Malpractice Policy (Exams) 2026-2027

Horizons Elevate

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Centre name	Horizons Elevate
Centre number	51324
Date policy first created	10/10/2025
Current policy approved by	SLT
Current policy reviewed by	SLT
Date of review	02/10/2026
Date of next review	02/10/2027

Key staff involved in the policy

Role	**Name**
Head of centre	Claire Willmott
Senior leader(s)	Claire Willmott - Executive head Charlotte Baggley - Head Ashley Sparks - Deputy
Exams Officer	Elodie Fuller
Other staff (if applicable)	Carol Johnson - SENCO

This policy is reviewed and updated annually to ensure that any malpractice at Horizons Elevate is managed in accordance with current requirements and regulations and reflects centre practice.

Reference in the policy to **GR** and **SMPP** relate to relevant sections of the current JCQ documents **General Regulations for Approved Centres** and **Suspected Malpractice: Policies and Procedures**.

Introduction

What are malpractice and maladministration?

'Malpractice' and 'maladministration' are distinct but related concepts, the common theme being that they involve a failure to follow the rules of an examination or assessment. This policy and procedure uses the word 'malpractice' to cover both 'malpractice' and 'maladministration' and it means any act, default or practice which is:

- a breach of the Regulations, and/or
- a breach of awarding organisation 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 organisation or centre or any officer, employee or agent of any awarding organisation or centre (SMPP 1)

Candidate malpractice

'Candidate malpractice' normally involves malpractice by a candidate in connection with any examination or assessment, including the preparation and authentication of any controlled assessments, coursework or non-examination assessments, the presentation of any practical work, the compilation of portfolios of assessment evidence and the completion of any examination. (SMPP 2)

Centre staff malpractice

'Centre staff malpractice' means malpractice committed by:

- a member of staff, contractor (whether employed under a contract of employment or a contract for services) or a volunteer at a centre, or
- an individual appointed in another capacity by a centre, such as an invigilator, a Communication Professional, a Language Modifier, a practical assistant, a prompter, a reader or a scribe (SMPP 2)

Centre malpractice

'Centre malpractice' normally involves malpractice where there is an element of systemic failure, a breach in policies or widespread malpractice such that a centre-level sanction is appropriate (SMPP 2)

Suspected malpractice

For the purposes of this document, suspected malpractice means all alleged or suspected incidents of malpractice (regardless of how the incident might be categorised, as described in SMPP, section 1.9). (SMPP 2)

Purpose of the policy

To confirm Horizons Elevate:

- has in place for inspection that must be reviewed and updated annually, a written malpractice policy which covers all qualifications delivered by the centre with reference to the JCQ document *Suspected Malpractice Policies and Procedures*

  The policy **must** detail how candidates are informed and advised to avoid committing malpractice in

examinations/assessments, how suspected malpractice issues should be escalated within the centre and reported to the relevant awarding body. It **must** also acknowledge the use of AI (e.g. what AI is, when it may be used and how it should be acknowledged, the risks of using AI, what AI misuse is and how this will be treated as malpractice). (GR 5.3)

General principles

In accordance with the regulations Horizons Elevate will:

- take all reasonable steps to prevent the occurrence of any malpractice (which includes maladministration) before, during and after assessments have taken place (GR 5.11)
- inform the awarding body **immediately** of any alleged, suspected or actual incidents of malpractice or maladministration involving a candidate or a member of staff, by completing the appropriate documentation (GR 5.11)
- as required by an awarding body, gather evidence of any instances of alleged or suspected malpractice (which includes maladministration) in accordance with the current JCQ document **Suspected Malpractice - Policies and Procedures** and provide such information and advice as the awarding body may reasonably require (GR 5.11)

Preventing malpractice

Horizons Elevate has in place:

- robust processes to prevent and identify malpractice, as outlined in section 3 of the JCQ document *Suspected Malpractice: Policies and Procedures* (SMPP 4.3)
- this includes ensuring that staff involved in the delivery of assessments and examinations understand the requirements for conducting these as specified in the following current JCQ documents and any further awarding body guidance:
    - *General Regulations for Approved Centres*
    - *Instructions for conducting examinations (ICE)*
    - *Instructions for conducting coursework*
    - *Instructions for conducting non-examination assessments*
    - *Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments*
    - *A guide to the special consideration process*
    - *Suspected Malpractice: Policies and Procedures*
    - *Plagiarism in Assessments*
    - *AI Use in Assessments: Your role in protecting the integrity of qualifications*
    - *Post Results Services*
    - *A guide to the awarding organisations' appeals processes*
    - *Guidance for centres on cyber security* (SMPP 3.2)

Additional information:

Not applicable.

Informing and advising candidates how to avoid committing malpractice in examinations/assessments

Before candidates sit their examinations, they are sent their examination timetable along with a copy of the JCQ "Warning to Candidates" and the "Unauthorised Items" poster. Students are also trained on the examination rules during mock examinations. These rules are then reinforced once more during the Invigilator's Announcement at the start of each examination.

Students are also given an Examination toolkit before their first mocks that contains information relating to how the exams will be conducted and the rules they are expected to follow

AI use in assessments (and preventing AI misuse)

Students complete the majority of their exams and a large number of other assessments under close staff supervision with limited access to authorised materials and no permitted access to the internet. The delivery of these assessments should be unaffected by developments in AI tools as students must not be able to use such tools when completing these assessments, although care must be taken when a student is allowed to use a laptop or similar device for exams, to ensure they have no access to AI tools. There are some assessments in which access to the internet is permitted in the preparatory, research or production stages. The majority of these assessments will be Non-Examined Assessments (NEAs), coursework and internal assessments for General Qualifications (GQs) and Vocational & Technical Qualifications (VTQs). JCQ's guidance which is designed to help students and teachers to complete NEAs, coursework and other internal assessments successfully is followed in relation to these assessments.

