



Assessment Malpractice and Maladministration

Policy and Procedures 2026-2027

Assistant Principal – Quality and Engagement

Publication Date: Aug 2026

Review: Date: August 2027 | Version No. 1

1. Purpose

- 1.1. This policy defines malpractice and maladministration in relation to assessment, quality assurance and certification activities across all College provision, including Further Education, Apprenticeships and Higher Education programmes. It outlines the responsibilities of students, apprentices, staff and other stakeholders and sets out the procedures for reporting, investigating and managing suspected malpractice and maladministration.
- 1.2. Guidance on malpractice relating to external examinations will be referred to the Awarding Organisation (AO).
- 1.3. Malpractice consists of those acts which undermine the integrity and validity of assessment, the certification of qualifications and/or damage the authority of those responsible for conducting the assessment and certification.
- 1.4. Higher Education: In cases of students enrolled on programmes approved by Higher Education Institutions (HE) the policies of the HEI will take precedence where applicable.
- 1.5. In these cases, the relevant HEI policy should be referred to.

2. Policy

- 2.1. All staff must be vigilant regarding assessment malpractice. All investigations relating to malpractice and maladministration will be conducted fairly, consistently and without discrimination. The College will ensure that no individual is disadvantaged on the grounds of their protected characteristics.
- 2.2. City of Wolverhampton College does not tolerate actions (or attempted actions) of malpractice by students in connection with their qualifications. The College may impose penalties and/or sanctions on students or apprentices where incidents (or attempted incidents) of malpractice have been proven.
- 2.3. City of Wolverhampton College does not tolerate actions (or attempted actions) of malpractice by staff in connection with any qualifications.
- 2.4. Malpractice offences can be deemed as:
 - 2.4.1. Cheating in an examination: Copying from the work of other students or apprentices, obtaining help from other students or apprentices in a way that contravenes the regulations for the examination, bringing into the examination any unauthorised materials, or referring during the examination to any unauthorised material, or any form of impersonation.

- 2.4.2. Plagiarism: using work from any other source published in a manner not authorised by the regulations for assessment and presenting the 'used' work as if it were the student or apprentice's own work. Work presented by a student or apprentice in assessment must be their own, and where exceptions are permitted, any such exceptions must be clearly identified, and the source fully acknowledged (including downloads from any internet site).
- 2.4.3. Fabrication of information: Presentation of any false or fabricated information, results, or conclusions in any form of assessment, including practical or field work studies, oral presentations, unpublished work, and including the work of fellow students, interviews and reports from work placements etc.
- 2.4.4. Collusion: This is the deliberate and intentional collaboration, without official approval, between two or more students or apprentices in the development and production of work that is eventually submitted by each student or apprentice, in a substantially similar and/or identical form; and is presented by each student or apprentice to be the outcome of his or her individual efforts. Collusion also occurs where there is unauthorised co-operation between a student or apprentice and another person, in or outside of College, in the preparation and production of work, which is ultimately presented as their own.
- 2.4.5. Impersonation: Pretending to be someone else to produce the work for another or arranging for another to take one's place in an assessment/examination/test.
- 2.4.6. Failing to abide by the instructions or advice of an assessor, a supervisor, an invigilator or awarding body conditions in relation to the assessment, examination, test rules, regulations or security.
- 2.4.7. The alteration of any results document, including certificates.
- 2.4.8. The College recognises that AI tools may support learning when used appropriately and in accordance with awarding organisation requirements. Students and apprentices may use AI tools for activities such as research and information gathering, developing ideas and planning and checking spelling, grammar and readability.
- 2.4.9. Students and apprentices must not present AI-generated work as their own, use AI to complete assessments where prohibited, submit AI-generated responses without acknowledgement or gain an unfair advantage through inappropriate AI use.
- 2.4.10. Staff must follow current Joint Council Qualification (JCQ), Ofqual and awarding organisation guidance when determining acceptable AI use in assessments.
- 2.4.11. Teachers will provide specific guidance on what tools, if any, are allowed in the context of learners' assignments, but the following applies across all of City of Wolverhampton College's assessments.

2.4.12. An unfair advantage is:

- When you hide something and are not transparent about your approach.
- When you take something directly from someone (or something) else and don't reference or acknowledge.
- When you do not use something in an appropriate way.
- When you do not follow the assessment guidance.
- Document(s) can mean hard copy or electronic.

3. Procedure

3.1. Attempting to or carrying out any malpractice activity by students or apprentices is not permitted by the College.

3.2. The following are examples of malpractice by students or apprentices; this list is not exhaustive and other instances of malpractice may be considered by the College at its discretion. Action taken is appropriate to the malpractice.

