

Maladministration and Malpractice Policy

1. Introduction

Incidents of malpractice/maladministration can potentially lead to learners being disadvantaged, can require the conducting of costly and time-consuming investigations and may cause reputational damage to ABP. It is, therefore, desirable to prevent malpractice or maladministration from occurring, whenever possible. Where it is not possible to prevent this, cases of suspected or actual malpractice/maladministration should be dealt with quickly, thoroughly and effectively.

2. Scope

This policy is aimed at our customers, including learners, who are delivering or registered on ABP programmes or courses, approved qualifications or units within or outside Bangladesh and who are involved in suspected or actual malpractice/maladministration. It is also for use by ABP staff to ensure they deal with all malpractice and maladministration investigations in a consistent manner.

It sets out the steps ABP staff, learners or third-parties must follow when reporting suspected or actual cases of malpractice/maladministration and ABP's responsibilities in dealing with such cases. It also sets out the procedural steps ABP will follow when reviewing the cases.

3. Responsibility of ABP Staff and Learners

3.1 It is important that all staff involved in the management, assessment and quality assurance of ABP qualifications are fully aware of the contents of the policy

3.2 It is important that all registered learners of ABP are fully aware of the contents of the policy

4. Definition of Malpractice and Maladministration

4.1 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.

4.1.1 It covers any deliberate actions, neglect, default or other practice that compromises, or could compromise:

4.1.1.1 The assessment process;

4.1.1.2 The integrity of a regulated qualification;

4.1.1.3 The validity of a result or certificate;

4.1.1.4 The reputation and credibility of ABP; or,

4.1.1.5 The qualification or the wider qualifications community.

4.1.2 Malpractice may include a range of issues from the failure to maintain appropriate records or systems, to the deliberate falsification of records in order to claim certificates;

4.1.3 For the purpose of this policy this term also covers misconduct and forms of unnecessary discrimination or bias towards certain or groups of learners.

4.1.4 Examples of malpractice

4.1.4.1 Failure to carry out internal assessment, internal moderation or internal verification in accordance with requirements;

4.1.4.2 Deliberate failure to adhere to learner registration and certification procedures;

- 4.1.4.3 Deliberate failure to continually adhere to centre recognition and/or qualification approval requirements or actions assigned;
 - 4.1.4.4 Deliberate failure to maintain appropriate auditable records, e.g. certification claims and/or forgery of evidence;
 - 4.1.4.5 Fraudulent claim(s) for certificates;
 - 4.1.4.6 Intentional withholding of information which is critical to maintaining the rigour of quality assurance and standards of qualifications;
 - 4.1.4.7 Collusion or permitting collusion in exams/assessments;
 - 4.1.4.8 Learners still working towards qualification after certification claims have been made;
 - 4.1.4.9 Plagiarism by learners/staff;
 - 4.1.4.10 Copying from another learner (including using ICT to do so).
- 4.2 Maladministration is essentially any activity or practice which results in non-compliance with administrative regulations and requirements and includes the application of persistent mistakes or poor administration.
- 4.2.1 Examples of maladministration**
- 4.2.1.1 Persistent failure to adhere to learner registration and certification procedures;
 - 4.2.1.2 Persistent failure to adhere to centre recognition and/or qualification requirements and/or associated actions assigned;
 - 4.2.1.3 Late learner registrations (both infrequent and persistent);
 - 4.2.2 Unreasonable delays in responding to requests and/or communications;
 - 4.2.3 Inaccurate claim for certificates;
 - 4.2.4 Failure to maintain appropriate auditable records, e.g. certification claims and/or forgery of evidence;
 - 4.2.5 Withholding of information, by deliberate act or omission.

5. Process for Making an Allegation of Maladministration or Malpractice

- 5.1 Anybody who identifies or is made aware of suspected or actual cases of malpractice or maladministration at any time must immediately notify the ABP Board of Governance. In doing so they should put them in writing/email and enclose appropriate supporting evidence.
- 5.2 All allegations must include (where possible):
- 5.2.1 Learner's name and the ABP-provided registration/identification number;
 - 5.2.2 ABP staff members' name and job role – if they are involved in the case;
 - 5.2.3 Details of the course/qualification affected or nature of the service affected;
 - 5.2.4 Nature of the suspected or actual malpractice and associated dates, details and outcome of any initial investigation carried out by ABP Senior Officers or anybody else involved in the case, including any mitigating circumstances.
- 5.3 The ABP Board of Governance will then conduct an initial investigation to ensure that staff involved in the initial investigation are competent and have no personal interest in the outcome of the investigation.
- 5.4 In all cases of suspected malpractice and maladministration reported ABP will protect the identity of the 'informant' in accordance with our duty of confidentiality and/or any other legal duty.