The following JCQ support materials are also used to help teachers understand and prevent AI misuse and to help students to better understand the rules for use of AI in assessments:
- AI information sheet for teachers
- AI poster for students

Prior to beginning their work, candidates are issued with the JCQ **Information for candidates** documents: **AI (Artificial Intelligence and assessments)**, (as applicable to any of their qualifications) **Coursework assessments**, **Non-examination assessments** and **Social media** (GR 5.8)

Relevant subject staff ensure that all candidates have read the **Notice to candidates** within the relevant awarding body's **Candidate declaration form** (Authentication form) prior to beginning their work.

Candidates will not sign the declaration until they have completed their work and handed it in for final assessment.

Identification and reporting of malpractice

All staff at Horizons Elevate have a responsibility for reporting any potential malpractice that they may identify.

Escalating suspected malpractice issues

Once suspected malpractice is identified, any member of staff at the centre can report it using the appropriate channels. (SMPP 4.3)

Any suspected malpractice must be reported immediately to the Head of Centre, Senior Leader or Exam Officer.

Reporting suspected malpractice to the awarding organisation

- The head of centre will notify the appropriate awarding organisation immediately of all* alleged, suspected or actual incidents of (staff, centre and candidate) malpractice, using the appropriate forms, and will conduct any investigation and gathering of information in accordance with the requirements of the JCQ document *Suspected Malpractice: Policies and Procedures* (SMPP 4.1)

  (*The only exception to this is candidate malpractice discovered in coursework or non-examination assessments where the offence relates to the content of candidate work (e.g. copying/collusion, plagiarism and/or AI misuse and the authentication forms have not been signed by the candidate)

- The head of centre will ensure that, where a candidate is a child or an adult at risk and is the subject of a malpractice investigation, the candidate's parent/carer/ appropriate adult is kept informed of the progress of

the investigation (SMPP 4.1)

- Form JCQ/M1 will be used to notify an awarding organisation of an incident of suspected candidate malpractice. Form JCQ/M2 will be used (**before** an investigation commences) to notify an awarding organisation of an incident of suspected staff malpractice/maladministration (SMPP 4.4, 4.6)
- Candidate malpractice offences relating to the content of work (i.e. inappropriate/offensive content, copying/collusion, plagiarism (including AI misuse) and/or false declaration of authentication) which are discovered in a controlled assessment, coursework or non-examination assessment component prior to the candidate signing the declaration of authentication, do not need to be reported to the awarding organisation. Instead, they will be dealt with in accordance with the centre's internal procedures.

  Malpractice by a candidate discovered in a controlled assessment, coursework or non-examination assessment where the offence does not relate to the content of candidates' work (e.g. possession of unauthorised materials, breach of assessment conditions) or where a candidate **has** signed the declaration of authentication, must be reported using a JCQ M1 to the relevant awarding organisation. If, at the time of the malpractice, there is no entry for that candidate (who the centre intended to enter), the centre is required to submit an entry by the required entry deadline. (SMPP 4.5)
- If, in the view of the information gatherer, there is sufficient evidence that an individual may have committed malpractice, that individual (the candidate or the member of staff) will be informed of all the required information and informed of their rights and responsibilities as the accused individual, prior to the submission of the report to the awarding organisation (SMPP 5.35-36, 40)
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- Once the information gathering has concluded, the head of centre (or other appointed information gatherer) will submit a written report to the relevant awarding organisation summarising the information obtained and actions taken, accompanied by the information obtained during the course of their enquiries (SMPP 5.37)
- Form JCQ/M1 will be used when reporting candidate cases; for centre staff, form JCQ/M3 will be used (SMPP 5.39)
- The awarding organisation will decide on the basis of the report, and any supporting documentation, whether there is evidence of malpractice and if any further investigation is required. The head of centre will be informed accordingly. (SMPP 5.42)

Additional information:

Not applicable.

Communicating malpractice decisions

Once a decision has been made by the awarding organisation, it will be communicated in writing to the head of centre as soon as possible.

The head of centre will communicate the decision to the individuals concerned and pass on details of any sanctions and action in cases where this is indicated. The head of centre will also inform the individuals if they have the right to appeal. (SMPP 11.1)

Additional information:

Not applicable

Appeals against decisions made in cases of malpractice

Horizons Elevate will:

- Provide the individual with information on the process and timeframe for submitting an appeal, where relevant

- Refer to further information and follow the process provided in the JCQ document **A guide to the awarding organisations' appeals processes**

Additional information:

Not applicable

Changes effective from September 2026

(Updated)

- Wording updated under heading **Purpose of the policy**
- JCQ documents updated under heading **Preventing malpractice**
- Wording in certain bullet points updated under various headings
- Insert prompts updated in various *Additional information* sections
- Updated various SMPP section references
- References to awarding 'body' in the SMPP document updated to 'organisation'

(Amended)

- Heading **AI use in assessments** amended to **AI use in assessments (and preventing AI misuse)**
- Bullet point referring to *Information for candidates* documents amended

(Added)

- New insert sections added under various headings
- New bullet point added under heading **AI use in**... referring to the *Candidate declaration form*
- Under heading **Identification and reporting of**... added a sentence with reference to all staff responsibility

Centre-specific changes

New Exams Officer in post - Elodie Fuller

Centre name change - Horizons Elevate