



# Malpractice Policy (Exams) 2026-27

Unity Academy Blackpool

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|----------------------------|-------------------------|
| Centre name                | Unity Academy Blackpool |
| Centre number              | 46427                   |
| Date policy first created  | 04/12/2024              |
| Current policy approved by | Chris Drew              |
| Current policy reviewed by | Gareth Wright           |
| Date of review             | 08/09/2026              |
| Date of next review        | 19/11/2027              |

## Key staff involved in the policy

| Role             | Name          |
|------------------|---------------|
| Head of centre   | Chris Drew    |
| Senior leader(s) | Rebecca Lemar |
| Exams officer    | Gareth Wright |

This policy is reviewed and updated annually to ensure that any malpractice at Unity Academy Blackpool is managed in accordance with current requirements and regulations.

Reference in the policy to **GR** and **SMPP** relate to relevant sections of the current JCQ documents **General Regulations for Approved Centres** and **Suspected Malpractice: Policies and Procedures**.

## Introduction

### What is malpractice and maladministration?

‘Malpractice’ and ‘maladministration’ are related concepts, the common theme being that they involve a failure to follow the rules of an examination or assessment. This policy and procedure uses the word ‘malpractice’ to cover both ‘malpractice’ and ‘maladministration’ and it means 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 (SMPP 1)

### Candidate malpractice

‘Candidate malpractice’ normally involves malpractice by a candidate in connection with any examination or assessment, including the preparation and authentication of any controlled assessments, coursework or non examination assessments, the presentation of any practical work, the compilation of portfolios of assessment evidence and the completion of any examination. (SMPP 2)

### Centre staff malpractice

‘Centre staff malpractice’ means malpractice committed by:

- a member of staff, contractor (whether employed under a contract of employment or a contract for services) or a volunteer at a centre, or
- an individual appointed in another capacity by a centre such as an invigilator, a Communication Professional, a Language Modifier, a practical assistant, a prompter, a reader or a scribe (SMPP 2)

### Suspected malpractice

For the purposes of this document, suspected malpractice means all alleged or suspected incidents of malpractice (regardless of how the incident might be categorised, as described in SMPP, section 19). (SMPP 2)

## Purpose of the policy

To confirm Unity Academy Blackpool:

- has in place for inspection that must be reviewed and updated annually, a written malpractice policy which covers all qualifications delivered by the centre detailing how candidates are informed and advised to avoid committing malpractice in examinations/assessments, how suspected malpractice issues should be escalated within the centre and reported to the relevant awarding body; it must also acknowledge the use of AI (e.g. what AI is, when it may be used and how it should be acknowledged, the risks of using AI, what AI misuse is and how this will be treated as malpractice) (GR 5.3)

## General principles

In accordance with the regulations Unity Academy Blackpool will:

- take all reasonable steps to prevent the occurrence of any malpractice (which includes maladministration) before, during and after assessments have taken place (GR 5.11)
- inform the awarding body **immediately** of any alleged, suspected or actual incidents of malpractice or maladministration, involving a candidate or a member of staff, by completing the appropriate documentation (GR 5.11)
- as required by an awarding body, gather evidence of any instances of alleged or suspected malpractice (which includes maladministration) in accordance with the current JCQ document **Suspected Malpractice - Policies and Procedures** and provide such information and advice as the awarding body may reasonably require (GR 5.11)

## Preventing malpractice

Unity Academy Blackpool has robust processes to prevent and identify malpractice, as outlined in section 3 of the JCQ document **Suspected Malpractice: Policies and Procedures**. (SMPP 4.3) This includes ensuring that staff involved in the delivery of assessments and examinations understand the requirements for conducting these as specified in the following JCQ documents and any further awarding body guidance:

- General Regulations for Approved Centres 2026-2027
- Instructions for conducting examinations (ICE) 2026-2027
- Instructions for conducting coursework 2026-2027
- Instructions for conducting non-examination assessments 2026-2027
- Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments 2026-2027
- A guide to the special consideration process 2026-2027
- Suspected Malpractice: Policies and Procedures 2026-2027
- Plagiarism in Assessments
- AI Use in Assessments: Protecting the Integrity of Qualifications
- Post Results Services 2026-2027
- A guide to the awarding bodies' appeals processes 2026-2027

(SMPP 3.3.1)

Additional information:

### Informing and advising candidates how to avoid committing malpractice in examinations/assessments

Candidates are routinely informed and advised to avoid committing malpractice in examinations/assessments during year group assemblies in preparation for mock and external exams. These are conducted by the senior leader with oversight of exams/assessments, a member of the exams office and the Head of Year. Advice for candidates about malpractice is also included in the candidate handbook which is distributed to candidates in the spring term.

