

Malpractice, Maladministration and Plagiarism Policy

1. PURPOSE:

Malpractice, maladministration and plagiarism is an act that can potentially lead to learners being disadvantaged. Incidents also threaten the quality, integrity and reputation of DMS (hereafter “the company”), its staff, learners and the qualifications offered. Therefore, it is desirable to prevent malpractice, maladministration and plagiarism from occurring wherever possible by establishing a culture of overall values between staff and learners. Where it is not possible to prevent, cases of suspected or actual malpractice, misadministration and plagiarism should be dealt with quickly, thoroughly and effectively.

2. SCOPE:

This policy applies to internal and external summative assessments, assignments, examinations and their reporting.

It is the responsibility of all company staff to be vigilant with regard to any events which may lead to malpractice/maladministration/plagiarism occurring and report promptly to the IQA where they suspect malpractice/maladministration/plagiarism has and/or may occur so that appropriate action can be taken to address with immediate effect.

The IQA is responsible for notifying relevant awarding bodies of cases of suspected/actual malpractice/maladministration/plagiarism to ensure the appropriate action may be taken.

3. OBJECTIVES:

- To identify and minimise the risk of malpractice by staff or learners;
- To identify and minimise the risk of maladministration by staff;
- To respond to any incident promptly and objectively;
- To standardise and record any investigation to ensure openness and fairness;
- To impose appropriate penalties and/or sanctions on learners or staff where incidents (or attempted incidents) are proven;
- To protect the integrity of the centre and awarding bodies.

4. DEFINITION:

Malpractice is any irregular conduct through deliberate activity, neglect or default on the part of a learner or member of staff, which gives unfair advantage to a learner or group of learners, or disadvantages other learner. 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 company to deal with identified issues may in itself constitute Malpractice.

Maladministration is any activity, neglect, default or other practice that results in the company or learner not complying with the specified requirements for delivery of the qualifications and as set out in the awarding organisation requirements for approved centres and regulator documents.

Plagiarism is defined as copying ideas from someone else’s work and presenting them as one’s own.

5. PROCEDURE

Where DMS (company) discovers or suspects an individual, or individuals, of malpractice it will conduct an investigation in a form commensurate with the nature of the allegation.

Such investigation will be undertaken by the centres IQA, who will interview all personnel linked to the allegation.

The company will make the individual(s) aware in writing at the earliest opportunity of the nature of the alleged malpractice/maladministration/plagiarism and of possible consequences should malpractice/maladministration/plagiarism be proven.

The investigation will proceed through the following stages:

Preliminary investigation, conducted by the appropriate IQA, into the allegation to determine whether a full investigation is necessary. If the allegation is against a member of staff and appears to have substance, then all assessments by this member of staff should be halted until the investigation is complete.

Should it be determined that a full investigation is necessary it shall be conducted by an independent Investigation Officer appointed. A wider scrutiny of both current and historical evidence relating to the situation will be undertaken. For allegations against staff this is to not only establish the route cause but also the possible effects on learners' past and present.

During the investigation the company will give the individual the opportunity to respond to the allegations made.

All stages of the investigation shall be documented by the person leading the investigation and reported to the relevant Awarding Organisation by the QC.

The individual will be informed of the avenues for appealing against any judgement made.

The Investigation Officer shall produce a report of their findings.

For cases of staff malpractice/misadministration the IQA will decide whether to invoke the Staff Disciplinary procedure.

For cases of learner assessment malpractice, reference should be made by the QC & Investigating Officer to all other relevant policies.

6. POSSIBLE ACTIONS TAKEN BY THE COMPANY:

The company may take internal disciplinary action in line with Policy and Procedures. This action will be commensurate with the seriousness of the Malpractice/Maladministration/plagiarism and comply with appropriate employment legislation and awarding body requirements who may impose penalties or sanctions