



ACADEMIC INTEGRITY, MALPRACTICE & MALADMINISTRATION POLICY

Academic Integrity, Malpractice & Maladministration

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ACADEMIC INTEGRITY, MALPRACTICE & MALADMINISTRATION POLICY

PURPOSE

This policy sets out Ravenscroft College's approach to academic integrity and its procedures for identifying, investigating and resolving cases of malpractice and maladministration. It is designed to protect the integrity of the qualifications the College delivers, to comply with the requirements of the awarding body, OTHM Qualifications, and to meet the Ofqual General Conditions of Recognition.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all learners enrolled on programmes at Ravenscroft College, all staff involved in the delivery, assessment, or administration of those programmes, and any third party involved in the assessment or quality assurance process.

DEFINITIONS

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity means the honest, responsible, and ethical pursuit of learning and scholarship. It requires that all assessed work submitted by learners is their own, properly referenced, and produced in accordance with the assessment requirements of the relevant awarding body.

Malpractice

Malpractice is any act, default, or practice that compromises, attempts to compromise, or may compromise the assessment process, the integrity of a regulated qualification, or the validity of an assessment result. Malpractice may be committed by a learner or by staff.

Examples of learner malpractice include, but are not limited to:

- Plagiarism: presenting the work, ideas, or words of another person as one's own without appropriate acknowledgement



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- Collusion: working with another person or persons to produce work that is submitted as if it were the learner's individual effort, where collaboration is not permitted
- Fabrication: inventing or falsifying data, evidence, references, or results
- Impersonation: having another person complete an assessment on a learner's behalf, or doing so for another learner
- Contract cheating: commissioning or purchasing work from a third party (including essay mills) and submitting it as one's own
- Misuse of artificial intelligence: submitting AI-generated content as the learner's own without acknowledgement, whether copied or paraphrased; using AI to produce the analysis, argument or judgement that the assessment criteria require the learner to demonstrate; altering AI output to disguise its origin; fabricating references to AI sources; or signing the declaration of authenticity while knowingly submitting unacknowledged AI-assisted work
- Acceptable use of artificial intelligence. AI may be used to generate ideas, to structure thinking, or for basic language and grammar support, provided the use is acknowledged and the assessed skill remains the learner's own. Where an assignment brief permits or restricts AI use, the brief takes precedence. Acknowledgement must be clear enough for the assessor to understand which tool was used, what it was used for, the prompts or instructions given, the output produced, and how the learner used, checked or changed that output.
- Where AI misuse is suspected the assessor will consider the indicators set out in the awarding body guidance, including a sudden change in the standard of writing, generic or uncontextualised content, misused terminology and references that cannot be traced. Detection software informs that judgement but does not replace it, and no finding is made on a software score alone.
- Unauthorised materials: bringing in or using prohibited materials, devices, or resources during an assessment
- Tampering: altering or interfering with assessment materials, results, certificates, or records
- Misrepresentation: providing false information in support of an application, enrolment, or assessment claim, including falsifying prior qualifications or English language evidence



Examples of staff malpractice include, but are not limited to:

- Providing improper assistance to learners during assessments beyond what is permitted
- Altering or fabricating assessment records or outcomes
- Failing to comply with awarding body assessment regulations or confidentiality requirements
- Failing to report known or suspected malpractice by learners or other staff

Maladministration

Maladministration is any act, default, or practice that results in non-compliance with administrative requirements and regulations, whether intentional or through negligence.

Examples include:

- Failure to adhere to the awarding body's procedures for the conduct of assessments
- Failure to maintain accurate and secure records of assessment decisions and learner evidence
- Incorrect registration of learners with the awarding body
- Failure to report assessment outcomes within required timeframes
- Breach of confidentiality in relation to assessment materials or outcomes
- Failure to maintain the security of assessment materials before, during, and after assessments
- Centre malpractice. The awarding body also defines malpractice committed by the College itself, which includes falsifying assessment, registration or quality assurance records, giving false or incomplete information to the awarding body, claiming certificates for learners who have not met the requirements, obstructing an investigation, and failing to report known or suspected malpractice. Failure to cooperate with an awarding body investigation is itself malpractice.



PREVENTION

Ravenscroft College is committed to preventing malpractice and maladministration through:

- Clear communication of academic integrity expectations during learner induction and throughout programmes
- Published assessment guidelines that set out what is and is not permissible for each assessment
- The use of plagiarism detection software (e.g., Turnitin or equivalent) for all submitted work
- Staff training on assessment regulations, integrity, and the identification of malpractice
- Secure handling and storage of all assessment materials and records
- Regular internal verification and standardisation of assessment practices
- Learners confirm their identity for every submission by logging in through their own secure virtual learning environment account and by signing the declaration of authenticity that accompanies each unit. Photographic identification is verified at admissions and held on the learner record. Where the College cannot be satisfied that submitted work is the learner's own, the matter is handled under this policy.

DETECTION AND REPORTING

All staff have a responsibility to report suspected malpractice or maladministration. Any concerns should be reported immediately to the Quality Assurance Coordinator.

Reporting to the awarding body is not discretionary and does not wait for the College to complete its own enquiries. Every suspected case is reported to the awarding body within 5 working days of being identified.