### AI use in assessments

Unity Academy Blackpool provides the JCQ guidance for Teachers and Assessors - 'AI Use in Assessments: Protecting the Integrity of Qualifications' to all centre staff to ensure the consequences of AI misuse are understood and prevented wherever possible. Students complete their exams and assessments under close staff supervision with limited access to authorised materials and no unauthorised access to the internet. There are some assessments in which access to the internet is permitted in the preparatory, research or production stages, the majority of which are Non-Examined Assessments (NEAs), coursework and internal assessments for General Qualifications (GQs) and Vocational and Technical Qualifications (VTQs). The minimal internet access during assessments should stop the temptation to use AI but Unity Academy Blackpool recognises AI can also be used offline. Staff are trained to be able to recognise AI generated responses compared to authentic student responses and the process for reporting this is understood across the centre.

## Identification and reporting of malpractice

### Escalating suspected malpractice issues

Once suspected malpractice is identified, any member of staff at the centre can report it using the appropriate channels. (SMPP 4.3)

Centre staff who have identified malpractice (typically an invigilator or member of teaching staff) should report the incident to the Exams Officer. This will then be escalated to the senior leadership team member with oversight of Exams and the Head of Centre.

### Reporting suspected malpractice to the awarding body

- The head of centre will notify the appropriate awarding body immediately of all alleged, suspected or actual incidents of malpractice, using the appropriate forms, and will conduct any investigation and gathering of information in accordance with the requirements of the JCQ document **Suspected Malpractice: Policies and Procedures** (SMPP 4.1.3)
- The head of centre will ensure that, where a candidate is a child or an adult at risk and is the subject of a malpractice investigation, the candidate's parent/carer/ appropriate adult is kept informed of the progress of the investigation (SMPP 4.1.3)
- Form JCQ/M1 will be used to notify an awarding body of an incident of candidate malpractice. Form JCQ/M2a will be used to notify an awarding body of an incident of suspected staff malpractice/maladministration prior to an investigation, or Form JCQ/M2b where an investigation has already been conducted by the centre (SMPP 4.4, 4.6).
- Malpractice by a candidate discovered in a controlled assessment, coursework or non- examination assessment component prior to the candidate signing the declaration of authentication does not need to be reported to the awarding body but will be dealt with in accordance with the centre's internal procedures. The only exception to this is where the awarding body's confidential assessment material has potentially been breached. The breach will be reported to the awarding body immediately (SMPP 4.5)
- If, in the view of the investigator, there is sufficient evidence to implicate an individual in malpractice, that individual (the candidate or the member of staff) will be informed of the rights of accused individuals (SMPP 5.33)
- Once the information gathering has concluded, the head of centre (or other appointed information gatherer) will submit a written report summarising the information obtained and actions taken to the relevant awarding body, accompanied by the information obtained during the course of their enquiries (5.35)
- Form JCQ/M1 will be used when reporting candidate cases; for centre staff, form JCQ/M3 will be used (SMPP 5.37)
- The awarding body will decide on the basis of the report, and any supporting documentation, whether there is evidence of malpractice and if any further investigation is required. The head of centre will be informed accordingly (SMPP 5.40)
- Where suspected staff malpractice involves concerns regarding staff conduct or potential safeguarding risks, reporting procedures will align with the centre's Whistleblowing Policy, Staff Code of Conduct, and Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

## Communicating malpractice decisions

Once a decision has been made, it will be communicated in writing to the head of centre as soon as possible. The head of centre will communicate the decision to the individuals concerned and pass on details of any sanctions and action in cases where this is indicated. The head of centre will also inform the individuals if they have the right to appeal. (SMPP 11.1)

## Appeals against decisions made in cases of malpractice

Unity Academy Blackpool will:

- Provide the individual with information on the process and timeframe for submitting an appeal, where relevant

- Refer to further information and follow the process provided in the JCQ document **A guide to the awarding bodies' appeals processes**

## **Changes 2026/2027**

(Changed): Updated named postholders to reflect current leadership, incorporating the new Head of Centre Chris Drew and the new Exams Officer to Gareth Wright.

(Changed): Updated all JCQ publication year references throughout Section 3/Preventing Malpractice to reflect the 2026/2027 academic year.

(Changed): Updated staff malpractice reporting form references to reflect JCQ forms M2a (notification) and M2b (investigation report).

(Added): Explicitly cross-referenced internal escalation routes for staff malpractice with the centre's Whistleblowing and Child Protection and Safeguarding policies.

## **Centre-specific changes**

Upon review in 2026, no centre-specific updates or changes were applicable to this document.