



**Malpractice and Maladministration
(including plagiarism, cheating and collusion)
Policy**

**2026/27
Academic Year**

SLT Owner	Emma Brannen
Department Area	Quality & Curriculum
Date of Review	August 2026
Date of Approval	August 2026
Approved by	College Executive
Next Review Date	August 2027
Status	Publish on Website

	POLICY Malpractice and Maladministration Policy 2026/27 Academic Year	Number	
		Page	1 of 20
		Version	2

Malpractice and Maladministration Policy *(including plagiarism, cheating and collusion)* 2026-2027

Content

- Purpose and scope
- Centre's responsibility
- Review arrangements
- Definition of plagiarism
- Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Assessments
- Definition of cheating
- Definition of collusion
- Definition of malpractice; examples of malpractice
- Definition of Maladministration; examples of maladministration
- Detection of plagiarism
- Reporting malpractice or maladministration
- Confidentiality and Whistle Blowing
- Responsibility for the investigation
- Notifying Relevant Parties
- Investigating Timelines and Summary Process
- Investigation Report
- Investigation Outcome
- Making an Appeal against the outcome of an assessment malpractice investigation; how to appeal, outcome of appeal.

ISSUE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
DATE	08/2025	08/2026						

	POLICY Malpractice and Maladministration Policy 2026/27 Academic Year	Number	
		Page	1 of 20
		Version	2

Purpose and scope

This policy is aimed at all awarding organisations and The Sandwell Colleges students who are delivering/registered on approved qualifications (including units), accreditations or Quality Assured Awards, and who are involved in suspected or actual malpractice and / or maladministration. This policy is to be used by all staff across the Colleges to ensure they deal with all malpractice and maladministration investigations in a consistent manner.

This policy covers all academic work of the college and all students studying a qualification registered with an awarding organisation under the colleges centre number.

Higher Education: In cases of students enrolled on programmes approved by Higher Education Institutions (HE) the policies of the HEI will take precedence where applicable. In these cases, the relevant HEI policy should be referred to.

It also sets out the procedural steps that students and other personnel must follow when reporting suspected or actual cases of malpractice and/or maladministration and our responsibilities in dealing with such cases.

Centre's Responsibility

It is important that staff involved in the management, assessment and quality assurance of qualifications, accreditations and QAA, and our students are fully aware of the contents of the policy and that the centre has arrangements in place to prevent and investigate instances of suspected malpractice and maladministration.

A failure to report suspected or actual malpractice/maladministration cases including plagiarism, cheating and collusion or have in place effective arrangements to prevent such cases, may lead to sanctions being imposed on the centre.

The colleges compliance with this policy and how it takes reasonable steps to prevent and/or investigate instances of malpractice and maladministration will be reviewed by awarding organisations periodically through ongoing centre monitoring arrangements. Should an investigation be undertaken, the Head of Centre will:

- Ensure the investigation is carried out by competent investigators who have no personal involvement in the incident or personal interest in the matter.
- Ensure the investigation is carried out in an effective, prompt and thorough manner and that the investigator(s) look beyond the immediate reported issue to ensure that arrangements at the college are appropriate for all qualifications.
- Respond timely and openly to all requests relating to the allegation and / or investigation.

ISSUE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
DATE	08/2025	08/2026						

	POLICY Malpractice and Maladministration Policy 2026/27 Academic Year	Number	
		Page	1 of 20
		Version	2

- Co-operate and ensure that staff co-operate fully with any investigation and / or request for information.

Review Arrangements

The Senior Vice Principal Quality and Student Success will review the policy each year as part of the College's annual self-evaluation arrangements and revise it as and when necessary in response to customer and candidate feedback, changes in our practices, actions from regulatory authorities or external agencies, changes in legislation, or trends identified from previous allegations.

In addition, this policy may be updated in light of operational feedback to ensure arrangements for dealing with suspected cases of malpractice and maladministration remain effective.

