Policies and Procedures for Dealing with Malpractice

Introduction

This guidance is targeted towards learners registered on Ascentis qualifications. It applies to:

- Regulated qualifications, units, examinations, and assessments (Ofqual, CCEA, Qualification Wales, and Access to Higher Education provision)
- Non-regulated / customised qualifications.

Maladministration

Malpractice is essentially any activity or practice which deliberately contravenes regulations and compromises the integrity of the internal or external assessment process and / or the validity of certificates.

It covers any deliberate actions, neglect, default, or other practice that compromises, or could compromise:

- The assessment process,

- The integrity of a regulated qualification,

- The validity of a result or certificate,

- The reputation and credibility of Ascentis,

- The qualification or the wider qualifications community.

Examples of Malpractice by Learners

The examples of learner malpractice listed below are intended as guidance on the definition of malpractice and are not exhaustive:

- The alteration or falsification of any results document, including certificates,

- Failing to abide by the conditions of supervision designed to maintain the security of the assessments,

- Collusion: working collaboratively with other candidates, beyond what is permitted,

- Copying from another candidate (including the use of ICT to aid the copying),

- Allowing work to be copied e.g., posting written coursework on social networking sites prior to an assessment,

- The deliberate destruction of another candidate's work,

- Disruptive behaviour in the assessment room or during an assessment session (including the use of offensive language),

- Exchanging, obtaining, receiving, passing on information (or the attempt to) which could be examination related by means of talking, electronic, written or non-verbal communication,

- Making a false declaration of authenticity in relation to the authorship of controlled assessments, coursework or the contents of a portfolio,

- Allowing others to assist in the production of controlled assessments, coursework or assisting others in the production of controlled assessments or coursework,

- Bringing into the assessment room notes in the wrong format (where notes are permitted in examinations) or inappropriately annotated texts (in open book examinations),

- Impersonation: pretending to be someone else, arranging for another person to take one's place in an examination or an assessment,

- Plagiarism: unacknowledged copying from published sources or incomplete referencing; theft of another candidate's work,

- Behaving in a manner so as to undermine the integrity of the assessment.

The Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Assessments

Ascentis is committed to ensuring that all assessments are fair, reliable, and valid. We recognise that there are some potential risks associated with the use of AI in assessments, such as the possibility of bias and the potential for cheating.

Ascentis expects learners to cite the use of AI tools in their assessments. By signing the authenticity declaration, a learner is confirming that the work they submit for summative assessment is their own, and to this effect learners are not permitted to submit work for summative assessment that has been generated by an AI tool.

This includes all formats in which such work could be produced, including text, imagery, video, sound, animation or any other outputs. Such work will be considered as malpractice, as the work generated is not the students' own. The only exception to this, is where the course content permits the use of AI generated work, or the AI generated work is appropriately referenced.

Learners should be aware of the potential risks associated with the use of AI tools in assessments. They should also be aware that they are responsible for ensuring that they are not cheating in an assessment by using AI tools.

When Learner Malpractice is Suspected

The Centre has a duty to report any instance of suspected learner malpractice or attempted malpractice to Ascentis, after which an investigation will be undertaken.

Where learner malpractice or attempted malpractice is proven, the matter will be dealt with in line with the Centre's malpractice policy / procedure.

The penalties applied following proven learner malpractice must be appropriate and proportionate to the specific circumstances. These can include (but are not limited to):

- A reprimand,

- A written warning,

- An appropriately reduced result,

- Loss of assessment result, ranging from that for a single piece of work to that for the whole qualification,

- Exclusion from one or more assessments for a set period of time,

- Disqualification of the learner from the qualification,

- Debarring a Learner from taking Ascentis qualifications for a number of years.