

Malpractice Policy

September 2025

Scope	All academic staff, including Lecturers, Course Coordinators, and Academic Support Tutors
OFS Condition	B4
Strategic Plan	Pillar 1
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Approved by the Board of Governors

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 UK Business College (UKBC) is committed to providing high quality learning opportunities for its students and therefore require that standards of assessment are consistent, transparent and in line with the requirements of the awarding body.

1.2 This policy will contain within it, the procedures that the College will use to manage malpractice and suspected malpractice by students.

1.3 The purpose of the malpractice policy is to identify the risk of malpractice by students, ensure consistency and appropriateness in the handling of malpractice and suspected malpractice, and outline response procedures and the recording of any investigations.

1.4 This policy applies to all students and staff studying on a taught programme of study at UK Business College.

1.5 To reflect the current taught programmes offered at UK Business College, this document has been primarily informed by the following awarding policy documents and guidance:

- *Joint Council for Qualifications: Plagiarism in Assessments*
- *Joint Council for Qualifications: Suspected Malpractice Policies and Procedures*
- *Centre Guidance: Dealing with malpractice and maladministration*
- *Understanding and Managing Plagiarism - Vocational Quality Assurance*
- *BTEC Centre Guide to Plagiarism*

1.8 Whilst this document outlines the processes to identify and report suspected forms of malpractice, UKBC is committed to preventative measures and ensuring that students understand what constitutes malpractice, how to avoid it via the promotion and development of appropriate assessment literacies, and what the likely consequences are if suspected malpractice is confirmed.

2.0 DEFINITION

2.1 'Malpractice' is defined as the failure to follow the rules of an examination or assessment. This policy and procedure use the word 'malpractice' to cover both 'malpractice' and 'maladministration' and is defined as any act, default or practice which is:

- a breach of the Regulations; and/or

- a breach of awarding body 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 body or centre or any officer, employee or agent of any awarding body or centre

2.2 Malpractice comprises of a variety of different actions and practices, including plagiarism, collusion, and subcontracting. For clarity and consistency of understanding, table 1 identified and defines the different forms of plagiarism:

Table 1 – Different Forms of Plagiarism

Direct Quotes	Direct quotes that are not referenced accordingly or passages of text copied verbatim with no acknowledgement to the original author
Cutting and Pasting from the Internet/Al Sources/Copying directly from Books	Directly copying material from an online/Physical source without referencing or citing appropriately.
Inaccurate citation	Not following the rules that are set regarding referencing and citation, both within text and part of a reference list/bibliography
Paraphrasing	Where the context stays the same, but a few words are changed, or the order is swapped around to make it look like their own work. Failure to give credit to the original work
Submitting the same piece of work for two different purposes	Trying to submit the same piece of work across two different courses or purposes is considered academic misconduct
Self-plagiarism	Reusing your own previous work (or parts of it) in a new assignment without making it clear that it's been used before. Even though it's your writing, submitting it again as if it's new counts as academic misconduct.

2.3 *Misuse* of Artificial Intelligence (AI) also constitutes a form of malpractice and will be subject to the same reporting procedures as outlined in this document. For the purposes of staff and students at UK Business College, AI misuse is defined as ‘inappropriately using an AI tool such that the work submitted for assessment is not the student’s own and/or the student fails to appropriately reference and explain their use of AI’.

2.4 Collusion, comprising of the unauthorised sharing of work between a cohort, and/or working collaboratively with other candidates when the assessment is an individual submission, and subcontracting (also referred to as contract cheating) to someone to compete the work for you or using a ghost-writing service, also constitute forms of malpractice for UKBC programmes.

2.5 In the event of suspected collusion, all learners connected to the incident will be subject to investigation and possible penalties, pending the outcome of the investigation.

2.6 Falsification also constitutes a form of malpractice. This refers to deliberately changing, making up, or misrepresenting information in your academic work, and includes altering data, inventing results, or misreporting sources.

3.0 RESPONSIBILITIES

3.1 The College must ensure that information for students, including non-examination assessments, coursework, on-screen tests, written examinations, and plagiarism is distributed to candidates prior to assessments/examinations taking place. This also includes information pertaining to the use and misuse of AI and associated AI tools, where applicable.