This policy should also be read in conjunction with;

- Assessment & Internal Quality Assurance Procedure
- Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) suspected malpractice in examinations and assessment policy.

Definition of Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the presentation of someone else's work, words, images, ideas, opinions or discoveries, whether published or not, as one's own, or alternatively taking for one's own use, the artwork, images or computer-generated work of others without properly acknowledging the source, with or without the owner's permission.

Plagiarism by students can occur in examinations, but is most likely to occur outside sat, unseen exams, i.e. in coursework, assignments, portfolios, essays and dissertations.

Examples of plagiarism may include:

- Directly copying from written physical, pictorial or written material without crediting the source
- Paraphrasing someone else's work without crediting the source

Work submitted for assessment must be the student's own efforts and must be their own work. Students are bound by the student code of conduct and are required to ensure that all submitted work is their own and valid for assessment purposes.

Brief quotations from the published or unpublished works of another person, suitably attributed, are acceptable. Details on how to reference material used can be obtained from Tutors and via the Virtual Learning Environment.

ISSUE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
DATE	08/2025	08/2026						

	POLICY Malpractice and Maladministration Policy 2026/27 Academic Year	Number	
		Page	1 of 20
		Version	2

Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Assessments

Using AI, for example, ChatGPT to generate or modify content to evade plagiarism detection is deemed as malpractice.

Examples of AI misuse include, but are not limited to:

- copying or paraphrasing sections of AI-generated content so that the work is no longer the student's own
- copying or paraphrasing whole responses of AI-generated content
- using AI to complete parts of an assessment so that the work does not reflect the student's own work, analysis, evaluation, or calculations
- failing to acknowledge and reference the use of AI tools when they have been used as a source of information
- submitting work with intentionally incomplete or misleading references or bibliographies.

If any sections of learner's work are reproduced directly from AI generated responses, those elements must be identified by the learner and they must understand that this does not allow them to demonstrate that they have independently met the marking criteria and therefore will not be rewarded.

Teachers and assessors must only accept work for assessment which they consider to be the students' own. Where teachers have doubts about the authenticity of student work submitted for assessment (for example, they suspect that parts of it has been generated by AI, but this has not been acknowledged), they must investigate and take appropriate action.

Definition of Cheating

The term cheating includes, without limitation:

- Being in possession of notes, 'crib notes', or text books during an examination other than an examination where the rubric permits such usage
- Communicating during the examination with another candidate
- Having prior access to the examination questions unless permitted to do so by the rubric of the examination
- Substitution of examination materials
- Unfair or unauthorised use of an electronic calculator/device
- Impersonation
- Use of a communication device during the examination
- Any deliberate attempt to deceive

ISSUE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
DATE	08/2025	08/2026						

	POLICY Malpractice and Maladministration Policy 2026/27 Academic Year	Number	
		Page	1 of 20
		Version	2

Definition of Collusion

Collusion is an example of unfair means because, like plagiarism, it is an attempt to deceive the examiners by disguising the true authorship of an assignment, or part of an assignment. Its most common version is that student A copies, or imitates in close detail, student B's work with student B's consent. But it also includes cases in which two or more students divide the elements of an assignment among themselves, and copy, or imitate in close detail, one another's answers.

It is an offence to copy, or imitate in close detail, another student's work, even with their consent (in which case it becomes an offence of collusion). It is also an offence of collusion to consent to having one's work copied or imitated in close detail.

Students are expected to take reasonable steps to safeguard their work from improper use by others.

Collusion should not be confused with the normal situation in which students learn from one another, sharing ideas, as they generate the knowledge and understanding necessary for each of them to successfully and independently undertake an assignment. Nor should it be confused with group work on an assignment where this is specifically authorised in the assignment brief.

Definition of Malpractice

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, accreditation or Quality Assured Award
- The validity of a result or certificate
- The reputation and credibility of The Sandwell Colleges and the Awarding Organisation.

