractice and/or maladministration seriously and will investigate all allegations to establish whether malpractice has occurred and take appropriate action where this is found to be the case.

## Scope

The policy also applies to all those involved with the development and/or delivery of QFI qualifications and assessments including QFI staff and contractors, approved centre staff, assessors, internal and external verifiers, independent end-point assessors and lead assessors.

## Responsibility

QFI's Accountable Officer has overall responsibility for ensuring that this policy is implemented.

## What this policy covers and how it will be implemented

### 1. Definitions

Malpractice is defined as any deliberate activity, neglect, default or other practice that compromises the integrity of the assessment process, and/or the validity of certificates. Malpractice 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. Failure by a centre to deal with identified issues may in itself constitute malpractice.

Maladministration is any activity, neglect, default or other practice that results in the centre or candidate not complying with the specified requirements for delivery of the qualifications. Maladministration may or may not be deliberate. Malpractice and maladministration overlap.

### 2. Making allegations

Allegations of malpractice and/or maladministration must be raised direct with QFI's Accountable who will not disclose, and will seek to protect, the identity of any whistle blower.

As much detail as possible should be submitted along with any available supporting evidence, i.e.:

- Date(s) and time(s) of incident(s)
- Person(s) involved
- Nature of incident(s)
- Findings of any centre investigation

QFI will make an initial response/ acknowledgement in writing within **10 working days**.

### 3. Investigating malpractice

Awarding bodies are required to have procedures in place to initiate and conduct investigations into suspected malpractice/ maladministration. The main purpose of the investigation is to establish if any regulations have been breached and to determine whether there is any irregularity. The fundamental principle of investigations is to conduct them in a fair, reasonable and legal manner, ensuring that all relevant evidence is considered without bias.

QFI will allocate someone suitably qualified that is independent of the centre and any individual(s) concerned for the purpose of the investigation. Centres are required to fully co-operate with QFI investigations. This includes providing access to records, staff and candidates where required for the purpose of the investigation.

QFI will normally deal with the head of the centre or someone with suitable authority delegated for this purpose. Incidents will be investigated as follows by gather relevant information and consulting with those concerned and others. All parties are required to co-operate fully with the investigation.

Depending upon the gravity of the incident, centre and/or assessor approval status may be suspended whilst the investigation takes place (this may relate to a particular qualification or all of QFI's qualifications). QFI will normally impose a sanction of level 3 or above until a full investigation has been conducted.

Investigations may take days, weeks or months depending upon the nature and scale of the incident; QFI seeks to conduct investigations and produce the report as soon as practically possible with a target of **30 working days**.

### 4. Outcomes

Following the investigation a draft report will be produced that the parties involved will be invited to check for factual accuracy and comment upon. Upon receipt of the final version of the report an appeal may be made regarding actions imposed. Details of how to appeal are included in the QFI Appeals Policy.

Conclusions will be based on established evidence which will be reviewed by a member of the Board that has not been involved with the investigation. Where investigations establish that malpractice/maladministration has in fact occurred, a course of proposed action will be identified, agreed, implemented and monitored. Actions will be proportionate to the gravity and scope of the occurrence and may include the following:

- The development and implementation of action plans to prevent re-occurrence;
- Suspending or removing registration for units/qualifications;
- Suspending or removing approval;
- Imposing other sanctions as appropriate.

Certificates will be revoked if the result on the certificate is false because of malpractice or maladministration.

QFI will take all reasonable steps to prevent any potential adverse effect to which any incident may give rise. Where an incident brings the outcome of other results into serious question this would be considered a potential 'adverse effect' as other candidates may be affected. In such cases QFI will:

- Identify any other candidate who has been affected;
- Correct or mitigate the effect as far as possible – for example adjusting marks
- Take action to avoid a re-occurrence – this may include removal of assessors or provision of additional training or monitoring.

Where there is cause to believe that an incident may also affect centres and/or other awarding bodies these will be notified by QFI.

QFI will inform the regulators and other relevant bodies such as the Institute for Apprenticeships and TE, and the ESFA where any incidents, or suspected incidents, of malpractice are discovered, and where a potential adverse effect is identified.

## **5. Preventing malpractice and maladministration**

QFI takes a number of actions to seek to prevent malpractice, including:

- Attending any events run by the regulators
- Disseminating information to staff, contractors, centres and external verifiers as necessary
- Covering malpractice within centre meetings
- Annual centre agreement reminding centres of their responsibilities
- Regular monitoring visits
- Imposition of sanctions to prevent escalation of issues

In general QFI seeks to ensure that malpractice has high visibility.

## **6. Requirements of approved centres**

Approved qualification centres must have their own malpractice/maladministration policy, the implementation of which may be audited at centre monitoring visits. Guidance on the policy is included in the Centre Handbook. Further reading can be found here:

[http://www.wjec.co.uk/uploads/publications/Suspected%20Malpractice.pdf?language\\_id=1](http://www.wjec.co.uk/uploads/publications/Suspected%20Malpractice.pdf?language_id=1)

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*[End of policy]*