



**ACADEMY**  
Online Learning Ltd

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# Malpractice Policy

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Academy Online Learning Ltd

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1.0 Introduction.....	3
2.0 Persons Affected.....	3
3.0 Definitions .....	3
4.0 Responsibilities.....	4
5.0 Policy .....	4
6.0 Procedures .....	5
6.1 <i>Malpractice Undertaken by AOLL Staff/Tutors ..</i>	<i>5</i>
6.4 <i>Avoiding Malpractice by Staff.....</i>	<i>7</i>
6.5 <i>Malpractice Undertaken by Learners .....</i>	<i>8</i>
6.6 <i>Avoiding Malpractice by Learners .....</i>	<i>9</i>
6.7 <i>Detecting Malpractice .....</i>	<i>9</i>
6.8 <i>Dealing with Malpractice .....</i>	<i>10</i>
6.9 <i>Malpractice Procedure for AOLL Staff .....</i>	<i>11</i>
6.10 <i>Malpractice Procedure for Learners .....</i>	<i>13</i>

# 1.0 Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to detail examples of malpractice and the method in which AOLL will deal with such instances undertaken by either staff or learners. This is particularly important given the nature in which AOLL operate being within an online learning environment.

## 2.0 Persons Affected

2.1 AOLL Staff

2.2 Tutors

2.3 Providers

2.4 Learners

## 3.0 Definitions

3.1 Malpractice is defined as such actions which may 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.

3.2 Malpractice is deliberate behaviour that can be deemed as unethical or immoral. Areas of possible compromise are: -

4.21 The assessment process.

4.22 The integrity of a regulated Qualification, a non-regulated Unit or an Access to HE Diploma.

4.23 The validity of an award of credit or Qualification or HE Diploma.

4.24 The reputation and credibility of AOLL.

3.3 Maladministration covers negligent or poorly informed behaviour resulting in procedures that may compromise the integrity of assessment and within this policy will be covered under 'Malpractice undertaken by AOLL staff'.

## 4.0 Responsibilities

5.1 Quality Review Team are responsible for implementing the procedures as defined below in response to allegations of malpractice.

5.2 Staff (including Tutors) are responsible for adhering to all AOLL procedures to avoid malpractice.

5.3 Learners are responsible for adhering to procedures outlined in the student handbook.

## 5.0 Policy

5.1 The policy of AOLL is informed by rules required under statutory regulation to take every reasonable step to prevent any occurrence of malpractice (including plagiarism) or maladministration.

- 5.2 The potential damage to AOLL's standing, image and loss of reputation is such that where malpractice has been proven, staff may be excluded (instant dismissal) and learners terminated from enrolment.

## 6.0 Procedures

### *6.1 Malpractice Undertaken by AOLL Staff/Tutors*

This section covers malpractice in relation to AOLL staff including and consisting of: -

- Monthly paid employees
- Self-employed tutors
- Self-employed providers

Staff malpractice and maladministration includes non-compliance as well as professional misconduct. The following examples provide an illustrative guidance but are in no means an exhaustive list: -

#### 6.2 Malpractice by AOLL staff:

- 6.21 Failing to follow relevant regulations and/or AOLL procedures.
- 6.22 Failing to deal with issues identified by External Moderators and/or regulatory bodies.
- 6.23 Failing to keep learner information secure as required by Data Protection Act.
- 6.24 Failing to store assessment instruments and marking guidance securely.
- 6.25 Giving learners access to test papers, supplying answers, etc.
- 6.26 Facilitating and/or allowing impersonation of learners or other AOLL staff.

- 6.27 Deliberately falsifying records, e.g. learner personal data, assessment and/or verification records, witness statements, certificates, etc.
- 6.28 Forging authenticating signatures.
- 6.29 Allowing evidence, known by the staff member not to be the learner's own, to be included in a learner's assignment/task/portfolio/coursework/exam.
- 6.211 Helping learners to complete assessments.
- 6.212 Altering mark or assessment schemes or assessment and grading criteria.
- 6.213 Making inappropriate adjustments to assessment decisions.
- 6.214 Making or processing fraudulent certification claims, e.g., claiming for a certificate prior to the learner completing all the requirements of assessment.
- 6.215 Misusing the conditions for special learner requirements and/or reasonable adjustments.
- 6.216 Failing to meet published deadlines for the issue of certificates.
- 6.216 Giving information on formal assessment outcomes before the official release of such information by AOLL.