Malpractice may also include a range of issues from the failure to maintain appropriate records of systems, to the deliberate falsification of records in order to claim certificates. For the purpose of this policy this term also covers misconduct and forms of unnecessary discrimination or bias towards certain groups of students.

ISSUE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
DATE	08/2025	08/2026						

	POLICY Malpractice and Maladministration Policy 2026/27 Academic Year	Number	
		Page	1 of 20
		Version	2

Examples of Malpractice

The categories listed below are examples of centre and candidate malpractice. Please note that these examples are not exhaustive and are only intended as guidance on our definition of malpractice

Denial of access to premises, records, information, learners and staff to any authorised awarding body representative and / or the regulatory authorities

Failure to carry out assessments, internal quality assurance (i.e. internal verification or moderation) in accordance with the College's requirements

Deliberate failure to adhere to our candidate registration and certification procedures

Deliberate failure to continually adhere to our centre approval or actions assigned to your centre

Deliberate failure to continually adhere to our qualification, accreditation or QAA approval requirements

Deliberate failure to maintain appropriate auditable records (e.g. certification claims) and / or forgery of evidence

Fraudulent claims for certification

The unauthorised use of inappropriate personnel, materials and / or equipment for assessments

Intentional withholding of information from us which is critical to maintaining the rigour of quality assurance and standards of qualification, accreditations or Quality Assured Awards

Deliberate misuse of logo and trademarks or misrepresentation of a centre's relationship with awarding organisations and / or its recognition and approval status with awarding organisations.

Issuing certificates relating to specific qualifications, accreditations or Quality Assured Awards (i.e. centre produced certificates)

Collusion or permitting collusion in assessments, including online assessments

Candidates still working towards a qualification after certification claims have been made

ISSUE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
DATE	08/2025	08/2026						

Persistent instances of maladministration within the centre

Deliberate contravention by a centre and / or its candidates of the assessment arrangements applicable to the qualifications, accreditations and / or Quality Assured Awards offered

A loss, theft of, or a breach of confidentiality in any assessment materials

Plagiarism including the use of AI by candidates / staff

Copying from another candidate, including using ICT and/or AI to do so

Assuming the identity of another candidate or having someone assume your identity during an assessment

Unauthorised amendment, copying or distributing of exam / assessment papers / materials

Unauthorised amendment, copying or distributing of exam / assessment papers / materials

Inappropriate assistance to learners by to pass a qualification (including units), accreditation or Quality Assured Award

Deliberate submission of false information to gain a qualification (including units), accreditation or Quality Assured Award

Deliberate failure to adhere to, or to circumnavigate, the requirements of our Additional Learning Support Policy

False identification used at registration

Creation of false records

Impersonation of a learner for assessment

Inappropriate use of technology during assessments (e.g. mobile phone)

Selling certificates, questions and / or assessment details

Cheating

Extortion

Fraud

ISSUE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
DATE	08/2025	08/2026						

	POLICY Malpractice and Maladministration Policy 2026/27 Academic Year	Number	
		Page	1 of 20
		Version	2

Definition of Maladministration

Maladministration is essentially any activity or practice, which results in non-compliance with administrative regulations and requirements and include the application of persistent mistakes or poor administration within a centre (e.g. inappropriate candidate records)

Examples of Maladministration

The categories listed below are examples of centre and learner maladministration. Please note, that these examples are not exhaustive and are only intended as guidance on our definition of maladministration:

- Failure to adhere to our candidate registration and certification procedures
- Failure to adhere to our centre approval requirements and / or associated actions assigned to the centre
- Failure to adhere to our qualification, accreditation or QAA approval requirements
- Late candidate registrations, both infrequent and persistent
- Unreasonable delays in responding to request and / or communications from Awarding Organisations
- Inaccurate claims for certificates (including certificates claimed in 'error')
- Failure to maintain appropriate auditable records (e.g. certification claims)
- Withholding of information from us which is required to assure awarding organisations of the centre's ability to deliver qualifications appropriately
- Misuse of qualifications and trademarks or misrepresentation of a centre's relationship with awarding bodies and / or its recognition and approval status with the approved Awarding Organisations

