



MALPRACTICE AND MALADMINISTRATION POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Policy reference UKV-QA-20 | Version 3.0

UK Versity Online Limited | BAC Accredited College | UKPRN 10052768

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Status	Updated
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Policy owner	Quality Manager
Author	Director of Education
Approved by	Principal (Ramanjeet Singh), on behalf of the Academic Board
Approval date	1 October 2026

Malpractice and Maladministration Policy and Procedure

UK Versity Online Limited | ATHE 889 | Pearson 07737 | OTHM DC1506132 | Ascentis 3286 | NCFE 8465520 | IFA Direct 283334

Document control

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Version	3.0
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Effective date	1 October 2026
Next review	September 2027 (annual), or earlier if required
Owner	Quality Manager
Author	Director of Education
Approval authority	Academic Board, chaired by the Principal (Ramanjeet Singh)
Approval date	1 October 2026
Applies to	All UK Versity learners, staff, assessors, internal quality assurers, invigilators, agents and anyone acting on UK Versity's behalf in the delivery, assessment or administration of qualifications
Supersedes	Malpractice and Maladministration Policy and Procedure (QA-05, May 2026); Malpractice and Maladministration Policy (April 2026)
Summary	Defines malpractice and maladministration by learners, staff and the centre, and sets out how UK Versity receives, investigates, decides, sanctions and reports cases to awarding organisations.

Compliance mapping

BAC College Scheme 2023 standards	11.7; 14.1
UK Quality Code 2024 (voluntary)	Principle 11
OfS conditions (benchmark only; not OfS registered)	B4 (benchmark)
Awarding organisations	ATHE; Pearson; OTHM; Ascentis; NCFE; IFA Direct
Legislation and regulation	Ofqual General Conditions of Recognition; UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018 (as amended by the Data (Use and Access) Act 2025); Equality Act 2010; Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998

Version history

Version	Date	Change
1.0	November 2014	First issue as Malpractice and Maladministration Policy and Procedure (QA-05)
2.0	May 2026	Revised: learner and centre examples, AI misuse, investigation stages and annexure

Version	Date	Change
3.0	October 2026	Full rebuild: AO notification timescales, rights of the accused, interim measures, AI detection score removed as an automatic offence, multi-AO alignment, BAC/QAA/OfS mapping, version control

1. Purpose

This policy protects the integrity of the qualifications UK Versity delivers and the interests of learners. It defines malpractice and maladministration, explains how anyone can report a concern, and sets out how UK Versity investigates, decides and acts, including how and when awarding organisations are told.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all learners, staff (employed, freelance or contracted), assessors, internal quality assurers (IQAs), invigilators, agents and any person acting on behalf of UK Versity Online Limited (trading as UK Versity). It covers all regulated qualifications delivered by UK Versity for ATHE (Awarding body for Training and Higher Education), Pearson Education Ltd (Pearson BTEC, including BTEC Higher Nationals), OTHM Qualifications, Ascentis (including Access to HE Diplomas, validated under the QAA Access to HE scheme), NCFE (including qualifications under the NCFE CACHE brand, and NCFE Functional Skills) and Institute of Financial Accountants (IFA) qualifications delivered through IFA Direct, administered in partnership with ATHE.

For learners on Pearson BTEC Higher National programmes, the Pearson HN edition of this policy (v3.0, July 2026) applies and takes precedence where the two differ.

For NCFE Functional Skills external assessments, UKV-NCFE-FS-P-01 Plagiarism, Malpractice and Examination Conduct Policy v1.0 (18 September 2026) applies alongside this policy.

First cases of poor academic practice are handled as a learning issue under UKV-QA-19 Academic Integrity, Plagiarism and Use of AI Policy. This policy applies when a case is referred from UKV-QA-19 or is otherwise serious, deliberate or repeated.

3. Definitions

Malpractice is any act, or failure to act, whether deliberate, reckless or negligent, that breaches the rules for assessment or certification and could undermine the integrity of an assessment, a result or a certificate.

Maladministration is any activity, error or failure in administration that results in UK Versity not meeting awarding organisation or regulatory requirements for delivery, assessment or certification, without an intention to deceive.

Adverse effect is an act, omission or event that could prejudice learners or undermine public confidence in a qualification, as described in the Ofqual General Conditions of Recognition.

