



MALPRACTICE, MALADMINISTRATION & PLAGIARISM (INCLUDING THE USE OF AI) POLICY

Date Last Reviewed	December 2025
Date Effective From	6th January 2026
Date of Next Planned Review	December 2026
Signed	Natalie King, Managing Director

This document covers Malpractice, Maladministration and Plagiarism (including the use of Artificial Intelligence). This policy applies to AccXel staff, contractors, and learners.

Maladministration:

Maladministration is an activity or practice that results from non-compliance with regulations and includes the application of persistent mistakes or poor administration. To maintain quality assurance the lead Internal Quality Assessor (IQA) should include qualification administration within the standardisation process. Registration and completion are verifiable and will be included in sampling plans. Certification claims will be confirmed as an agenda item at standardisation meetings.

Examples of Maladministration that may occur are listed below, this list is not exhaustive.

- Inappropriate learner record
- Results of exams being incorrectly recorded

- Feedback forms not being securely filed
- Inaccurate claim of results and certificates

Where incidents of maladministration are identified any ongoing processes associated will be suspended immediately and if necessary, the Awarding Organisation (AO) informed. The Managing Director will lead a thorough investigation to determine the impact of the incident. Corrective measures will be taken. Where required this investigation will be led by the AO. In such cases AccXel will cooperate with all requests and work openly with the relevant AO. The investigation will determine where the process has failed and decide how to resolve the situation. This may include retraining or a complete overhaul of administration procedures. The Managing Director will provide a full report on conclusion of the investigation.

Proven maladministration may result in:

- Loss of accreditation
- Centre suspension
- Invalidity of certificates
- Disciplinary procedures for responsible members of staff
- Loss of reputation
- Possible legal action

Malpractice:

Malpractice is an activity or practice that is dishonest or fraudulent. As a result, the integrity of exams, assessments or processes within the organisation are compromised and question the validity of certificates and competency of completed learners.

Examples of Malpractice that may occur are listed below, this list is not exhaustive.

- Certificates being claimed before qualification requirements are met
- Inappropriate support during an examination
- Bribery
- Submission of false information
- Falsifying assessment records
- Fictitious evidence from either assessor or learner

On receiving an accusation of malpractice, the Managing Director will, immediately, assess the validity of the complaint and investigate the allegation. All associated learners and members of staff will be

interviewed, and relative documentation scrutinised. Where applicable the AO will be informed in which case AccXel will give full cooperation. The Managing Director will provide a full report on conclusion of the investigation. This report will form the basis of any disciplinary action.

Proven malpractice may result in:

- Loss of accreditation
- Centre suspension
- Invalidity of certificates
- Disciplinary procedures for responsible members of staff
- Learners being removed from learning
- Possible legal action

Plagiarism (including use of Artificial Intelligence):

Plagiarism can be defined as attempting to pass off other people's work and ideas as your own. This can include copying from another learner, copying from books or the internet, paraphrasing the work of other people without reference or subcontracting the work to someone else.

In accordance with JCQ General Regulations for Approved Centres, all work submitted for qualification assessments must be the students' own work.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) poses a new threat in our attempts to avoid cases of plagiarism and malpractice. Whether we like it or not, AI is here to stay, and educational establishments need to consider how they can best manage this application of technology in a way which can enhance the range of teaching and learning strategies without risking the authenticity of students' work and potential investigations leading to sanctions.

Appropriate uses of AI:

When used appropriately, AI can be a powerful tool for learning, but it is important that tutors explain appropriate uses of AI at the outset of each course to avoid confusion.

AI chatbots, such as ChatGPT, can complete tasks such as the following:

- Analysing, improving, and summarising text
- Translating text from one language to another

- Generating new ideas, prompts, or suggestions for a given topic or theme
- Generating text with specific attributes, such as tone, sentiment, or formality

Clearly, some of these applications could be helpful to students to help complete their work, but they must be shown how to use these tools appropriately in line with the specific regulations for each qualification. AI tools must only be used when the assessment permits the use of the internet.