ISSUE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
DATE	08/2025	08/2026						

	POLICY Malpractice and Maladministration Policy 2026/27 Academic Year	Number	
		Page	1 of 20
		Version	2

Detection of Plagiarism

As part of the approach to detect plagiarism the college is committed in using the VLE to submit assignments. In doing so, Turnitin, a plagiarism checker and originality detector, is used to authenticate student's work. Turnitin uses extensive databases of material from a range of sources, including matching text on web pages, journals, text books and the work of other students, in order to detect when the work submitted by a student has been copied from another source. Turnitin generates an originality report to facilitate the identification of potential plagiarism cases. The originality report can be used as evidence and supports the related decision-making process. By enrolling at the college students agree to the submission of their work to the plagiarism service used by the college.

Reporting Assessment Malpractice or Maladministration

In all cases of suspected student malpractice, plagiarism, cheating or collusion the Quality & Standards Manager/Quality Nominee (Harminder.Shergill@sandwell.ac.uk) will be notified as soon as possible and provided with relevant detail.

Where there is a case of cheating, plagiarism or collusion in connection with written assignments, the assessment must be suspended and assessors must not come to a decision on the candidate's result.

The Curriculum Lead or Head of Section/Head of Curriculum will initially act as the investigating officer and complete the 'Suspected Assessment Malpractice – Centre Investigation Report' form. This should be forwarded to the Quality & Standards Manager/Quality Nominee, accompanied by a written statement from the student/s with any other relevant evidence. (See guidance notes for suspected malpractice centre investigation report form for information on other sources of evidence required). A curriculum leader who is involved in any part of assessment of the suspected malpractice cannot assume the role of investigating officer and, in this instance, the relevant Assistant Principal will undertake the investigation. In addition, where the awarding organisation is part of the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ), the 'JCQ M1 form for suspected candidate malpractice' will be completed and submitted to the Quality & Standards Manager/Quality Nominee.

All cases of suspected centre staff malpractice or maladministration must be reported to the Quality & Standards Manager/Quality Nominee. Details provided should include the alleged activity and the source/evidence for the allegation.

Investigators will be impartial (Quality Nominee or an appointed Investigating Officer), have no conflict of interest with the person who raised the issue, or with the people involved in the allegation and must not have been involved in the same issue at an earlier stage.

ISSUE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
DATE	08/2025	08/2026						

	POLICY Malpractice and Maladministration Policy 2026/27 Academic Year	Number	
		Page	1 of 20
		Version	2

In all cases the Quality & Standards Manager/Quality Nominee will record and review investigation evidence, agree the centre recommendations and inform the relevant Awarding Organisation in line with the Awarding Organisation requirements and centre agreement.

Confidentiality and Whistle Blowing

Sometimes a person making an allegation of malpractice and maladministration may wish to remain anonymous, although it is always preferable to reveal your identity and provide us with your contact details. However, if you are concerned about possible adverse consequences that may occur should your identity be revealed to another party then inform us that you do not wish for us to divulge your identity and we will work to ensure your details are not disclosed.

We will always aim to keep the identity of the person making the allegations confidential where asked to do so, although we cannot guarantee this. We may need to disclose your identity should the allegation lead to issues that need to be taken forward by other parties. For example:

- The police, fraud prevention agencies or other law enforcement agencies (to investigate or prevent crime, including fraud)
- The courts (in connection with any court proceedings)
- Other third parties such as the relevant regulatory authority (e.g. Ofqual)

At our discretion, we will keep you updated as to how we have progressed the allegation (e.g. we have undertaken an investigation) but we won't disclose details of the investigation. In addition, it may not be appropriate for us to disclose full details of the outcomes of the investigation, or any actions taken against the parties concerned, due to confidentiality or legal reasons.

