Malpractice and Maladministration Policy

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Approved by: Executives

Date version approved: 09-07-2026

Version Number	Date	Changes
v2.0	11-06-26	Document updated to be in alignment with NCFE and JCQ

Contents

1. Policy principles

This policy sets out Active IQ's framework to ensure we are maintaining the integrity and credibility of our qualifications and assessments. In particular, the policy reflects the principles of fairness, transparency, proportionality, consistency, and accountability in the prevention, identification and management of malpractice and maladministration.

It does not replace any of the requirements contained within. Non-adherence to our policies may itself constitute as maladministration, malpractice, and/or a breach of the Centre Agreement.

2. Introduction

This policy supports our responsibility to ensure that qualifications are awarded fairly and consistently and has been developed in line with Ofqual's regulatory principles. We adopt and apply the JCQ Suspected Malpractice guidance in full for all regulated qualifications. We retain responsibility for investigating cases, determining outcomes, and applying any necessary sanctions in line with JCQ guidance and this policy.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Active IQ Centre Agreement, mandatory policies, and all other required documentation. It must also be considered alongside Ofqual's General Conditions of Recognition particularly Condition A8, as well as the regulatory requirements of Qualifications Wales and the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA).

In addition, this policy should be read in accordance with **Suspected Malpractice: Policies and Procedures**, published by the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ), which is available on the JCQ website (www.jcq.org.uk).

2.1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all instances of suspected malpractice and maladministration occurring at any stage of the qualification lifecycle – including registration, assessment, marking, moderation, certification, and appeals – are managed in a way that is fair and clearly defines definitions and procedures. Any sanctions are proportionate, and clear roles and responsibilities are defined to protect qualification integrity.

2.2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- all Active IQ regulated qualifications, assessments, and assessment-related activities

- all approved centres, their staff, contractors, affiliates, and learners
- anyone involved in the delivery, assessment, internal quality assurance, examination administration, or certification of Active IQ qualifications
- any individual reporting suspected malpractice or maladministration
- investigations conducted alone or jointly with other awarding organisations where incidents or evidence span over multiple organisations.

This policy does not apply to appeals, complaints, or whistleblowing; these are covered by separate Active IQ policies.

2.3. Responsibilities/duties

Provider Assurance Manager is responsible for ensuring that Active IQ's malpractice and maladministration prevention, detection, investigation, and reporting processes are carried out effectively, consistently, and in alignment with regulatory requirements.

2.4. Joint centre investigations

Where an incident involves more than one awarding organisation, we will agree joint investigation arrangements in line with JCQ requirements. It will be agreed which awarding organisation will be designated lead for coordination. All involved awarding organisations will agree roles and responsibilities from the onset.

Active IQ will:

- provide clear and accessible guidance to all centres
- take all reasonable steps to prevent and mitigate malpractice
- investigate suspected or alleged malpractice fairly, promptly, and robustly
- withhold results/certificates if necessary
- share intelligence with regulators and other awarding organisations when appropriate
- apply sanctions proportionately and consistently
- protect individuals reporting concerns where possible
- maintain accurate records of all cases.

2.4.1 Centre responsibilities

Centres must:

- maintain a robust internal system to prevent and detect malpractice
- have clear internal malpractice procedures aligned to Active IQ's requirements
- report all suspected or confirmed malpractice to Active IQ immediately
- cooperate fully and promptly with Active IQ investigations
- provide all requested evidence in the required format and timescales

- ensure learners and staff understand malpractice definitions and consequences
- ensure secure handling and storage of assessment materials
- ensure exam officers and assessors are trained, resourced, and supported.

Failure to comply may itself be treated as malpractice and a breach of Active IQ's Centre Agreement.

2.4.2 Learner responsibilities

Learners must:
- adhere to all regulations and guidance connected to our assessments
- submit only their own, authentic work
- not access or share unauthorised materials
- report any concerns relating to assessment integrity.

2.5. Definitions

Word/acronym	Definition
Malpractice	Malpractice is usually considered a deliberate act to breach assessment conditions to gain an unfair advantage. It includes any act, omission, or practice which: • breaches regulatory requirements or Active IQ assessment rules • compromises, or attempts to compromise, the integrity of assessment or the validity of a learner result • damages confidence in Active IQ qualifications • provides an unfair advantage or disadvantages others. Examples include (not exhaustive): • assessment material breaches • unauthorised assistance to learners • plagiarism, collusion, or misuse of AI tools • falsification of records • failure to maintain secure storage of assessment materials • failure to report suspected malpractice.
Maladministration	Maladministration refers to any actions that compromises the integrity, security, or confidentiality of assessments,

	potentially leading to results that don't accurately reflect a student's work. Maladministration is often considered an accidental or unintentional act which breaches the integrity of assessment or brings assessment results into disrepute.
JCQ	Joint Council for Qualifications
Centre staff malpractice	Malpractice committed by any member of staff, contractor, volunteer, or third party working on behalf of a centre such as exam paper leaks.
Centre staff maladministration	Systemic or organisational failings within a centre that compromise assessment integrity (including failures in leadership, quality assurance, security or compliance).
Learner malpractice	Malpractice committed by a learner in any form of assessment (internal or external).

