

Staff Academic Malpractice Policy

Document Summary

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1. Introduction & Guiding Principles

This policy outlines the procedures for addressing and investigating all forms of academic malpractice by staff. Its purpose is to uphold the integrity and credibility of all academic awards, in line with Office for Students (OfS) Conditions of Registration B4 and B5, the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) Quality Code, the ACAS Code of Practice on Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures, relevant awarding body regulations from Pearson and the British Acupuncture Accreditation Board (BAAB), the Staff AI Policy, and institutional assessment regulations. The policy applies to all staff involved in the assessment and administration of qualifications at The City College.

2. Examples of Malpractice

Academic malpractice is strictly prohibited. The following are examples of malpractice, although this list is not exhaustive:

- Improper assistance to students: Providing help that could improperly influence assessment outcomes, such as producing work for a student or providing undue assistance during an assessment.
- Fabrication of evidence: Inventing or changing marks, creating falsified witness statements, or allowing unverified evidence to be submitted as a student's own work.
- Security breaches: Failing to keep student coursework or portfolios secure and confidential.
- Fraudulent claims: Submitting fraudulent claims for certificates or improperly retaining them.
- Misuse of special conditions: Improperly applying special student requirements, such as allowing unauthorised assistance that has the potential to influence assessment outcomes.
- Conflicts of interest and academic bias: Failing to declare a personal, commercial, or family relationship with a student being taught or assessed. While intimate relationships with students, sexual misconduct, harassment, and bullying are strictly prohibited and investigated under the Sexual Misconduct, Bullying and Harassment Policy in accordance with OfS Condition E5, any resulting compromise of marking impartiality or assessment integrity will also be treated as academic malpractice.
- Unauthorised artificial intelligence use: Using unapproved generative AI tools to generate assignment grades, fabricate marking feedback, or input confidential student assessment data into public AI platforms in violation of UK GDPR and the Staff AI Policy.

3. Staff Malpractice Procedure

All allegations will be treated seriously and investigated with fairness and due process. The investigation will be coordinated by a designated officer.

The investigation will commence within 10 working days of the allegation being made. For Pearson Higher National qualifications, in accordance with JCQ and Pearson regulations on suspected malpractice, the Head of Centre must notify Pearson immediately upon discovering suspected staff malpractice, prior to or at the outset of the investigation, using the standard notification procedure. The designated investigator will establish the full facts, interviewing the staff member and relevant witnesses, and collecting all contemporaneous evidence.

The staff member will be:

- Informed in writing of the specific allegations and supporting evidence.
- Given a formal opportunity to respond in writing and present their case.
- Advised of their right to be accompanied at investigatory interviews by a workplace colleague or representative.
- Informed of the potential disciplinary consequences if malpractice is substantiated.
- Notified of their right of appeal under the Staff Disciplinary Procedure.

Where an investigation substantiates serious malpractice, the College will submit a formal investigation report to the relevant awarding organisation, including Pearson or the BAAB, and where appropriate, will notify Ofqual, relevant professional regulatory bodies, or the police.

If a staff member's malpractice results in a student submitting work that is not their own, the student's work may be invalidated, and the awarding body may not be able to issue a result. The College will take all necessary steps to mitigate the impact on the student.

4. Sanctions and Appeals

Where a member of staff is found to be in breach of this policy, sanctions will be applied, which may include:

- Written warning
- Mandatory training or mentoring
- Suspension from involvement in assessments
- Dismissal for gross professional misconduct

A staff member may appeal any sanction imposed using the College's Staff Disciplinary Procedure in the Staff handbook.

The final external route for an employment-related dispute lies with an employment tribunal, not the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA), which has a statutory remit restricted exclusively to student complaints. Any external complaints regarding freedom of speech or academic freedom raised by staff members fall under the remit of the Office for Students Free Speech Complaints Scheme.