Responsibility for the Investigation

In accordance with regulatory requirement all suspected cases of maladministration and malpractice will be examined promptly by the College and the Awarding Organisation to establish if malpractice or maladministration has occurred. We will take all reasonable steps to prevent any adverse effect from occurring as defined by the regulators.

All suspected cases of assessment malpractice and maladministration will be passed to the Quality & Standards Manager/Quality Nominee and they will acknowledge receipt, as appropriate, to external parties within 48 hours.

The Quality & Standards Manager/Quality Nominee will be responsible for ensuring that the investigation is carried out in a prompt and effective manner and in accordance with the procedures in this policy. The Quality & Standards Manager/Quality Nominee will allocate an appropriate manager to lead the investigation and establish whether or not the malpractice or maladministration has occurred, and review any supporting evidence required or gathered.

ISSUE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
DATE	08/2025	08/2026						

	POLICY Malpractice and Maladministration Policy 2026/27 Academic Year	Number	
		Page	1 of 20
		Version	2

If there is an investigation into allegations or malpractice or irregularities against a Head of Centre of the management of the centre, then such investigations should be carried out by the College's Chair of the Governing Body, or their nominee.

In all cases of suspected assessment malpractice and maladministration reported to the college we would protect the identity of the 'informant' in accordance with our duty of confidentiality and / or any other legal duty.

At all times we will ensure that all personnel assigned to the investigation have the appropriate level of training and competence and they have had no previous involvement or personal interest in the matter.

Notifying Relevant Parties

In all cases of suspected or actual malpractice and / or maladministration the College will notify the awarding organisation that we will be investigating the matter. If the Head of Centre, or management is under investigation, communication with the awarding body may be with the Chair of Governors, Local Authority Officials or other appropriate authorities.

In the case of student malpractice, the college will investigate the issue in conjunction with the awarding organisation. In doing so we may withhold details of the person making the allegation in order not to breach a duty of confidentiality or any other legal duty. Awarding Organisations will ask the centre to investigate the matter where they have confidence that the investigation will be prompt, thorough, independent and effective.

The awarding organisation may communicate directly with members of College staff who have been accused of malpractice and/or maladministration if appropriate (e.g. where the staff member is no longer employed by the centre). They may also communicate directly with a candidate or their representative (e.g. if there is a contradiction in the evidence provided during an investigation or where the centre is suspected of being involved in malpractice).

Where applicable, the awarding organisation Head of Operations will inform the appropriate regulatory authority if we believe there has been an incident of malpractice or maladministration, which could either invalidate the award of a qualification, or if it could affect another awarding organisation. In particular, we will keep them informed of progress in large and / or complex cases.

Where the allegation may affect another awarding organisation and their provision, the awarding organisation will also inform them in accordance with the regulatory requirements and obligations imposed by the relevant regulator and / or seek to undertake a joint investigation with them if appropriate. If we do not know the details of organisations that might be affected, we will ask relevant regulators to help us identify relevant parties that should be informed.

If fraud is suspected and / or identified, we may also notify the police.

ISSUE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
DATE	08/2025	08/2026						

	POLICY Malpractice and Maladministration Policy 2026/27 Academic Year	Number	
		Page	1 of 20
		Version	2

Investigation Timelines and Summary Process

The College aims to action and resolve all stages of the investigation within 10 working days of receipt of the allegation. However, in some cases the investigation may take longer. In such instances, we'll advise all parties concerned of any revised timescales.

The fundamental principle of all investigations is to conduct them in a fair, reasonable and legal manner, ensuring that all relevant evidence is considered without bias. In doing so, investigations will be underpinned by terms of reference and based around the following broad objectives:

- To establish the facts relating to allegations in order to determine whether any malpractice and / or maladministration has taken place.
- To identify the cause of any malpractice and / or maladministration and those involved.
- To establish the scale of any malpractice and / or maladministration and whether other qualifications, accreditations or Quality Assured Awards are affected.
- To evaluate any action already taken by the centre.
- To determine whether remedial action is required to reduce the risk to current registered candidates and to preserve the integrity of the qualification, accreditation or Quality Assured Award.
- To ascertain whether any action is required in respect of certificates already issued.
- To obtain clear evidence to support any sanctions to be applied to the centre, and / or any actions relating to members of staff.
- To identify any adverse patterns or trends.

