



Malpractice and Maladministration Procedure

This policy is aimed at our customers, including learners, who are registered on Linton Training programmes or courses, approved qualifications or units within or outside the UK and who are involved in suspected or actual malpractice/maladministration.

It is also for use by our staff to ensure they deal with all malpractice and maladministration investigations in a consistent manner.

It sets out the steps our centre, and learners or other personnel must follow when reporting suspected or actual cases of malpractice/maladministration and or responsibilities in dealing with such cases. It also sets out the procedural steps we will follow when reviewing the cases.

Centre Responsibilities

It is important that all staff involved in the management, assessment and quality assurance of our qualifications, and learners are fully aware of the contents of the policy and we have arrangements in place to prevent and investigate instances of malpractice and maladministration.

Definition of Malpractice

Malpractice is essentially any activity or practice which deliberately contravenes regulations and comprises the integrity of the internal or external assessment processes and/or the validity of certificates.

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

- The assessment process;
- The integrity of a regulated qualification;
- The validity of a result or certificate;
- The reputation and credibility of Linton Training or,
- The qualification of the wider qualifications community.

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.

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

Definition of Maladministration

Maladministration is essentially any activity or practice which results on non compliance with administrative regulations and requirements and includes the application or persistent mistakes or poor administration.

Examples of Maladministration

- Persistent failure to adhere to our earner registration and certification procedures
- Persistent failure to adhere to our centre recognition and/or qualification requirements and/or associated actions assigned to the centre
- Late learner registrations (both infrequent and persistent)
- Unreasonable delays in responding to requests and/or communications from AoL
- Inaccurate claim for certificates
- Failure to maintain appropriate auditable records, e.g. certification claims and/or forgery of evidence
- Withholding of information, by deliberate act or omission, from us which is required to assure active

Examples of Malpractice

- Failure to carry out internal assessment, internal moderation or internal verification in accordance with our requirements
- Deliberate failure to adhere to our learner registration and certification procedures
- Deliberate failure to continually adhere to our centre recognition and/or qualification approval requirements or actions assigned to your centre
- Deliberate failure to maintain appropriate auditable records, e.g. certification claims and/or forgery of evidence
- Fraudulent claim(s) for certificates
- Intentional withholding of information from us which is critical to maintaining the rigour of quality assurance and standards of qualifications
- Collusion of permitting collusion in exams/assessments
- Learners still working towards qualification after certification claims have been made
- Plagiarism by learners/staff
- Copying from another learner (including using ICT to do so)

Process for making an allegation of malpractice/maladministration

Anybody who identifies or is made aware of suspected or actual cases of malpractice or maladministration at any time must immediately notify Rhys Linton, Operations Manager. In doing so they should put them in writing/email and enclose supporting evidence.

An allegation must include (where possible):

- Learner's name and Linton Training registration number
- The Linton Training staff members name and job role – if they are involved
- Details of the course/qualification affected or nature of the service affected
- Nature of suspected or actual malpractice and associated dates, details and outcome of any initial investigation carried out by the centre or anybody else involved in the case, including any mitigating circumstances.

The Operations Manager or his appointed representative will then complete an initial investigation prior to ensure that staff involved in the initial investigation are competent and have no personal interest in the outcome of the investigation.

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

Confidentiality and whistle blowing

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; however if you are concerned about possible adverse consequences you may request that the directors do not divulge your identity.

Responsibility for the investigation

In accordance with regulatory requirements all suspected cases of maladministration and malpractice will be examined by Linton Training to establish if malpractice or maladministration has occurred and will take all reasonable steps to prevent any adverse effect from the occurrence as defined by Ofqual.

We will acknowledge receipt, as appropriate, to external parties with 48 hours.

Our CEO, Martyn Linton 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, review any supporting evidence received or gathered by Linton Training.

Notifying relevant parties

Where applicable, our CEO will inform the appropriate regulatory authorities 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.

Where the allegation may affect another awarding organisation and their provision we will also inform them in accordance with the regulatory requirements and obligations imposed by the regulator Ofqual. If we do not know the details of organisations that might be affected we will ask Ofqual to help us identify relevant parties that should be informed.

Investigation timelines and summary process

We aim to action and resolve all stages of the investigation within ten working days of receipt of the allegation.

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

- To establish the facts relating to allegations/complaints in order to determine whether any irregularities have occurred
- To identify the cause of the irregularities and those involved
- To establish the scale of the irregularities
- To evaluate any action already taken
- To determine whether remedial action is required to reduce the risk to current registered learners and to preserve the integrity of Linton Training and the qualification
- 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:

- Ensure all material collected as part of an investigation is kept secure
- If an investigation leads to the 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

- Expect all parties, who are either directly or indirectly involved in the investigation to fully cooperate with us

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.

Where a member of Linton Training staff or an associate is under investigation we may suspend them or move them to other duties until the investigation is complete.

Throughout the investigation our CEO 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 informed relevant external parties.

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:

- Identify where the breach, if any, has occurred
- Confirm the facts of the case
- Identify who is responsible for the breach, if any
- Confirm the appropriate level of remedial action to be applied

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

If it is 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 ten 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 an other legal duty.

If it is an internal investigation against a member of our staff the report will be agreed by the CEO along with any 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 in order to:

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

The action we may take may include:

- Imposing actions in order to address the instance of malpractice/maladministration and to prevent it from reoccurring
- In cases where certificates are deemed to be invalid, informing the awarding organisation concerned and the regulatory authorities why they are invalid and any action to be taken for

- reassessment and/or the withdrawal of the certificates
- Informing relevant third parties (e.g. funding bodies) of our findings in case they need to take relevant action in relation to the centre

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 Linton Training.

In addition the CEO will record any lessons learned from the investigation and pass these on to relevant internal colleagues to help prevent the same instance or malpractice or maladministration from reoccurring.

If the relevant party (ies) wish to appeal against our decision to impose sanctions please refer to our Complaints Procedure.

Martyn Linton
CEO
Linton Utilities UK Ltd t/a Linton Training
10/09/2024