### 6.3 Maladministration by AOLL staff:

- 6.31 Inaccurate production of assessment records.
- 6.32 Failure to follow procedures when entering learner data or assessment decisions.
- 6.33 Poor monitoring of assessment processes.
- 6.34 Incorrect recording of assessment decisions.
- 6.35 Incorrect completion of learner registrations.
- 6.36 Issuing of an erroneous certificate or qualification.
- 6.37 Negligent or uninformed destruction of assessment or qualification records.

- 6.38 Non-compliance with codes of conduct.
- 6.39 Failure to keep unseen assessment papers or mark schemes secure prior to assessment.
- 6.311 Failure to maintain appropriate records.
- 6.312 Failure to keep learner computer files secure.

## *6.4 Avoiding Malpractice by Staff*

AOLL will proactively try to avoid malpractice by staff through robust procedures as follows:-

- 6.41 Staff induction for all new members with the outcome being a signed induction checklist as proof that the AOLL policies, including malpractice, have been read and fully understood.
- 6.42 Ensuring staff have read the malpractice policy and associated guidance whereby staff sign the induction checklist as proof of their understanding.
- 6.43 Maintaining a secure IT system ensuring records are 'locked' so that access levels are allocated to staff as required once they have signed the induction checklist.
- 6.44 Allocating a 'mentor' to new members of staff for guidance and support.
- 6.45 Hold regular team meetings which are in an open and honest environment.
- 6.46 Hold quarterly quality reviews to review systems, policies and procedures to ensure they remain of a high quality and fit for purpose.
- 6.47 Record all instances of malpractice in an Incident Log including summaries of any investigations and their outcomes and ensure this log and associated records are a) stored securely and b) reported to relevant awarding organisations.

- 6.48 Contractual agreements with all members of staff with clear definitions of job roles and lines of responsibility.
- 6.49 Ensuring all meetings have minutes and actions allocated to specific owners.
- 6.411 Ensuring that any instances of malpractice, maladministration and/or plagiarism are reviewed by the Quality Review Team who will decide the outcome jointly.
- 6.412 Ensuring that all required documentation, including the RAC, is reviewed by the Quality Review Team to ensure accuracy prior to being presented to relevant awarding organisations.

## *6.5 Malpractice Undertaken by Learners*

Learner malpractice can include serious plagiarism, as well as other forms of malpractice, including, but not limited to:

- 6.51 Any form of impersonation.
- 6.52 Falsification, fabrication or alteration of results, certificates or assessment evidence.
- 6.53 Failure to follow AOLL policies or the instructions and/or advice of staff/tutors/assessors.
- 6.54 Misuse of assessment or examination material.
- 6.55 Using unauthorised material during supervised examinations.
- 6.56 Obtaining, receiving, exchanging or passing on assessment-related information.
- 6.57 Behaviour that disrupts or undermines the integrity of assessment.
- 6.58 Any form of cheating to gain an unfair advantage.
- 6.59 Deliberate destruction of another person's work.
- 6.60 Resubmitting previously graded work.



- 6.61 Colluding with other learners in the preparation and production of work that is eventually submitted by one or both learners as the outcome of his or her individual efforts.
- 6.62 Allowing another student to copy one's own work.
- 6.63 Behaving in a way which causes offence or harm to other learners.
- 6.64 Using 'essay mills' or other third parties to produce assignments
- 6.65 Using artificial intelligence such as 'Chat GTP' to produce assignments.

## *6.6 Avoiding Malpractice by Learners*

To assist learners in avoiding malpractice or plagiarism, all learners are provided with a handbook detailing information and the website provides access to all AOLL policies and procedures which includes the AOLL Malpractice Policy and AOLL Plagiarism Policy.

## *6.7 Detecting Malpractice*

Malpractice may be detected in a variety of ways including: -

- 6.71 Observation – a witness may identify a person or persons undertaking inappropriate activities and report the observation openly or anonymously.
- 6.72 Word of mouth – a person not involved in the alleged activity is told by another party inappropriate activities are taking place and reports this openly or anonymously.
- 6.73 Professional activity – e.g. An AOLL member of staff notices unauthorised changes to records or inappropriate application of AOLL policies.
- 6.74 Professional judgement - e.g. an AOLL member of staff notices the written style of a student's work differing from their other forms of

written communication or cannot confidently verify the provenance of an assignment.

- 6.75 Use of plagiarism and AI detection software such as Turnitin, Ouriginal and Chatgtp detector.

## *6.8 Dealing with Malpractice*

In any of the above instances AOLL will initiate the following procedure:

- 6.81 All instances of malpractice should be reported to the Quality Review Team including any evidence where present.
- 6.82 The Quality Review Team will review the reported incident and associated evidence. The Quality Manager will report on the Incident Log. All evidence will be securely stored.
- 6.83 All investigations will be treated fairly, consistently and reasonably to establish the facts, circumstances and scale of the malpractice.
- 6.84 All investigations will be concluded within four weeks of the malpractice allegations where operationally possible. Where this is not possible, regular updates will be recorded on the incident log including reason for delay.
- 6.85 Where the Quality Review Team conclude that malpractice has occurred, the following steps will be taken.
- 6.86 AOLL reserve the right to instantly implement stage three should the Quality Review Team deem the malpractice incident to be so severe to be damaging to the reputation of AOLL and the integrity of qualifications. This includes breaching the terms and conditions which includes:
- None payment of fees
  - Plagiarised work submitted by the purchaser
  - Giving or receiving of assessments from a third party

- Misconduct for example, uploading inappropriate materials to the student study area including the forum or during a supervised exam
- Other conduct which can reasonably be defined by AOLL as grounds for termination of the service

## *6.9 Malpractice Procedure for AOLL Staff*

### **STAGE ONE: 1<sup>st</sup> Occurrence of Malpractice**

- 6.91 Two members of the Quality Review Team (providing there is not a conflict of interest with the member of staff) will arrange a meeting via video-conference with the AOLL staff member and explain the details of the malpractice incident, including gathered evidence and state that within AOLL regulations malpractice has occurred. This will present itself in the form of a verbal warning.
- 6.92 The member of staff is entitled to have a colleague/friend to attend with them if they wish.
- 6.93 The Quality Manager will record minutes of the meeting which will be emailed to the member of staff and the Quality Review Team.
- 6.94 The member of staff will be expected to respond to this email within five working days to confirm this is an accurate record of the meeting.
- 6.95 The member of staff is able to follow the appeals procedure if they disagree with the Quality Review Team's decision.
- 6.96 The incident will be recorded on the incident log, stored securely and presented to relevant awarding organisations.

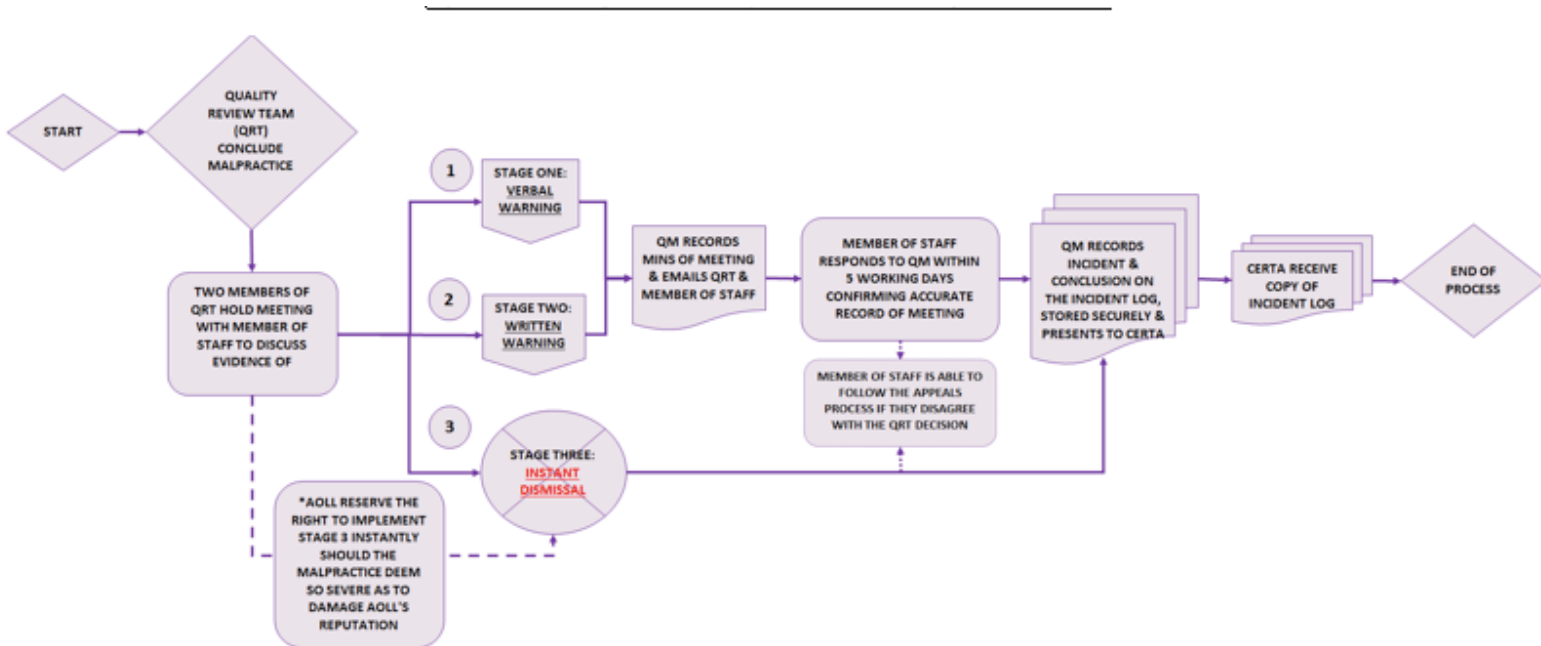
### **STAGE TWO: 2<sup>nd</sup> Occurrence of Malpractice**

- 6.97 Two members of the Quality Review Team (providing there is not a conflict of interest with the member of staff) will arrange a meeting via video-conference with the AOLL member of staff and explain the details of the malpractice incident, including gathered evidence and state that within AOLL regulations malpractice has occurred for a second time. This will present itself in the form of a written warning.
- 6.98 The member of staff is entitled to have a colleague/friend to attend with them if they wish.
- 6.99 The Quality Manager will record minutes of the meeting which will be emailed to the member of staff and the Quality Review Team.
- 6.991 The member of staff will be expected to respond to this email within five working days to confirm this is an accurate record of the meeting.
- 6.992 The member of staff is able to follow the appeals procedure if they disagree with the Quality Review Team's decision.
- 6.993 The incident will be recorded on the incident log, stored securely and presented to relevant awarding organisations.

### **STAGE THREE: 3<sup>rd</sup> Occurrence of Malpractice**

- 6.994 If the Quality Review Team conclude that a third instance of malpractice has occurred, the member of staff will be instantly dismissed with all access to resources removed. The incident will be recorded on the Incident Log, stored securely and presented to relevant awarding organisations.
- 6.995 The member of staff is able to follow the appeals procedure if they disagree with the Quality Review Team's decision.

Figure 1: Flow Diagram AOLL Malpractice Procedure against AOLL Staff



## 6.10 Malpractice Procedure for Learners

### STAGE ONE: 1<sup>st</sup> Occurrence of Malpractice

- 6.101 The Quality Manager will email the learner stating that within AOLL regulations malpractice has occurred and give the learner the opportunity to respond.
- 6.102 The learner will be expected to respond to this email within five working days.
- 6.103 Where malpractice involves submitted work, the student may be given the opportunity to re-do the assignment, or be issued with an alternative assessment brief/method as applicable. For example a supervised exam. This will incur additional charges.
- 6.104 The learner is able to follow the appeals procedure if they disagree with the Quality Review Team's decision.
- 6.105 The incident will be recorded on the incident log, stored securely and presented to relevant awarding organisations.

## **STAGE TWO: 2<sup>nd</sup> Occurrence of Malpractice**

- 6.107 The Quality Manager will email the learner stating that within AOLL regulations malpractice has occurred and this will present itself in the form of a written warning as it is a second occurrence of malpractice.
- 6.108 The learner will be expected to respond to this email within five working days to confirm this is an accurate record of the meeting.
- 6.109 Where malpractice involves submitted work, the student may be given the opportunity to re-do the assignment, or be issued with an alternative assessment brief/method as applicable. Any submissions as a result of this would be capped at a pass grade and charges will apply.
- 6.109 The learner is able to follow the appeals procedure if they disagree with the Quality Review Team's decision.
- 6.1010 The incident will be recorded on the incident log, stored securely and presented to relevant awarding organisations.

## **STAGE THREE: 3<sup>rd</sup> Occurrence of Malpractice**

- 6.1094 If the Quality Review Team conclude that a third instance of malpractice has occurred, AOLL will remove the learner from the course without any course fee refunds. The incident will be recorded on the Incident Log, stored securely and presented to relevant awarding organisations.
- 6.1095 The learner is able to follow the appeals procedure if they disagree with the Quality Review Team's decision.