The investigation may involve a request for further information from relevant parties, and / or interviews with personnel involved in the investigation. Therefore, we will expect all parties, who are either directly or indirectly involved in the investigation, to co-operate fully. The College will ensure that all records of investigation of suspected assessment malpractice or maladministration will be retained for at least 6 years (and including where any criminal investigation is involved). In all cases of suspected minor and major assessment malpractice, copies of evidence and centre investigation reports will be provided and retained by the college's Quality team.

If an investigation leads to invalidation of certificates, or criminal or civil prosecution, all records and original documentation relating to the case will be retained until the case and any appeals have been heard and for six years thereafter.

Throughout the investigation the Quality & Standards Manager/Quality Nominee will be responsible for overseeing the work of the investigation team to ensure that due process is being followed, appropriate evidence has been gathered and reviewed, for liaising with and keeping informed relevant external parties. The Quality & Standards Manager/Quality Nominee will conduct all liaisons with the relevant awarding organisation, including review and submission of all centre investigation reports and evidence following suspected assessment malpractice.

ISSUE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
DATE	08/2025	08/2026						

	POLICY Malpractice and Maladministration Policy 2026/27 Academic Year	Number	
		Page	1 of 20
		Version	2

Investigation Report

After an investigation, the 'Suspected Assessment Malpractice – Centre Investigation Report' form will be produced, for the parties concerned to check the factual accuracy. Where the awarding organisation is part of the Joint Council for Qualifications the 'JCQ M1 Report of suspected candidate malpractice' or the 'JCQ M2b Report into an instance of centre staff suspected malpractice or maladministration'.

Any subsequent amendments will be agreed between the parties concerned and the college. The report will:

- Identify where the malpractice / maladministration, if any, occurred
- Confirm the facts of the case, and any mitigating factors if relevant
- Identify who was responsible for the malpractice / maladministration, if any
- Contain supporting evidence where appropriate (e.g. written statements)

We will make the final report available to the regulatory authorities and other external agencies as required.

If it was an independent / third party that notified us of the suspected or actual case of malpractice and / or maladministration, we may also inform them of the outcome – normally within 10 working days of making our decision – in doing so we may withhold some details if to disclose such information would breach a duty of confidentiality, or any other legal duty. If it's an internal investigation against a member of our staff the Head of Operations will agree the report with the relevant internal managers and appropriate internal disciplinary procedures will be implemented.

Investigation Outcomes

If the investigation confirms that malpractice or maladministration has taken place, we will consider what action to take to:

- Minimise the risk to the integrity of certification now and in the future.
- Maintain public confidence in the delivery and awarding of qualification, accreditation or Quality Assured Awards.
- Discourage others from carrying out similar instances of malpractice or maladministration.
- Ensure there has been no gain from compromising our standards.

In line with relevant awarding organisation policy and considering the extent of the assessment malpractice, the next steps will be decided by the Head of Section/Heads of Curriculum and/or Assistant Principal and agreed by the Quality & Standards Manager/Quality Nominee. Where the assessment malpractice is minor it may be appropriate to assess the work after deletion of the offending paragraphs. In general, the usual minimum consequence would be a requirement to re-submit the work to bring it up to the pass standard or an opportunity to undertake an alternative piece of work so as not to deny the student the opportunity to complete the qualification. This would be subject to approval from the relevant Awarding Organisation. BTEC level 2 and level 3 students may not be allowed to re-submit work under the BTEC assessment rules.