3.1 Examples of learner malpractice

- Plagiarism, collusion, contract cheating, self-plagiarism and fabrication, as defined in UKV-QA-19.
- Unacknowledged or prohibited use of AI tools, as defined in UKV-QA-19.
- Impersonation, including another person completing work or sitting an assessment, or using another person's Moodle or Zoom login.
- Using unauthorised materials, devices or communication in an examination or controlled assessment.
- Obtaining, or trying to obtain, assessment questions or answers in advance.
- False declaration of authenticity, or submitting false evidence, such as fake workplace or witness statements.

- Misrepresenting circumstances to gain special consideration or an extension.
- Submitting forged documents, including qualification certificates or identity documents, at admission or during study.
- Offering inducements to staff, or threatening or abusive behaviour towards staff connected with an assessment decision.

3.2 Examples of staff and centre malpractice

- Falsifying learner records, attendance, assessment decisions, IQA records or certification claims.
- Giving learners assessment answers, or help beyond what the qualification permits.
- Failing to keep assessment materials secure.
- Assessing or verifying work where there is an undeclared conflict of interest (see UKV-QA-21).
- Admitting learners who do not meet entry requirements by falsifying or not verifying their qualifications or identity.
- Claiming certificates for learners who have not met the requirements.
- Concealing information from, or giving false information to, an awarding organisation, EQA or regulator.
- Failing to report suspected malpractice, obstructing an investigation or destroying evidence.
- Agents misrepresenting qualifications or completing work for applicants or learners.

3.3 Examples of maladministration

- Late or incorrect learner registrations or certification claims.
- Inaccurate or missing assessment, IQA or learner records.
- Not following awarding organisation assessment or quality assurance procedures, or not training staff in them.
- Not putting approved reasonable adjustments in place.
- Failing to tell learners about assessment requirements, deadlines or changes.

4. Policy statement and principles

1. UK Versity treats every credible report seriously and investigates promptly, fairly and in proportion to the concern.
2. No one who reports a concern in good faith will be disadvantaged. UK Versity protects the identity of the person reporting, as far as the investigation allows.
3. Anyone accused is presumed not to have committed malpractice until a decision is made on the evidence. The standard of proof is the balance of probabilities. A learner is not required to admit malpractice for a finding to be made, and an admission is not required to close a case.
4. The investigator is independent of the matter and has no conflict of interest.
5. **An AI detection or plagiarism score is not an offence in itself.** A combined AI and plagiarism score above 20% is a centre-set screening trigger for review under UKV-QA-19. It is never on its own the basis for a malpractice finding. Judgement is holistic and uses the authenticity discussion, drafts, version history and writing voice. For Pearson BTEC Higher National programmes no percentage trigger is used; the Pearson HN edition applies.
6. Awarding organisations are notified within their required timescales (section 8). Where an awarding organisation tells UK Versity to follow a different process for a case, UK Versity follows that instruction.

5. Reporting a concern

1. Learners, staff, agents, EQAs and members of the public can report suspected malpractice or maladministration.
2. Report to the Quality Manager in writing, by email to admin@ukversity.co.uk marked "Confidential: Quality Manager", or by post to UK Versity House, 11 Woodcock Court, Waters Edge Business Park, Modwen Road, Salford M5 3EZ. Staff may also report by telephone on 0161 273 4745; the person receiving the report makes a written record the same day.
3. If the concern involves the Quality Manager, report it to the Principal and Director of Education.
4. Give, where possible: names and roles of those involved, the qualification and unit affected, what happened and when, and any evidence.
5. Reports may be made anonymously. UK Versity will act on an anonymous report where it contains enough detail to investigate.
6. Staff may also use UKV-QA-28 Whistleblowing Policy.
7. Staff who suspect malpractice must report it the same working day they become aware of it and must not investigate it themselves.

6. Investigation procedure

6.1 Timescales

Step	Timescale
Acknowledge the report (where the reporter is known)	Within 2 working days of receipt
Initial review and decision to investigate	Within 5 working days of receipt
Notify the relevant awarding organisation	Within the AO timescale in section 8
Complete the investigation and written report	Normally within 20 working days of receipt
Written outcome to the individual	Within 5 working days of the decision

If the investigation will take longer than 20 working days, the Quality Manager writes to the parties with the reason and a revised date.