3.2.1. Cheating in Examinations - If an invigilator in an examination has cause to suspect any student or apprentice of cheating, for example, by the discovery of unauthorised books or papers brought into the examination, these will be confiscated when discovered and any work done by the student or apprentice up to that time will be suitably annotated. The student or apprentice will, however, be allowed to complete the examination. At the end of the examination the student or apprentice may be asked for an explanation. Unless a totally satisfactory response is received, the invigilator will submit a written report, along with the student malpractice investigation form (see appendix A), to the College's Examinations Department. This report will include a description of the evidence that cheating has occurred, together with details of the student or apprentice's name, the date and time of the examination and any other relevant information. Where material is confiscated, this material should be presented along with the written report. The Examinations Department will forward this information to the relevant examining organisation in line with the appropriate examination regulations.

3.2.2. If there is suspected malpractice by a student, the following investigation stages will take place:

- Allegation reported
- Initial review undertaken
- Evidence gathered
- Individual informed of allegation
- Opportunity provided to respond
- Outcome determined
- Awarding organisation informed where required

- Appeals process available
- 3.2.3 Plagiarism/Fabrication - If a member staff marking an assessment, or otherwise associated with the presentation of an assessment suspects plagiarism, the matter will be reported to the relevant Curriculum Manager. The report must include the appropriate details, including the nature of the alleged offence and the evidence for suspecting it.
- 3.2.4 Collusion - Where a member of staff marking an assignment, or any piece of work associated with the assessment of modules, suspected unauthorised collusion in the production of that piece of work, between two or more students or apprentices, the matter will be reported to the relevant Curriculum Manager. The report should include: the nature of the alleged offence; the names of the students suspected of colluding; and the evidence upon which the allegation is based.
- 3.3. Malpractice by students or apprentices will result in the College's Positive Behaviour Policy and Procedures being adhered to.
- 3.4. Attempting to or carrying out any malpractice activity by staff is not permitted by the College.
- 3.5. The following are examples of malpractice by staff; this list is not exhaustive and other instances of malpractice may be considered by the College at its discretion:
- Falsification of assessment records
 - Failure to report suspected malpractice
 - Providing excessive support to students
 - Conflict of interest not declared
 - Unauthorised amendment of assessment evidence
 - Failure to comply with all awarding organisation requirements; including the sole use of AI
- 3.6. Malpractice by staff will result in the College's Staff Disciplinary and Capability Policy being adhered to.
- 3.7. The Assistant Principal for Quality (or nominated senior postholder) will determine whether an incident must be reported to the relevant awarding organisation. Mandatory reporting requirements specified by awarding organisations will take precedence over this procedure.
- 3.8. If the College discovers or suspects anyone of malpractice, it will make the individual fully aware at the earliest opportunity of the nature of the alleged malpractice and of the possible consequences should malpractice be proven.
- 3.9. If the College is alleging an individual may have been involved in act of malpractice, there will be the opportunity for the individual(s) to respond to the allegations made.

3.10. The College will also inform such individuals of the avenues for appealing should a judgment be made against them. It may be necessary during this process to notify the funding authorities. The College may have to notify the Police in some cases of malpractice. It is accepted that awarding bodies may apply sanctions to the College.

3.11. Guidance to prevent malpractice:

3.11.1. The College requires staff to ask students or apprentices to declare that their work is their own, for instance:

- For internally assessed units, staff are responsible for checking the validity of the student's work.
- And/or students or apprentices must provide a written declaration that the evidence is authentic, and that the assessment was conducted under the requirements of the assessment specification.

3.11.2. The College will take positive steps to prevent or reduce the occurrence of student malpractice. These steps will include:

- Using the induction period to inform students and apprentices of the College's policy on malpractice and the penalties and provide access to the policy.
- Showing students and apprentices, the appropriate formats to record cited texts and other materials or information sources including websites.
- Introducing procedures for assessing work in a way that reduces or identifies malpractice.

4. Maladministration

4.1 Maladministration refers to any unintentional action, negligence, lapse or other behaviour that leads to the College or student/apprentice failing to adhere to the prescribed standards for the delivery, assessment, or certification of qualifications outlined in the relevant codes of practice or centre agreement, where applicable.

4.2 The following are examples of maladministration; this list is not exhaustive and other instances of maladministration may be considered by the College at its discretion. Action taken is appropriate to the maladministration.

- Consistent non-compliance with student registration and certification procedures.
- Ongoing failure to meet centre recognition, qualification requirements, or associated stipulated actions.
- Delayed student registrations, both sporadic and continual.
- Unjustified delays in responding to requests or communications from Awarding organisations.
- Failure to follow assessment procedures.

- Submission of inaccurate claims for certificates.
- Neglecting to uphold proper auditable records, such as certification claims or falsifying evidence.
- Failure to implement timely awarding organisation actions.
- Intentional withholding of information, whether by deliberate action or omission