2.6. Location

Available via the Active IQ website.

3 Prevention measures

Active IQ requires centres to implement prevention measures including, but not limited to:

- staff induction and annual compliance training
- secure storage and handling of examination and assessment materials
- delivery of JCQ/Active IQ candidate notices before all assessments
- use of plagiarism detection tools and authenticity checks
- robust conflict-of-interest management
- clear processes for access arrangements and special considerations
- internal monitoring and internal quality assurance systems.

4. Identification and reporting of malpractice and maladministration

Please refer to section 4 of JCQ Suspected Malpractice: Policies and Procedures for further information on identifying and reporting: https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/malpractice/

4.1. Reporting to Active IQ

Centres must report all suspected or actual malpractice to NCFE immediately using the NCFE Malpractice Notification Forms available via the NCFE website, or by sending JCQ's M1, M2 and M3 forms to providerassurance@ncfe.org.uk

4.2. Exceptions in line with (JCQ)

Plagiarism/AI misuse in coursework before candidate authentication may be managed internally; however, centres must retain evidence of internal handling.

4.3 Whistleblowing

Active IQ promotes a culture of openness and encourages the reporting of suspected malpractice. While disclosures can be made anonymously, doing so may limit the organisation's ability to investigate the concern or take further action.

5. Active IQ investigation process

Active IQ will follow a fair and robustly structured process when conducting investigations which will include assessing the nature and seriousness of the allegation, risk to assessment integrity, whether safeguarding or criminal concerns exist, and whether any immediate actions for example withholding results are required.

This will include determining investigative approach, information gathering, evaluating all evidence to establish whether the allegations have been appropriately substantiated, and a conclusion based on the balance of probabilities. Any irregularities identified will be escalated via our malpractice procedures.

5.1. Notifying relevant parties

In all but exceptional cases of suspected or actual malpractice/maladministration, we will notify the head of centre (or the named centre contact within our records, if they differ) about the allegation, explaining that we will be commencing an investigation, or in the case of learner malpractice, we may ask the centre to investigate the issue in liaison with our own personnel. In doing so, we may withhold details of the person making the allegation to the extent that they have asked that we do so.

Communications about the investigation will be directed to the head of the centre, unless they are connected to or implicated in the investigation, in which case an appropriate alternative contact person will be appointed. Centres should take all reasonable steps to cooperate with or assist with any investigations

6. Appeals

Centres may appeal in line with Active IQ and JCQ's Appeals policies and guidance, and centres can also make an appeal on the behalf of their learners, staff members, and affiliated parties.

7. Sanctions

When imposing sanctions on a centre, we understand that learners may be affected. We recognise our regulatory duties towards registered learners, and we will take steps where appropriate to ensure that they are supported. As outlined, sanctions may also be placed directly against learners.

Active IQ will ensure all sanctions will be proportionate, evidence-based, and consistently applied. Any sanctions imposed will be in in full conjunction with the Active IQ Centre Agreement and Active IQ's Sanctions Policy and all other mandatory documentation, including (section 7) JCQ's Suspected Malpractice: Policies and Procedures.

8. Safeguarding and wellbeing

Active IQ will consider:

- the wellbeing of learners and staff throughout the investigation
- the need for an appropriate adult during interviews
- additional support for individuals with disabilities or learning needs
- mandatory reporting to safeguarding authorities where risk is identified.

9. Initial Equality Impact Assessment

An Initial Equality Impact Assessment has been completed for this policy, and no concerns were raised.

10. References to associated documents

Available on Active IQ website

- Active IQ Centre Risk Management Policy
- Active IQ Internal Verification Requirements for Centres Policy
- Active IQ Sanctions Policy
- Active IQ Quality Assurance Arrangements Policy
- Active IQ Role of The External Verifier Policy

11. Implementation and dissemination

This policy will be available via Active IQ's website.

12. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner if required. Trends in malpractice will be monitored, and any risks including moderation irregularities identified through malpractice procedures will be escalated. Learning and updates will be shared with centres, and processes will be improved where necessary or to align with regulatory requirements.

Active IQ operates in line with this policy and maintains appropriate governance arrangements to ensure ongoing compliance.

13. Data retention and confidentiality

Active IQ will handle all information in line with GDPR, the Data (Use and Access Act) 2025, and the Data Protection Act 2018, and will retain records in line with Active IQ's Retention Policy.

13.1. Disclaimer: Submission of original documentation

To protect personal information, please do not send original documents to Active IQ via post. We cannot accept responsibility for the loss, damage, or return of any original documentation sent to us.

Where documentation is required, we request that you provide certified copies or high-quality scanned versions instead. This approach helps protect your documents and ensures a more secure and efficient service.

14. Contact us

If you have any queries about the contents of the policy, please contact our external verification team on:
E: ev@activeiq.co.uk
T: +44(0)1480 467 950