6.2 Steps

1. **Initial review.** The Quality Manager, or a nominee with no conflict of interest, decides whether there are reasonable grounds for concern, whether interim measures are needed and which awarding organisation must be told.
2. **Appoint an investigator.** The Principal and Director of Education appoints an investigator who has the right expertise and has not been involved in the matter, did not make the allegation and has no personal interest in the outcome. For learner cases the Quality Manager normally investigates. For staff or centre cases, or where the Quality Manager is conflicted, the Principal appoints another senior member of staff. Where no suitable independent person is available internally, UK Versity asks the awarding organisation for advice, which may include an external investigator.
3. **Inform the individual.** The investigator writes to the individual at the earliest opportunity, setting out the allegation, the evidence, the procedure, the possible consequences and their rights under section 6.3.
4. **Gather evidence.** The investigator secures and reviews learner work, detection reports, drafts and version history, Moodle and Zoom logs, emails, assessment and IQA records, and takes written statements. Evidence is preserved unaltered.

5. **Interview.** The individual is invited to a recorded interview, normally on Zoom, with at least 3 working days' notice.
6. **Report.** The investigator produces a written report containing the facts, the evidence, statements, the individual's response, any mitigating factors and a recommended outcome.
7. **Decision.** The Principal and Director of Education (or, for learner cases, the Quality Manager where not the investigator) decides whether malpractice or maladministration is proven and the sanction. The decision-maker is not the person who made the allegation.
8. **Outcome.** The individual receives the decision in writing with reasons, the sanction and how to appeal.
9. **Report to the awarding organisation.** The Quality Manager sends the outcome and supporting documentation to the awarding organisation where required.

6.3 Rights of the person accused

- To be told in writing of the allegation and see the evidence relied on.
- To respond in writing, at interview, or both, and to seek advice.
- To be accompanied at any interview by a friend, colleague or representative, who may support but not answer on their behalf. For a learner under 18, or an adult at risk, a parent, guardian or appropriate adult is invited.
- To have reasonable adjustments made to the process.
- To be told that awarding organisations, regulators and, where the law requires, the police may be informed.
- To appeal the decision (section 10).

6.4 Interim measures

While a case is investigated, UK Versity may:

- pause marking of, or withhold, the affected results;
- withhold certification claims for affected learners;
- reallocate the assessments of a staff member under investigation to another assessor;
- suspend a staff member, or restrict their access to assessment materials and systems, under the staff disciplinary procedure;
- suspend a learner's access to specific assessments, but not to learning, unless there is a risk to others.

Interim measures are not a sanction and do not imply guilt.

7. Sanctions

Sanctions are proportionate to the seriousness of the case, the evidence and any mitigating factors. Awarding organisations may apply their own sanctions in addition.

For learners	For staff
Written warning and academic skills support	Advice and further training
Mark or grade removed for the affected task, criterion or unit	Written warning under the staff disciplinary procedure
Unit result cancelled; resubmission permitted or not permitted	Removal from assessment or IQA duties
Disqualification from the qualification	Suspension

For learners	For staff
Withdrawal from the programme under UKV-QA-09 Learner Terms and Conditions	Dismissal, including for gross misconduct
Awarding organisation may withhold or revoke a certificate	Referral to a professional body or the police where appropriate

For centre maladministration, UK Versity agrees a corrective action plan with named owners and dates, monitored by the Quality Manager until complete.

8. Notification to awarding organisations

The Quality Manager notifies the relevant awarding organisation as follows. Where malpractice involves a member of staff, the notification is made immediately.

AO	When UK Versity notifies
ATHE	Within 5 working days of discovery. Staff malpractice is reported to ATHE immediately in writing. The outcome and documentation are sent to ATHE after the investigation.
Pearson	Under the JCQ Suspected Malpractice Policies and Procedures. Pearson BTEC Higher Nationals: the Pearson HN edition applies.
OTHM	Promptly, under the OTHM Malpractice, Maladministration and Investigations Policy v4.1 (August 2026).
NCFE	Immediately, under the NCFE Malpractice and Maladministration Policy PA-014 v1.1.
Ascentis	In line with the Ascentis Centre Agreement (April 2026).
IFA Direct	Through ATHE, in line with ATHE timescales.

8.1 Co-operation with awarding organisation investigations

UK Versity co-operates fully with any awarding organisation investigation. This includes giving prompt access to staff, learners, records and learner work, preserving evidence, carrying out investigations when asked and implementing any required actions or sanctions.

8.2 Adverse effect

Where an incident could have an adverse effect on learners or on a qualification (for example, a security breach, a systemic assessment error or a result that may be invalid), the Quality Manager notifies the awarding organisation without delay, even before the investigation is complete, and takes steps to protect affected learners.