6. Confidentiality and Whistleblowing

Sometimes a person making an allegation of malpractice or maladministration may wish to remain anonymous. Although it is always preferable to reveal your identity and contact details to us, if you

are concerned about possible adverse consequences you may request that the ABP do not divulge your identity. While we are prepared to investigate issues which are reported to us anonymously we shall always try to confirm an allegation by means of a separate investigation before taking up the matter with those to whom the allegation relates.

7. Responsibility for the Investigation

- 7.1 In accordance with regulatory requirements all suspected cases of maladministration and malpractice will be examined promptly by ABP to establish if malpractice or maladministration has occurred and we will take all reasonable steps to prevent any adverse effect from the occurrence. We will acknowledge receipt, as appropriate, to external parties within 48 hours.
- 7.2 ABP Board of Governance will be responsible for ensuring the investigation is carried out in a prompt and effective manner and in accordance with the procedures in this policy and will allocate a relevant member of staff to lead the investigation and establish whether or not the malpractice or maladministration has occurred, and review any supporting evidence received or gathered by ABP.

8. Notifying Relevant Parties

In the event that an incident of malpractice or maladministration is of a nature that requires us to notify relevant regulatory and/or legal authorities, ABP Board of Governance will do so.

9. Investigation Timelines and Summary Process

- 9.1 We aim to take action and resolve all stages of the investigation within 10 working days of receipt of the allegation.
- 9.2 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 based around the following broad objectives:
 - 9.2.1 To establish the facts relating to allegations/complaints in order to determine whether any irregularities have occurred;
 - 9.2.2 To identify the cause of the irregularities and those involved;
 - 9.2.3 To establish the scale of the irregularities;
 - 9.2.4 To evaluate any action already taken;
 - 9.2.5 To determine whether remedial action is required to reduce the risk to current registered learners and to preserve the integrity of Cambridge Marketing College and the qualification;
 - 9.2.6 To identify any adverse patterns or trends.
- 9.3 The investigation may involve a request for further information from relevant parties and/or interviews with personnel involved in the investigation. Therefore, we will:
 - 9.3.1 Ensure all material collected as part of an investigation is kept secure;
 - 9.3.2 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 five years thereafter;
 - 9.3.3 Expect all parties, who are either directly or indirectly involved in the investigation, to fully cooperate with us.
- 9.4 Either at notification of a suspected or actual case of malpractice or maladministration and/or at any time during the investigation, we reserve the right to withhold a learner's, and/or cohort's, results.
- 9.5 Where a member of ABP staff is under investigation we may suspend them or move them to other duties until the investigation is complete.

9.6 Throughout the investigation ABP Board of Governance 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 and for liaising with and keeping relevant external parties informed.

10. Investigation Report

After an investigation, we will produce a draft report for the parties concerned to check the factual accuracy. Any subsequent amendments will be agreed between the parties concerned and ourselves. The report will:

1. Identify where the breach, if any, occurred.
2. Confirm the facts of the case.
3. Identify who is responsible for the breach (if any).
4. Confirm an appropriate level of remedial action to be applied.
5. We will make the final report available to the parties concerned and 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, we will 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 is an internal investigation against a member of our staff the report will be agreed by the ABP CEO, along with the relevant internal managers, and appropriate internal disciplinary procedures will be implemented.

11. Investigation Outcomes

- 11.1 If the investigation confirms that malpractice or maladministration has taken place we will consider what action to take in order to:
 - 11.1.1 Minimise the risk to the integrity of certification now and in the future;
 - 11.1.2 Maintain public confidence in the delivery and awarding of qualifications;
 - 11.1.3 Discourage others from carrying out similar instances of malpractice or maladministration;
 - 11.1.4 Ensure there has been no gain from compromising our standards.
- 11.2 The action we take may include:
 - 11.2.1 Imposing actions in order to address the instance of malpractice/maladministration and to prevent it from reoccurring;
 - 11.2.2 In cases where certificates are deemed to be invalid, inform the Awarding Organisation concerned and the regulatory authorities why they are invalid and any action to be taken for reassessment and/or for the withdrawal of the certificates. We will also let the affected learners know the action we are taking and that their original certificates are invalid and ask – where possible – to return the invalid certificates to us.

12. Maladministration

Should it be found that we have made an error in enrolling a student or administering a student's progress, we will work with the student to agree the best solution. If the student wishes to continue the course, an extension of time will be granted. If they wish to withdraw from the course, a full refund will be made.

13. Malpractice

Should incompetence or negligence occur, we will again work at our own cost, to rectify the situation with the student should they wish to continue with the course, or a full refund will be given.

In addition, to the above the concerned Senior Officer of ABP will record any lessons learnt from the investigation and pass these onto relevant internal colleagues to help prevent the same instance of maladministration or malpractice from reoccurring.