3.2 The College will ensure students are informed verbally and in writing about the required conditions under which the assessments are conducted, including warnings about the introduction of prohibited materials and devices into the assessments, and access to restricted resources, where applicable.

3.3 The College will ensure that students are aware of what actions and practices constitute malpractice and the sanctions that can be imposed on those who commit malpractice.

3.4 The College will ensure that students are aware of the sanctions of passing on or receiving (even if the information was not requested) confidential assessment materials, and that if a student receives confidential information, they must report it to a member of staff immediately.

3.5 The College will ensure that students completing coursework or non-examination assessments are aware of the need for the work to be their own, and fully understand the risks of malpractice and AI misuse, including the negative impact on their own learning. This information should be included within the student induction at the start of the programme, and reinforced throughout the academic year.

3.6 The College will ensure that students have opportunities to develop their AI literacy and fully understand the ethical use of AI, which includes knowing when it is appropriate to be used, and will make sure students receive guidance and support on how to use correct referencing conventions when acknowledging its use.

3.7 The College will ensure students have regular and comprehensive opportunities, through guidance, resources, and mandatory training workshops, to develop a range of assessment literacies, including time management strategies, to minimize the likelihood of unintended plagiarism.

3.8 The College must establish and maintain, and at all times comply with, up-to-date written procedures for the investigation of suspected or alleged malpractice.

3.9 The College must ensure that all academic staff receive appropriate and regular training to remain up to date with advancements in AI and associated tools, and other possible forms of current and emerging malpractice.

3.10 The College must ensure that investigations are carried out rigorously, effectively, transparently, and consistently.

4.0 IDENTIFICATION AND REPORTING OF MALPRACTICE

4.1 UKBC has established processes to identify and report suspected malpractice by students.

4.2 Malpractice by a student discovered in a controlled assessment, coursework or non-examination assessment component prior to the student signing the declaration of authentication need **not** be reported to the awarding body but must be dealt with in accordance with the centre's internal procedures, outlined in sections 4.4, 4.5, 4.6, and 4.7. If a declaration of authentication has already been signed by the student at the point that malpractice is suspected, the additional steps identified in sections 4.8 and 4.9 must also be followed.

4.3 Once suspected malpractice is identified, the marker must complete the form for malpractice (Appendix - A) and submit it to the Module Leader or Course Coordinator for review, who will then review the case to determine whether the suspected malpractice concerns are valid. In the instance of the Module Leader being the original marker, the form should be completed and sent to the Course Coordinator. The guidance outlined in Appendix D (subcontracting), Appendix E (AI misuse), and Appendix F (Turnitin Similarity Score) should be referred to when determining this.

4.4 If upon initial review of the evidence the Module Leader or Course Coordinator considers the suspected malpractice concerns to be valid, they must

notify the Head of Registry who will schedule a Malpractice Committee for the evidence to be formally reviewed, and a decision to be made. The outcome of which will be communicated to the student by the Registry Office. The student should also be made aware at this point of the suspected malpractice.

4.5 The Malpractice Committee must comprise of the following members:

- Head of Registry – Chair
- Associate Dean
- Programme Manager
- Academic Staff Member who has not undertaken marking for the module in which the malpractice is suspected. *Note: If possible, a lecturer from an alternative provision/subject area should attend*
- Course Coordinator (if not the original marker who raised the suspected malpractice case)
- Quality Nominee

4.6 If the committee determines that it is a minor or technical offence, then it will be considered as poor academic practice and the student will be invited to attend a one-to-one meeting with their Personal Academic Tutor (PAT) for an informal warning. If applicable, a development plan to support the enhancement of assessment literacy will also be developed with the PAT. Alternatively, if the committee conclude a more serious breach of malpractice, defined as an intentional or deliberate deception — such as knowingly attempting to cheat, mislead, or gain unfair academic advantage, the outcome could include a formal warning and/or a 0% mark for the assessment. As an outcome, the committee may also request that the student undertake a viva to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the assessment, especially if it remains unclear whether there is suspicion of malpractice or not.

4.7 Repeated (defined as more than once throughout the duration of the programme) cases of Poor Academic Practice will automatically be treated as malpractice.