While AI may become an established tool at the workplace in the future, for the purposes of demonstrating knowledge, understanding and skills for qualifications, it is important for students' progression that they do not rely on tools such as AI. For this reason, students should be taught and encouraged to develop the knowledge, skills and understanding of the subjects they are studying, but they must be guided to make sure they are using AI appropriately to assist their learning. It is not a shortcut to developing skills or acquiring knowledge.

Any use of AI which means students have not independently demonstrated their own attainment is likely to be considered malpractice.

Where AI tools have been used as a source of information, students must use references to show the name of the AI source used and the date the content was generated. For example: ChatGPT 3.5 (<https://openai.com/blog/chatgpt/>), 30/04/2024.

To support their work, the student should retain a copy of the computer-generated content for reference and authentication purposes as a screenshot and provide a brief explanation of how it has been used. This must be submitted with the work so the tutor/assessor is able to review how the AI-generated content has been used. Where this is not submitted, and the tutor/assessor suspects that the student has used AI tools, the tutor/assessor will need to consult this policy for appropriate next steps and should take action to assure themselves that the work is the student's own (see below).

Why plagiarism/ misuse of AI is wrong:

As well as running the risk of malpractice investigations and potentially harming the integrity of student work if used inappropriately, AI chatbots often produce answers which may seem convincing but contain incorrect or biased information. Some AI chatbots have been identified as providing dangerous and harmful answers to questions and some can also produce fake references to books/articles by real or fake people.

- Copying or paraphrasing sections of AI-generated content prevents students from being able to demonstrate clear understanding of the subject content.

- Using AI to complete parts of the assessment will prevent students from being able to explore important elements of the work they are undertaking and will make it very hard for them to provide analysis, evaluation or calculations to show how their learning has developed as they complete their work.
- Failing to acknowledge use of AI tools when they have been used as a source of information will prevent students from being able to demonstrate their ability to conduct meaningful research, which is often one of the assessment criteria.
- Submitting work with intentionally incomplete or misleading references or bibliographies will prevent students from being able to demonstrate and evaluate the full range of secondary sources they have used to complete their work.

Challenging the culture of plagiarism:

AccXel communicates with learners and employers and parents (if applicable) to make them aware of the risks and issues and ensure they support the centre's approach to avoiding cases of malpractice in order to convey the importance of students submitting their own independent work for assessments and outline to students/employers/parents the risks of malpractice and the potential sanctions.

Departments should:

- share procedures regarding investigation into suspected cases of plagiarism and other forms of academic misconduct.
- explain at induction what is meant by 'plagiarism' and how it will be monitored and policed.
- explain, at an early stage of the course, the concepts of individual ownership of ideas and words, the ownership of electronic material and the difference between 'intellectual property' and 'common knowledge'.
- provide instruction in study skills, research skills, writing skills, time management skills and the use of a suitable referencing system to record and cite sources correctly.
- insist upon the use of referencing bibliographies from day one.
- act as a team, with every tutor and assessor rigorously applying AccXel procedures on referencing and bibliographies.
- avoid the use of highly generic assignments and, instead, produce contextualised tasks that require the learner to research in depth and individually analyse and evaluate their findings.
- include a coversheet with authenticity statement with every assignment.

Learners must sign and date the authenticity statement to acknowledge that the work produced is their own and that they understand the penalties that will be imposed on learners who do submit plagiarised work. It is important that this statement of authenticity must be signed only once the assignment has been completed and submitted for assessment.

For this reason, all teachers should provide students with a clear guide to plagiarism and use of AI and get learners at the start of the course to sign and date this and stick it in their books to recognise that they are aware of the rules and the sanctions if those rules are not properly adhered to (see Appendix A).

Measures to detect plagiarism:

The expertise of individual tutors and assessors is the best safeguard against plagiarism, supported by appropriate technology where available.