9. Confidentiality and records

Investigation information is kept secure under UKV-QA-29 Data Protection and Records Retention Policy and shared only with those who need it, the awarding organisation, regulators and, where required, the police. Malpractice and maladministration investigation records, including evidence, reports, decisions and correspondence, are kept for at least 5 years from the case closing, or longer where an awarding organisation requires.

10. Appeals

- Learners may appeal a malpractice decision or sanction under UKV-QA-23 Appeals Policy and Procedure.
- Staff may appeal through the appeal stage of UK Versity's staff disciplinary procedure.
- Sanctions applied by an awarding organisation are appealed through that awarding organisation's own procedure.

11. Roles and responsibilities

Role	Responsibility
Principal and Director of Education (Head of Centre)	Approves this policy; appoints investigators; decides outcomes in staff and centre cases; is responsible for AO notification.
Quality Manager and Lead IQA	Owns this policy; receives reports; carries out initial reviews and learner investigations; notifies awarding organisations; keeps the malpractice register.
Examinations Officer and NCFE Coordinator	Reports irregularities in NCFE Functional Skills examinations under UKV-NCFE-FS-P-01 and UKV-QA-22.
Registrar	Withholds certification claims when instructed; keeps registration and certification records.
Assessors, tutors and IQAs	Follow assessment procedures; screen work under UKV-QA-19; report concerns the same working day.
All staff and agents	Know this policy; report concerns; co-operate with investigations.
Learners	Submit honest work; co-operate with investigations; report concerns.

12. Awarding organisation requirements

AO	Requirement / escalation route	Source document
ATHE	Report within 5 working days of discovery; staff malpractice reported immediately in writing; investigation by competent staff with no personal interest; full case record available to ATHE.	ATHE Malpractice and Maladministration Policy (2023)
Pearson	Report under JCQ procedures. BTEC Higher Nationals: Pearson HN edition.	JCQ Suspected Malpractice Policies and Procedures (current edition)
OTHM	Report promptly; detector probability is not proof and never the sole basis for a finding; balance of probabilities.	OTHM Malpractice, Maladministration and Investigations Policy v4.1 (August 2026); OTHM Managing Use of AI in Assessment v2.0 (September 2026)
NCFE	Report immediately. Functional Skills: UKV-NCFE-FS-P-01.	NCFE Malpractice and Maladministration Policy PA-014 v1.1
Ascentis	Notify in line with the Centre Agreement.	Ascentis Centre Agreement (April 2026)
IFA Direct	ATHE route and timescales apply.	ATHE Malpractice and Maladministration Policy (2023)

13. Related policies and legislation

- UKV-QA-15 Assessment Policy
- UKV-QA-16 Internal Quality Assurance Policy and Procedure
- UKV-QA-19 Academic Integrity, Plagiarism and Use of AI Policy
- UKV-QA-21 Conflict of Interest Policy
- UKV-QA-22 Examinations and Controlled Assessment Policy
- UKV-QA-23 Appeals Policy and Procedure
- UKV-QA-28 Whistleblowing Policy
- UKV-QA-29 Data Protection and Records Retention Policy
- UKV-NCFE-FS-P-01 Plagiarism, Malpractice and Examination Conduct Policy (NCFE Functional Skills) v1.0
- Ofqual General Conditions of Recognition
- UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018, as amended by the Data (Use and Access) Act 2025
- Equality Act 2010
- Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998
- JCQ Suspected Malpractice Policies and Procedures (current edition)

14. Monitoring and review

The Quality Manager keeps a malpractice and maladministration register recording every report, including cases found not proven, with dates, AO notifications, outcomes and actions. The Quality Manager reports to the Academic Board at least annually on the number and types of cases, timeliness against section 6.1, outcomes, AO notifications and lessons learned. Findings feed into standardisation, staff training and assessment design.

This policy is reviewed annually by September, and earlier if awarding organisation requirements, JCQ guidance, BAC standards, an EQA action or a significant case requires it. Investigation records are kept for at least 5 years.

Approval and review

Stage	Name and role	Date
Prepared by	Director of Education	30 September 2026
Checked by (policy owner)	Quality Manager	30 September 2026
Approved by	Ramanjeet Singh, Principal and Director of Education, on behalf of the Academic Board	1 October 2026
Next review due	Quality Manager (Shazia Khan) to schedule through the Policy Register UKV-QA-REG	September 2027