4.8 If a student has already signed the declaration of authentication, the steps outlined in 4.4 and 4.5 must be followed. However, the role of the Malpractice Committee in this instance is to review the evidence and if the suspected malpractice concerns are deemed to be valid, the Head of Centre must be informed and should notify the awarding body immediately of all alleged, suspected, or actual incidents of malpractice by completing the JCQ/M1 Form (Appendix - B). *Note that the role of the Malpractice Committee is not to agree an outcome for the student, but to determine if the suspected malpractice concerns are valid and should therefore be escalated to the awarding body.*

4.9 In the event of suspected learner malpractice in *external assessments*, the steps outlined in section 4.4 and 4.5 should also be followed. If the suspected malpractice is deemed to be valid by the Malpractice Committee, the case must be escalated to the awarding body through completion of the JCQ/M1 Form (Appendix - B)

4.10 If staff malpractice is discovered in coursework or non-examination assessments, the Head of Centre must inform the awarding body immediately, regardless of whether the authentication forms have been signed by the candidate(s), and before any investigation is undertaken.

4.11 In the event of suspected malpractice by staff, the Head of Centre is also required to complete a JCQ Form M2 (Appendix – C)

4.12 It is also the responsibility of the Head of Centre for UKBC to inform learners and centre staff of suspected malpractice of their responsibilities and rights.

4.13 Upon receipt of malpractice concerns, the awarding body will review and determine the appropriate next steps, as detailed below.

- Awarding body will review and assess strategy of investigation and if an investigation is necessary
- Background desktop research conducted by awarding body (factual review of the allegation or notification, historical malpractice cases, student volumes)
- Information gathering
- Evidence review (review of all the information gathered to determine if the allegations are supported by the evidence and if there are other concerns arising during the investigation)
- Findings of the investigation
- Case/investigation review (identification from the evidence of any potential regulation/ specification breaches)
- Malpractice Committee (the outcome of the investigation is determined by the Malpractice Committee)
- Final outcome

4.14 Once a decision has been made, it will be communicated in writing to the Head of Centre as soon as possible. It is the responsibility of the Head of Centre to communicate the decision to the individuals concerned and to pass on details of any sanctions and action in cases where this is indicated. The Head of Centre must also inform the individuals if they have the right to appeal.

4.15 Possible outcomes of an investigation can include one or more of the following:

- Disqualification of Work
- Removal of Certification
- Learner Sanctions, including suspension or exclusion from the programme
- Impact on Future Assessments, with learners being barred from retaking assessments or units within a specified period.
- Reporting to Regulatory Bodies - In serious cases, Pearson may report malpractice to other external regulatory bodies

4.0 APPEALS

4.1 UKBC has established procedures for considering appeals against sanctions arising from malpractice decisions.

4.2 Appeals must normally be made within 14 days of receiving the outcome of the Malpractice Committee's or Pearson decision.

4.3 Further information about the appeals process can be found in the *UKBC Academic Appeals Policy and Procedure*. In cases where the outcome has been determined by the awarding body, the student would be required to follow the awarding body appeals process.

5.0 REVIEW OF THE POLICY

5.1 This policy will be reviewed annually or as required by changes in external regulations and/or awarding body requirements. Any changes be reviewed by the College's Academic Board and ratified by the Board of Governors.

7. APPENDIX A

MALPRACTICE FORM

Student Number:	Student Name:		
Module Code:	Module Name:		
Assessment Item Number (e.g. 001):	Assessment Item Name (e.g. 'Report'):		
What type of malpractice is the student accused of?			
Plagiarism Self-plagiarism Collusion Falsification subcontracting Misuse of AI Other (please specify)			
Details of Suspected Malpractice: If applicable, supporting evidence should also be included within this document. Examples include the Turnitin Report, other student submissions (if collusion is expected), or previous submissions (if AI misuse or subcontracting is suspected).			
Has the Declaration of Authentication been signed by the student?	Yes	No	