ISSUE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
DATE	08/2025	08/2026						

	POLICY Malpractice and Maladministration Policy 2026/27 Academic Year	Number	
		Page	1 of 20
		Version	2

Once the seriousness of the offence has been considered and agreed, this may also result in disciplinary action as deemed appropriate under the college Student Development and Disciplinary Procedure.

Following an investigation, there are a number of actions that the awarding organisation may take to address the cause of, or the issues surrounding, the malpractice / maladministration to prevent a recurrence. Although this list is indicative only and is not meant to form an exhaustive list, it shows the type of actions the college could expect. The awarding organisation could:

- Impose sanctions on the centre.
- Undertake additional / increased visits to the centre to provide a greater level of support and / or monitoring depending on our needs and performance.
- Require specific centre staff to undergo additional training and / or scrutiny by the awarding body if there are concerns about the ability to undertake our role in the effective delivery of qualifications, accreditations or Quality Assured Awards.
- Require specific centre staff to be removed from the delivery or assessment of qualifications, accreditations or Quality Assured Awards
- Alter the way, and the period in which, centres receive assessment materials from awarding organisations if there are concerns around their ability to maintain the security and confidentiality of such materials.
- Insist independent personnel (e.g. invigilators, assessors, internal verifiers) are used for the future delivery of qualifications, accreditations or Quality Assured Awards.
- Act against candidates in relation to proven instances of cheating, plagiarism, fraud, such as some or all of the following (which may be communicated to the candidates by the awarding organisation and / or the candidate's centre).
- Issue a written warning that if the offence is repeated further action may be taken.
- Sanction loss of all marks / credits for the related work / unit.
- Disqualification from the qualification (including units), accreditations or Quality Assured Awards.
- Place a ban for a set period of time from taking any further qualifications, accreditations or Quality Assured Awards with the awarding organisation.
- Inform relevant third parties (e.g. funding bodies) of all findings in case they need to take relevant action in relation to the centre.
- Carry out additional related investigations if the awarding organisation suspect the issue may be more widespread at the College and / or at other campuses.

In cases where certificates are deemed to be invalid, the awarding organisation will inform the college and the regulatory authorities as to why they are invalid. The awarding organisation will specify the actions to be taken for reassessment and / or for the withdrawal of the certificates. The college will let the affected candidates know the action being taken and that their original certificates are invalid. The college will ask candidates to return the invalid certificates to the awarding organization.

ISSUE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
DATE	08/2025	08/2026						

	POLICY Malpractice and Maladministration Policy 2026/27 Academic Year	Number	
		Page	1 of 20
		Version	2

Making an Appeal against the outcome of an assessment malpractice investigation

A student may appeal against the outcome of a suspected assessment malpractice investigation and the sanction imposed on them. The College's Head of Centre may also appeal against a finding of malpractice and/or the sanction imposed on the centre, members of staff (including contracted workers), and on behalf of students entered or registered through the centre where deemed appropriate.

Grounds for Appeal: Appeals must be based on reasonable grounds which relate to the incident in question and the following are accepted as reasonable grounds:

- The incident was not dealt with in accordance with the college's Malpractice and Maladministration policy.
- The decision was unreasonable in light of the evidence presented to the Investigating Officer.
- Further evidence (including medical evidence) has come to light which could change the basis of the investigation outcome.
- The sanction imposed is disproportionate to the seriousness of the malpractice in line with internal policy and policy related to the relevant awarding organisation.

The following do not, by themselves, constitute grounds for an appeal:

- The individual did not intend to cheat.
- The individual has an unblemished academic record.
- The individual could lose a university place.
- The individual regrets their actions.

How to appeal: A student should submit a written request to the college's Quality & Standards Manager/Quality Nominee (Harinder.Shergill@sandwell.ac.uk) to appeal against a decision within 5 working days of notification of the original outcome following internal investigation. When an appeal is received, an acknowledgement will be sent in writing to the student by the Quality & Standards Manager/Quality Nominee. The evidence will be reviewed by the Quality & Standards Manager/Quality Nominee and Senior Vice Principal and supporting evidence checked for validity. (All relevant documentation should be submitted and reviewed at this point as there will be no further opportunity to review new evidence).