Check learner work for:

- the use of unfamiliar words
- grammar and syntax of a standard far higher than that demonstrated previously
- a discontinuous rise in the quality and accuracy of the learner's work
- the use of texts familiar to the assessor, but without appropriate referencing
- the use of American spellings and unfamiliar product names

Teachers/ assessors might also:

- build a spoken element into the assessment process, wherever appropriate, to check on understanding (eg viva voce, presentation with questions)
- ask learners to elaborate on suspect passages within their work.
- type a few selected phrases into a search engine such as Google: simple but effective.
- employ a sophisticated electronic plagiarism detection device such as 'Turnitin' or through 'Google Classroom Originality Reports' or other platforms.
- be familiar with the more widely used 'essay banks/ghost writing services' to be found on the internet.
- pay particular attention to those learners who perform well in coursework but much less well in examinations and tests.
- share concerns with colleagues. If everyone has the same suspicions about a particular learner, it will seem appropriate to apply rigorous checks to all their work.

Investigating suspected plagiarism:

Where teachers or support staff have doubts about the authenticity of student work submitted for assessment (for example, they suspect that parts of it have been generated by AI but this has not been acknowledged), they must investigate and take appropriate action.

The malpractice sanctions available for the offences of 'making a false declaration of authenticity' and 'plagiarism' include disqualification and debarment from taking qualifications. Students' marks may also be affected if they have relied on AI to complete an assessment and, as noted above, the attainment that they have demonstrated in relation to the requirements of the qualification does not accurately reflect their own work.

Ultimately the Principal has the responsibility for ensuring that students do not submit inauthentic work. If suspicions of malpractice are confirmed before the student has signed the declaration of authentication, AccXel will investigate internally and appropriate action will need to be taken proportionate to the offence, including reporting to the AO, if necessary. Tutors must not accept work which is not the student's own.

Possible Actions:

Where there are concerns about the authenticity of student work, two teachers will be required to investigate whether any breaches have taken place, which can either be two teachers within the department concerned, or a teacher and the IQA or Learning Coach. Once a decision has been reached, the student and their parents/carers must be notified, and the matter logged and reported to a member of the school's Senior Leadership Team. If malpractice is confirmed, the learner's work must not be submitted, and they will be required to complete the work at a later date. They may also be liable to additional fees that might be incurred due to the late entry of their work, if relevant.

If AI misuse or plagiarism is detected or suspected by the centre after the declaration of authentication has been signed, the case must be reported to the relevant awarding organisation as outlined in the JCQ Suspected Malpractice: Policies and Procedures (<https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/malpractice/>). Students will need to be referred to all relevant JCQ guidelines.

For this reason, it is imperative that teachers remind learners upon completion of the assignment but prior to signing the declaration sheet that the work submitted must comply with the stated regulations as the sanctions will be more severe.

Cases of suspected malpractice should be investigated promptly to ensure that the work of all learners is submitted as a matter of urgency prior to published deadlines. Students must be cautioned about the potential sanctions they are facing and interviewed to try to uncover the facts. Investigators should seek to clarify whether the learner understands the rules and allow them the opportunity to justify the inclusion of suspicious content. This should include some or all of the methods outlined previously, such as asking them to explain specific concepts or phrases they have used in their work to determine whether or not the submitted work is indeed their own work in line with the stated regulations.

In cases where the investigation involves work completed prior to the signing of the declaration sheet, once students and parents have been notified of the decision made they should have the right to appeal the decision if they are not satisfied with the outcome. Again, this must be carried out in a timely manner as soon as possible so the learner is not unfairly affected if they have missed a submission deadline as a result of the investigation.

For provision of Higher Education Programmes (accredited by Pearson), this Policy will be interpreted in line with Pearson's Malpractice and Maladministration Policy that can be found here: [centre-guidance-malpractice-maladministration.pdf \(pearson.com\)](https://www.pearson.com/centre-guidance-malpractice-maladministration.pdf) together with the JCQ guidance that can be found here: [Gen_regs_approved_centres_22-23_FINAL-1.pdf \(jqc.org.uk\)](https://www.jcq.org.uk/gen_regs_approved_centres_22-23_FINAL-1.pdf)

This policy has been agreed by the AccXel senior management team and agreed. It will be reviewed every year or after significant changes to AccXel's business or staff.

Signed:

Natalie King

Date: 06/01/2026