Marker Name (please print):	
Marker Signature:	
Date Escalated to Module Leader/Course Coordinator:	
Module Leader/Course Coordinator Comments:	
No	<i>If malpractice is not suspected, the Module Leader/Course Coordinator to specify why. If applicable, further actions should also be included, such as additional training for markers on identifying different forms of malpractice.</i>
<input style="width: 40px; height: 20px; border: 2px solid green;" type="checkbox"/>	
Yes	<i>If malpractice is suspected at this state, the Module Leader/Course Coordinator should specify why and notify the Head of Registry.</i>
<input style="width: 40px; height: 20px; border: 2px solid green;" type="checkbox"/>	
	Date Escalated to the Head of Registry: _____
Date of Malpractice Committee:	_____

Malpractice Committee Outcome and Agreed Actions/Next Steps <i>(To be completed by Head of Registry)</i> (Please also attach formal minutes from the Malpractice Committee)			
If the Declaration of Authentication has been signed by the student and the committee confirms suspected malpractice, the below section should also be completed			
Date Escalated to Head of Centre:		Date JCQ/M1 Form Completed and Sent to Awarding Body	

8. APPENDIX B

JCQ/M1 form - to be used by centres to report instances of suspected candidate malpractice.

Latest version of the form can be accessed via the link below:

<https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/malpractice/>

9. Appendix C

JCQ/M2 form - to be used by centres to report instances of suspected staff malpractice.

Latest version of the form can be accessed via the link below:

<https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/malpractice/>

10. Appendix D – Identifying the potential use of subcontracting

Detecting and proving subcontracting (contract cheating) can be challenging, and no single definite detection method exists. However, the following list provides a number of strategies and actions, emanating from sector research and recommendations, which should be considered if the marker suspects malpractice via subcontracting.

1. Check the document's metadata (available via file properties). In particular, review the **Author Name, and Creation Date to see if there are any apparent discrepancies. Note that if discrepancies are identified, it does not automatically imply malpractice. Instead, findings should be triangulated with the other considerations outlined below.**
2. Examine the similarity scores via Turnitin. Unusually low scores could be suggestive of fake or manipulated references, whilst very high scores could suggest the use of essay mills. Also consider how relevant the references are to the subject and the specific assessment, and review the synergy between the reference list and the in-text citations.
3. Consider how closely the submission addresses the assessment task and guidance. Is it too generic or lacking in specific examples? Also consider whether key theories, models, or frameworks used within the teaching materials and group discussions are missing or misinterpreted.
4. Consider the language and style of the submission. Be alert to changes and/or inconsistencies in font style, size, spelling, grammar and syntax throughout the particular submission. Also consider whether aspects linked to language, English proficiency, and style are consistent with the student profile and previous submissions if applicable.

If, upon examination of all of the above themes the marker still suspects subcontracting, the steps outlined in section 4 in this document should be followed.

11. Appendix E – Identifying possible AI misuse

To help identify possible misuse of AI, and/or if a marker suspects an assessment to have been created via the inappropriate use of AI, the latest guidance outlined by the Joint Council for Qualifications - JCQ (April 2025) should be followed. Please see **Section 8 (pages 11 and 12)** in the following document.

[AI-Use-in-Assessments_Apr25_FINAL.pdf](#)

If, upon examination of this guidance AI misuse is suspected, the steps outlined in section 4 in this document should be followed.

12. Appendix F – Turnitin Similarity Score

The Similarity Score in Turnitin shows the percentage of a student's submission that matches content from other sources, including academic publications, websites, and previously submitted work. While this score does **not** directly indicate plagiarism, it flags text that may need further review for originality and correct citation. The Similarity Score ranges from 0% to 100%, indicating how much of the text matches existing sources.

A high percentage doesn't automatically mean plagiarism has occurred, and as such UKBC emphasizes the importance of contextual evaluation when interpreting the scores, and so marker should consider the following points if the similarity score for a particular submission is high.

- Markers should use the Similarity Report to examine the nature of the matches and decide whether they represent plagiarism, poor citation, or other academic practice issues.
- To access the details of the similarity report, markers should click the percentage.
- The report highlights matched text and links it to the original sources, making it easier to evaluate the authenticity of the content.

If, upon examination of the similarity report the maker suspects malpractice, the steps outlined in section 4 in this document should be followed.

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