Following a second review the Quality & Standards Manager/Quality Nominee and Senior Vice Principal may:

- Resolve the appeal, on one of the accepted reasonable grounds for appeal.
- Reject the grounds for appeal.

Outcome of an appeal: The decision of the Quality & Standards Manager/Quality Nominee and Senior Vice Principal is final. There are no further avenues of internal appeal against decisions taken on malpractice or with the awarding organisation. The final outcome of a malpractice/maladministration appeal will be communicated and confirmed in writing to the student by the Quality & Standards Manager. Where the appeal concerns a

ISSUE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
DATE	08/2025	08/2026						

	POLICY Malpractice and Maladministration Policy 2026/27 Academic Year	Number	
		Page	1 of 20
		Version	2

higher education programme, the appellant will be eligible to receive a Completion of Procedures letter at this point.

Taking an appeal beyond the College

Where the Colleges Malpractice and Maladministration Policy has been exhausted and a resolution has not been achieved, a student has the right to seek advice from the Awarding Organisation. Contact details can be found on their website.

ISSUE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
DATE	08/2025	08/2026						

	POLICY Malpractice and Maladministration Policy 2026/27 Academic Year	Number	
		Page	1 of 20
		Version	2

For centre use only.

Suspected malpractice/maladministration centre investigation form

Centre Investigation Report:

Awarding Organisation:	
Centre Number:	<u>Delete as appropriate:</u> 20699 Sandwell College (including Central Saint Michael's Sixth Form) 20167 Cadbury Sixth Form College
Suspected issue:	Eg, suspected assessment malpractice within internally assessed assignment.
Report author:	
Investigating Officer/s and job title:	
Date of commencement of investigation:	
Student name/s if applicable with registration number:	
Qualification title and number if applicable:	

How the irregularity was discovered and the issue:	
Action taken:	
Outcome and Centre recommendations:	
Mitigation to avoid further incidents:	
Any other relevant evidence:	

ISSUE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
DATE	08/2025	08/2026						

	POLICY Malpractice and Maladministration Policy 2026/27 Academic Year	Number	
		Page	1 of 20
		Version	2

For centre use only. **Guidance Notes:**

Suspected Malpractice

‘Suspected Malpractice Centre Investigation report’ form should be completed by Curriculum Leads/Heads of Section or Assistant Principals in all cases of suspected student Malpractice in consultation with the Quality & Standards Manager/Quality Nominee.

The following evidence should be submitted to the Quality & Standards Manager/Quality Nominee:

- In all cases a signed and dated hand written statement from the student. (To allow the student an opportunity to provide information on how they believe the suspected malpractice occurred.)

Suspected malpractice within internal assessment:

- A copy of the signed and dated student declaration of authentication of own work.
- A copy of the internally assessed student work with areas of suspected malpractice highlighted.
- Records of assessor feedback.
- Records of internal quality assurance feedback.

Suspected malpractice within an examination:

- A copy of exam seating plan and exam incident log.
- Signed and dated hand written statement from the lead invigilator.
- Where deemed applicable signed and dated hand written statements from other students taking the examination.

Suspected malpractice identified by the Awarding Organisation through external moderation or verification:

- Awarding Organisation notification.
- Student work with the identified suspected malpractice.
- External feedback where available.

Suspected malpractice or maladministration by centre staff:

- In all cases a signed and dated hand written statement from relevant staff. (To allow an opportunity to provide information on how they believe the suspected malpractice or maladministration occurred.)
- Any other relevant evidence.

Joint Council Qualification

In addition, relevant JCQ forms should also be completed by the investigating officer for Awarding Organisations belonging to JCQ and submitted to the Quality & Standards Manager/Quality Nominee

Awarding Organisation JCQ members are:

Pearson; City and Guilds; CEA; OCR; SQA; AQA; WJEC/CBAC;