Learners who become aware of malpractice by another learner or by a member of staff are also encouraged to report it. Reports may be made to the Quality Assurance Coordinator or to the Director.



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All suspected cases of malpractice or maladministration will be recorded in the College's Malpractice and Maladministration Register.

INVESTIGATION PROCEDURE

Stage 1: Initial Assessment

Upon receipt of a report, the Quality Assurance Coordinator will conduct an initial assessment to determine whether there is sufficient evidence to warrant a formal investigation. If the matter is minor and can be attributed to a genuine misunderstanding (for example, a first-time minor referencing error), it may be dealt with informally through education and guidance. Where misuse of AI is suspected after work has been formally submitted, the concern is investigated and formally recorded; the original submitted work and all relevant evidence are preserved; the work is not replaced, amended or returned for informal correction while the concern is being considered; and no certification claim is made until the concern has been resolved.

Where the allegation concerns a member of the College's own staff, the College itself, or anyone who would ordinarily conduct or oversee the investigation, the College does not determine the matter alone. It reports the case to the awarding body, follows the awarding body's direction on who investigates, and appoints an independent investigator where no one internal is free of an interest in the outcome.

Stage 2: Formal Investigation

If a formal investigation is warranted, the Quality Assurance Coordinator (or their nominee) will:

1. Notify the individual(s) concerned in writing of the allegation and the investigation process
2. Gather and preserve all relevant evidence, including assessment submissions, VLE records, plagiarism reports, and witness statements
3. Invite the individual(s) to provide a written response or attend an investigation meeting, with the right to be accompanied
4. Make a finding of fact on the balance of probabilities
5. Determine the appropriate outcome



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The College will acknowledge receipt of a formal malpractice report within **3 working days**. The initial assessment will be completed within **10 working days** where possible. Formal investigations will aim to conclude within **30 working days** of formal notification; if further time is required the individual(s) will be informed in writing with an updated timescale and interim updates every 10 working days.

For investigations arising from online assessment, the College will collect and preserve the relevant digital evidence, including virtual learning environment access and submission records, submission timestamps, similarity and AI-detection reports if applicable, assessor feedback and internal quality assurance records. All evidence is logged in an Evidence Register recording who accessed it, when, and for what purpose, and that register forms the chain of custody for the investigation.

Possible Outcomes

Depending on the severity of the case, outcomes may include:

- No case to answer: the allegation is not substantiated
- Written warning: the case is substantiated but is a first or minor offence
- Requirement to resubmit the assessment with a capped grade or mark
- Nullification of the assessment result
- Suspension from the programme
- Expulsion from the programme and termination of enrolment
- Notification to the relevant awarding body
- In cases of staff malpractice or maladministration: disciplinary action in accordance with the College's employment procedures

NOTIFICATION TO AWARDING BODIES

The College reports every suspected case of malpractice or maladministration to the awarding body within 5 working days of identifying it, without waiting for an internal investigation to conclude. The awarding body oversees the investigation, may direct who conducts it, and may withhold results or certification while it is open. The College cooperates fully, provides any information requested within 10 working days, and does



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not reach a final finding on a case involving its own staff, or the College itself, without the awarding body's involvement.

Access to investigation evidence is restricted to authorised staff. All access is recorded in an access log capturing user identity, date and time, and the reason for access. Any disclosure of evidence to an external party, including the awarding body, is recorded.

Where an awarding body requests documentation or further information, the College will provide the requested evidence within **10 working days** unless otherwise agreed.

APPEALS

Learners: A learner may appeal a finding of malpractice or maladministration, or the outcome imposed, under the Academic Appeals Policy, within the time limit and by the method set out in that policy.

Staff and contractors: Two separate decisions can follow a finding against a member of staff or a contractor, including a sessional assessor or internal quality assurer, and each is challenged in a different way.

The finding itself: Suspected malpractice and maladministration are reported to the awarding body, which oversees the investigation. A member of staff or contractor who disputes the finding should ask the College in writing, within 5 working days of receiving it, to put their representations to the awarding body, and the College will do so. Where the concern involves the Head of Centre, the individual may contact the awarding body directly.

Any action taken by the College. An employee may appeal disciplinary action under the disciplinary procedure in the Staff Handbook. A contractor may appeal a decision to remove them from assessment or quality assurance duties, or to end their engagement, in writing to the Director within 10 working days of receiving the decision.

No appeal is heard by anyone involved in the original investigation or decision. Where no one within the College is independent of the case, the College appoints an external independent reviewer in accordance with the Conflict of Interest Policy.



RECORD KEEPING

All records relating to malpractice and maladministration cases, including reports, evidence, investigation notes and outcomes, are retained securely for a minimum of six years from the date of the final outcome, in accordance with the Evidence Retention and Records Management Policy. Records are available for review by the awarding body and the regulator on request.

Virtual learning environment records, submission logs and similarity reports where applicable. used in an investigation are retained for a minimum of three years from the date of the final decision, or longer where the awarding body requires it. Deletion actions are logged.

REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed annually or following any significant malpractice case, change in awarding body requirements, or update to regulatory expectations.

Last reviewed: October 2026