5. Conflicts of Interest Procedure

- 5.1. City of Wolverhampton College considers it to be essential that it adopts a proactive approach to ensure that conflicts of interest are avoided where possible and when not, are managed effectively.
- 5.2. The College defines a conflict of interest as any situation in which an organisation or individual's personal interests, or interests that they owe to another body, may (or maybe perceived to) influence or affect their decision making on matters related to the College. For example, assessing a family member, quality assuring work of a close relative, personal relationships that may affect assessment decisions and financial interests connected to qualifications or suppliers.
- 5.3. The College shall operate this procedure with a 'Risk Based' approach. Therefore, disclosure is expected by Governors and where appropriate Employees, External Quality Assurers/Examiner, Partners etc. who may be required to complete and sign a *Disclosure Form - Declaration of Interest*. All decisions would then be recorded in the risk register.
- 5.4. The College shall take all reasonable steps to robustly manage the conflict to mitigate any adverse effect to the College. Any actions will be approved by the Assistant Principal for Quality or a member of the Executive Management Team and recorded in a confidential file. The individual(s) concerned will be notified of the decision. The decision may be appealed up to four weeks after notification. The final decision will be made by the Chief Executive and Principal.
- 5.5. The information provided will be processed in accordance with GDPR. The information provided will be treated as 'confidential' and not be used for any other purpose.
- 5.6. In exceptional circumstances including national emergencies, public health incidents or other significant operational disruptions, the College may amend procedures whilst continuing to meet awarding organisation and regulatory requirements.

6. Investigation Process

- 6.1 Investigations will be conducted by a College or Senior Manager, fairly, reasonably, objectively and without discrimination. The College will consider the wellbeing and

support needs of all individuals involved, including any physical or learning difficulty, disability, safeguarding concern or other support requirement.

6.2 The investigation will normally include: initial review of the allegation; securing relevant evidence; informing the individual of the allegation and possible consequences; giving the individual an opportunity to respond; reviewing statements and documentation; determining whether malpractice or maladministration has occurred; identifying impact and risk; notifying the awarding organisation where required; deciding outcomes and actions; and recording the decision.

6.3 The College aims to complete investigations within 10 working days of receipt of the allegation where possible. Some cases may take longer due to complexity, availability of evidence, awarding organisation requirements or external involvement. Where timescales change, relevant parties will be kept informed as appropriate.

6.4 The investigation will seek to establish the facts, identify those involved, determine the scale and cause of the issue, evaluate action already taken, consider whether other learners or qualifications are affected, decide whether certificates or results may be at risk and identify actions to prevent recurrence.

7. Outcomes and Sanctions

7.1 If malpractice or maladministration is proven, the College will take action proportionate to the seriousness, impact and risk of the case and in line with awarding organisation requirements. Actions may include reassessment, resubmission where permitted, alternative assessment, withdrawal of work, written warning, disciplinary action, staff training, increased quality assurance, amendment of procedures, notification to awarding organisations or regulators, or other appropriate remedial action.

7.2 Awarding organisations may impose sanctions on candidates, staff or the centre. These may include loss of marks or credits, disqualification, withdrawal of certificates, restrictions on future entries, increased monitoring, additional visits, removal of centre approval, requirements for staff training or other actions specified by the awarding organisation.

7.3 Where certificates are deemed invalid, the College will follow awarding organisation instructions for withdrawal, reassessment, communication with affected learners and return or replacement of certificates.

8. Appeals

8.1 A student, apprentice, member of staff, Assistant Principal for Quality or member of the Executive Management Team may appeal an outcome or sanction where permitted by the College and awarding organisation procedures. Appeals must normally

be submitted in writing within 5 working days of the outcome being communicated, unless an awarding organisation specifies a different timescale.

- 8.2 Accepted grounds for appeal may include: the procedure was not followed; the decision was unreasonable in light of the evidence; new relevant evidence has become available; or the sanction is disproportionate. Disagreement with the decision, regret, lack of intention or potential impact on progression will not normally be sufficient grounds on their own.
- 8.3 The appeal will be reviewed by an appropriate senior manager who was not directly involved in the original decision, alongside the Quality Team or nominated senior postholder where appropriate. The outcome of the internal appeal will be confirmed in writing. Where internal routes are exhausted, individuals may be signposted to the relevant awarding organisation or, for Higher Education provision, the relevant HEI process.

Appendix A



Student Suspected Malpractice Investigation Form

Please tick below the evidence to be submitted with this report.

Information Submitted with Report	Tick
Statement(s) from Invigilator(s)	☐
Statement from teacher/curriculum manager/assessor/Internal verifier	☐
Statement(s) from candidate(s)	☐
Statement from examinations officer	☐
Seating plan of exam room	☐
Copies of sources of plagiarised material	☐
Assessment and Internal Verification records	☐
Other	☐

Please indicate in the table below which of the following have been completed (as appropriate)

	Yes	No	N/A
The candidates have been informed of their individual responsibilities and rights	☐	☐	☐
The candidate(s) have been informed of the allegation made against them	☐	☐	☐
Knows what evidence there is to support the allegation	☐	☐	☐
Knows the possible consequences should malpractice be proven	☐	☐	☐
Have had an opportunity to submit a written statement	☐	☐	☐
Have had the opportunity to seek advice (as necessary)	☐	☐	☐
Have been informed of the appeals procedure	☐	☐	☐

Please provide details of the investigation here, outlining conclusions made.

To be completed by investigating officer(s)

Name:	Signature:
Role:	Date:

Name:	Signature:
Role:	Date: