



*Mission statement: Inspiring learning, developing character,
building futures*

Curriculum policies and procedures

Assessment malpractice and plagiarism policy

Aim: To uphold the value of academic and vocational qualifications by ensuring that all work produced by students is their own and that assessment malpractice by staff or students is prevented or identified and minimised in order that no student has an unfair advantage over others in gaining their qualifications

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1. Introduction

Assessment malpractice and academic misconduct including plagiarism and inappropriate use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) is fundamentally dishonest.

Assessment malpractice includes any action by staff or students that has the potential to undermine the integrity and validity of the qualification and the assessment of students' work and we take incidents very seriously. This policy is aligned to the [JCQ Suspected Malpractice Policies and Procedures \(1 September 2023 to 31 August 2024\)](#).

Malpractice may or may not relate directly to sitting an examination.

JCQ recognises malpractice as being related to maladministration and that both involve a failure to follow the rules of examination or assessment and it means any act, default or practice which is a breach of the Regulations and/or:

- a breach of awarding body requirements regarding how a qualification should be delivered; and/or
- a failure to follow established procedures in relation to a qualification; which:
 - gives rise to prejudice to candidates; and/or
 - compromises public confidence in qualifications; and/or
 - compromises, attempts to compromise or may compromise the process of assessment, the integrity of any qualification or the validity of a result or certificate; and/or
 - damages the authority, reputation or credibility of any awarding body or centre or any officer, employee or agent of any awarding body or centre.

The following are types of malpractice by centre staff (examples for each type can be found in Appendix 2 part 1, Suspected Malpractice Policies and Procedures):

- breach of security;
- deception;
- improper assistance to candidates;
- failure to cooperate with an investigation;
- maladministration;
- candidate malpractice.

Malpractice by staff includes, but is not limited to: improper assistance of students, changing marks without sufficient evidence or justification, failure to keep student coursework secure, fraudulent claims for certificates and allowing evidence to be included in coursework or assessment which is known not to be the student's work.

Pressure on staff to increase a grade when the evidence does not justify it may also be seen as malpractice; centres are required to record such instances and report them to the awarding organisation.

Malpractice by students includes but is not limited to the following (a fuller list is identified in appendix 2 part 2 of [Suspected Malpractice Policies and Procedures 1 September 2023 to 31 August 2024](#)):

- plagiarism, including unacknowledged copying from, or reproduction of, third party sources or incomplete referencing (including the internet and artificial intelligence (AI) tools);
- collusion: working collaboratively with others, beyond what is permitted;
- allowing work to be copied, e.g. posting work on social networking sites prior to an examination/assessment;
- making a false declaration of authenticity in relation to the authorship of controlled assessment, coursework, non-examination assessment or the contents of a portfolio;
- being in possession of unauthorised confidential information about an examination or assessment and failing to report this to a centre or awarding body
- the inclusion of offensive comments, obscenities or drawings; discriminatory language, remarks or drawings directed at an individual or group in scripts, controlled assessments, coursework, non-examination assessments or portfolios;
- being in possession (whether used or not) of unauthorised material during an examination or assessment, for example: notes, study guides and personal organisers, own blank paper, calculators (when prohibited), dictionaries (when prohibited), watches, instruments which can capture a digital image, electronic dictionaries (when prohibited), translators, wordlists, glossaries, iPods, mobile phones, AirPods, MP3/4 players, pagers, or other similar electronic devices;
- behaving in a manner so as to undermine the integrity of the examination.

Awarding organisations are aware of the possibility of novel or unexpected forms of malpractice emerging as technologies, such as but not limited to AI, and the nature and organisation of examination centres change.

It is recognised that incidents of malpractice arise for a variety of reasons:

- some incidents are intentional and aim to give an unfair advantage in an examination or assessment;
- some incidents arise due to a lack of awareness of the regulations, carelessness, or forgetfulness in applying the regulations (which may often be called 'maladministration');
- some occur as a result of the force of circumstances which are beyond the control of those involved (e.g. a fire alarm sounds and the supervision of candidates is disrupted).

The individuals involved in malpractice also vary and may include students, staff and/or parents/carers.

Failure by a centre to notify, investigate and report to an awarding organisation all allegations of malpractice or suspected malpractice constitutes malpractice in itself. Also, failure to take action as required by an awarding organisation, as detailed in this document, or to cooperate with an awarding organisation's investigation, constitutes malpractice.

Awarding organisations are obliged to notify the qualifications regulators of certain malpractice incidents, in accordance with the regulators' conditions.

2. Scope of the policy

This policy is applicable to all students enrolled and staff working at the college.

3. General principles (purpose) of the policy

Blackpool Sixth is committed to ensuring that whenever subject teachers assess students' work it is done fairly, consistently and in accordance with the specification for the qualification concerned and that any incidents of assessment malpractice are minimised, identified and dealt with in an open, fair and effective manner. The college is also committed to ensuring that work presented by students is their own, is authenticated in accordance with the requirements of the relevant awarding body and that due reference and acknowledgement is given to other information sources used. Students found to be plagiarising work, or committing any form of assessment malpractice, potentially face disqualification from their current examination/assessment series. They also risk being denied the opportunity to be re-entered for an examination for a period of time following the malpractice. Therefore, the purpose of the policy is to ensure that students and staff understand the importance of producing their own work, together with the procedures in place to prevent, monitor and detect the possibility of assessment malpractice including plagiarism.

4. Preventing, monitoring and detecting assessment malpractice and plagiarism

All curriculum-facing staff are required to have a working knowledge of this policy and JCQ guidance regarding the prevention and identification of assessment malpractice and plagiarism and how to deal with any incidents identified. All curriculum-facing staff must also understand what AI is, the college's approach to this (as outlined in this policy) and how to prevent AI misuse in assessments. Annual training and guidance is provided to support the prevention and identification of assessment malpractice and plagiarism and how to deal with any incidents identified.

All students will have guidance as to what constitutes plagiarism and other malpractice, including the use of AI, via their teachers and progress mentors as part of their induction programme. The expectations will be reinforced by teachers throughout the course.

Artificial Intelligence

It is expected that students develop and are able to demonstrate their own knowledge, skills and understanding of the subjects they are studying, as required for the qualification in question and set out in the qualification specification, including demonstrating their performance in relation to the assessment objectives for the subject relevant to the question/s or other tasks students have been set.

Students must submit work for assessments which is their own, ensuring that the final product is in their own words, and isn't copied or paraphrased from another source such as an AI tool, and that the content reflects their own independent work.

Any use of AI which means students have not independently demonstrated their own attainment is likely to be considered malpractice. While AI is likely to become an established tool at the workplace in the future, for the purposes of demonstrating knowledge, understanding and skills for qualifications, it's important for students' progression that they do not rely on tools such as AI.

The college will provide appropriate study skills training for staff and students, including the risks associated with AI, such as unreliability and bias, how to use AI appropriately to support learning and avoid malpractice and plagiarism, and how to reference any appropriate use of AI, as described in 'AI Use in Assessments: Protecting the Integrity of Qualifications' JCQ guidance.

Information and support is available for all students to prevent incidents of assessment malpractice and plagiarism. Notices will be displayed in college to remind staff and students about the importance of avoiding plagiarism and malpractice.

Guidance will be provided for parents/carers to enable them to support students and ensure clarity of understanding.

As a means of preventing or minimising the risk of plagiarism subject teachers will:

- reinforce this policy when inducting students into college and at regular points thereafter, as appropriate;
- remind students of the severity of the situation and the potential impact on their qualification;
- seek to design assignment briefs and assessment processes that help to reduce assessment malpractice and plagiarism. This could include incorporating unique scenarios into the brief, or including alternative assessment methods either as a standalone or to support written work, e.g. Q&A or interviews for all, or a sample of students;
- discuss the work and process of producing it with the student/s;
- seek to remove the barriers and temptations by ensuring students have the appropriate skills and knowledge to undertake the work rather than resorting to plagiarism or malpractice;
- understand their students, their challenges and level and style of work to enable them to identify risks.

Students are required to provide a signed and dated authenticity statement with every vocational assignment brief to acknowledge that the work produced is their own and that they understand the penalties that will be imposed on students who do submit plagiarised work. Students completing Non Examination Assessments (NEA) must have signed the candidate declaration record (CDR) for the work to be accepted.

If alternative assessment e.g. teacher assessed grades, are required in the future all students will be required to confirm the work submitted for assessment and consideration, whether produced in college or completed remotely, is their own.

Teachers will take reasonable steps to monitor student work carefully for assessment malpractice and plagiarism. They will follow the guidance for teachers/assessors '[Plagiarism in Assessments](#)' and [AI Use in Assessments - Protecting the Integrity of Qualifications](#).

Detection methods could include, but are not limited to, standardisation of marked work, comparing student work, checking work for unfamiliar words and grammar, a change in the quality of work produced, identification of unreferenced familiar text or using plagiarism detection software where applicable.

Teachers will follow the robust quality assurance processes put in place by awarding bodies, Ofqual and JCQ (where relevant), including standardisation, internal verification, moderation, audited record keeping, tracking and certification claims in order to minimise and identify any malpractice.

5. Procedures for dealing with assessment malpractice and plagiarism

The college takes instances of assessment malpractice and plagiarism extremely seriously. In the event of acts of malpractice and plagiarism being suspected the college will follow the JCQ procedures outlined in Suspected Malpractice Policies and Procedures 1 September 2023 to 31 August 2024 which internally includes:

- the teacher will make a log of the incident, including time, date, location and student(s) involved.
- in the case of malpractice in association with external assessment the subject teacher and/or Head of Department will inform the Head of MIS & Examinations of the suspected malpractice. The subject teacher and / or Head of Department will inform the student(s) that the event will have to be reported to the awarding body and advise that a range of sanctions could be applied (please see Suspected Malpractice Policies and Procedures for full list of sanctions) from the loss of marks to partial or full disqualification from the qualification.
- in the case of suspected **plagiarism** a Head of Department or the Head of MIS and Examinations will undertake a thorough investigation; speaking first to the student(s) involved in order to seek clarification on how they sourced the material, assessment material, etc.

- in the case of suspected **malpractice** the Head of MIS and Examinations will undertake a thorough investigation and collate any evidence that may be required including teacher and student statements, seating plans and registers.
- students will be informed that they have the right to write a statement explaining their version of events and also that they have the right to appeal once the outcome has been given.

Plagiarism - internal assessment, coursework/non examination assessment (NEA):

- In cases where plagiarism has been proved (and depending upon the seriousness of the offence) for a first time offender, the student will be interviewed by an appropriate member of staff, normally from within the relevant Student Support Hub, and given a formal warning and reminded of the Assessment Malpractice and Plagiarism Policy. Details of the meeting will be recorded on the college's disciplinary system.
- The student's work will be withdrawn scoring no marks and the student will be given an opportunity to amend the work and resubmit the piece of work within an agreed time-frame. For vocational subjects, awarding body rules will be applied and students will not be given the opportunity of a further resubmission or retake.
- In cases where there is a further breach of the policy, or where a first time breach is of serious magnitude the student's parent(s) or guardian(s) will be informed and invited to attend a hearing with an appropriate member of staff, normally from within the relevant Hub. This is likely to lead to a formal warning and could result in a student losing their place at college.
- Once again, the student's work will then be withdrawn scoring no marks and the student will be given an opportunity to amend the work and resubmit the piece of work within an agreed time-frame. For vocational subjects, awarding body rules will be applied and students will not be given the opportunity of a further resubmission or retake.

In cases where there is either a second or further offence, or the first time breach is of serious magnitude, the college may also contact the appropriate examination board. Examination boards have at their disposal a range of sanctions that they may wish to invoke:

- the student being withdrawn from one or all of their current examination/assessment series
- the piece of work being awarded zero marks
- student being barred from being entered for the qualification for a specified period

In cases where an irregularity is discovered after a candidate has signed the declaration of authentication, or there is a suspicion of malpractice by a candidate during an examination, the college will submit full details of the case to the Head of MIS and Examinations for

checking and signing before sending to the awarding body at the earliest opportunity using the [JCQ/M1 suspected Candidate Malpractice Report](#) with supporting documentation.

In cases where there is a suspicion that a member of staff has committed malpractice or that maladministration of the qualification may have occurred, the college will let the awarding body know by emailing a completed [JCQ/M2 Notification of Suspected Malpractice/Maladministration Involving Center Staff Report](#).

Any cases of staff malpractice will be dealt with separately as part of the staff disciplinary policy.

In cases where inappropriate pressure is put upon a teacher, by student/s and/or parent/s or carer/s, to increase grade/s or to share teacher assessed grades (or any other variation) where this is not permitted by an awarding body, the Principal may be required to share this information with the awarding organisation who may treat such cases as potential malpractice.

6. Student appeals

In cases where the college has identified malpractice or plagiarism as having taken place, with subsequent disciplinary action having been taken, the student can appeal the decision.

If a student wishes to appeal, they must do so in writing to the Deputy Principal (for A Level and GCSE) or The Vice Principal - Curriculum (for vocational), within 5 working days of notification of the outcome, unless there are individual circumstances preventing this timescale being met such as college holidays or a religious festival. The appeal letter must include full details of the grounds of appeal and full evidence in support of the appeal request.

The Deputy Principal or Vice Principal will undertake a review of the case, will make a final binding judgement within 10 working days of receipt of the appeal. This may involve seeking evidence from all relevant students, teachers, Progress Mentors, Heads of Department/Assistant Heads of Department concerned and examinations personnel as relevant.

The student and parent(s)/carer(s) will be informed in writing of the outcome of the appeal.

A written record of the appeal will be kept on file for future record. If the appeal should highlight any significant irregularity, the awarding body will be notified.

7. Responsibility for the communication of this policy to students

The Assessment Malpractice and Plagiarism Policy will be disseminated to all Progress Mentors and through them to the students as part of the annual Induction Programme. This is to be overseen by the Head of Student Services. Subject teachers are to reinforce this policy when inducting students into college and at regular points thereafter as appropriate.

8. Review

The content and operation of this policy will be reviewed annually by the Vice Principal - Curriculum, together with the Senior Leadership Team and Head of MIS and Examinations.

Date of review: June 2024

Policy for review: June 2025

9. Further information

<https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/malpractice/>

[JCQ AI Use in Assessments: Protecting the Integrity of Qualifications guidance](#)

<https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/non-examination-assessments>

[JCQ AI information sheet for teachers](#)

[JCQ AI teacher presentation for students](#)

[JCQ AI poster for students](#)

[JCQ AI senior leader presentation for teachers](#)