

Academic Misconduct and Malpractice Policy

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1. Background

Scope of this document

1.1. This document is aimed to provide information regarding process and procedures of management of academic misconduct/malpractice and maladministration instances at BEG. This policy is created with regard to our Risk Assessment and Management Policy.

1.2. Academic Misconduct is a matter for learners and staff together. This policy provides the basis for quality enhancement process to ensure investigation of any potential or occurred academic misconduct/malpractice and maladministration. This policy will be applicable to all staff and learners on all learning programmes.

1.3. This policy will also provide guidance to learners, staff, trainers, and assessors on the appropriate use of Artificial Intelligence (AI Technology) tools in the academic sector, as well as what to do if a learner is suspected of using AI Technology without acknowledgement of its usage, in line with the Use of AI Policy.

1.4. This policy ensures that learners' plagiarism or cheating is managed in accordance with the Academic Misconduct policy, while minimising the impact on the organisation's reputation and goods.

Related Documents

1.5. Following documents will provide a better understanding of this policy existence and its connection with our approach towards management of the risks.

- i. Risk Assessment and Management Policy
- ii. Assessment & Internal Quality Assurance Strategy and Policy
- iii. Use of AI Policy
- iv. Learner Handbook
- v. Conflict of Interest Policy
- vi. Adverse Effect Management Policy
- vii. Anti Fraud Policy
- viii. Complaints Policy
- ix. Whistle Blowing Policy

Review of this document

1.6. The policy will be reviewed annually, with possible mid-year updating in case of any new adverse effect causing the change in controls.

2. Governing Principles for Academic Misconduct/Malpractice at BEG

2.1. BEG is dedicated to upholding standards of ethics in every aspect of our

company's operations, including the use of AI. All stakeholders are expected to familiarise themselves with and adhere to this policy to ensure the highest standards of integrity within our educational environment. Our approach to academic misconduct is guided by the following principles:

Transparency

2.2. At BEG, all stakeholders must carry out practices in a transparent manner, including designing the assessments and generating AI-assisted responses. Learners must ensure to collect information, analyse data, or generate insights from reliable resources that will help shape the design and structure of the assignment.

Accountability

2.3. Stakeholders must act with professionalism and maintain the integrity of the information by avoiding any form of plagiarism or unethical use of AI-generated content. They will be held accountable for any intentional and potential harm or misuse of AI tools.

Reliability

2.4. Stakeholders must ensure that the results are cross-checked, the underlying data is analysed, and there is alignment with the subject matter and learning objectives. When using AI, use critical thinking skills and your own knowledge to assess the relevance, accuracy, and appropriateness of AI-generated material.

3. Key Terminologies

Academic Misconduct/Malpractice

3.1. Academic misconduct undermine the values of BEG and compromise the integrity of the educational process. All learners are also expected to maintain discipline and respect the policies set by BEG. Any breach of such policies or breach of respect for others will also be counted as misconduct.

3.2. Malpractice is defined as an activity or deliberate breach which compromises the professional values and regulations of quality assurance, assessment or certification and consequently damages the reputation of awarding organisation(s). With regards to BEG's scope of work, malpractice compromises the validity of assessment and regulated qualification.

3.3. BEG has a very strict approach towards malpractice since:

- i. This will cause prejudice to learners
- ii. This can cause harm to assessment process and integrity of a regulated qualification
- iii. This will decrease public confidence in qualifications

3.4. Malpractice is the major example of Adverse Effect, for which we have Adverse Effect Management Policy.

3.5. Malpractice includes a range of issues such as fraudulent activity (e.g. bribery) and conflict of interest. For these activities we have Anti Fraud Policy and Conflict of Interest policy respectively.

3.6. For the avoidance of duplicating information, we will not provide information again already given in the policies mentioned above.

Maladministration

3.7. Maladministration is known as an act of malpractice which compromises BEG 's compliance with awarding organisation's set rules and regulations, for example instances of poor administration or consistent mistakes etc..

3.8. In this policy, reference to malpractice will also be considered as instances of maladministration.

3.9. Please refer to Annex 1 for examples of academic misconduct, malpractice and maladministration.

4. BEG's response to malpractice

4.1. Instances of malpractice can be categorised into the below categories:

- i. Security breach (for example confidentiality breach)
- ii. Act of deception (for example, inaccurate certificate claims)
- iii. Unfair benefits to learners (including taking gifts from learners in exchange for favours)
- iv. Maladministration (Staff failure to adhere to following the set policies and procedures)
- v. Learner's malpractice (for example, academic misconduct)
- vi. Cheating or Collusion: Copying from the work of another Learner and use of AI tools to generate content for assignments on purpose in order to acquire an unfair advantage.
- vii. Plagiarism: Cut or copied and pasted materials from websites, copying material from a text book or journal and Use of AI-generated content without proper attribution or acknowledgement, presenting as one's own.
- viii. Data manipulation: Using misleading or falsified data intentionally to fit a desired outcome.

4.2. Following measures will be taken by BEG to minimise the risk of malpractice:

- i. Follow the risk-based approach for identification and management of malpractice and maladministration according to awarding organisation's regulations
- ii. Expect all staff and learners to be informed of the malpractice and maladministration policy and its possible outcomes
- iii. Legal agreements with awarding organisation (s) for liability if Adverse Effect occurs due to any act or omission
- iv. Declarations in place for Adverse Effect

- v. Regular training and guidance on prevention of malpractice

5. Malpractice within BEG

5.1. In case of malpractice in BEG, the concerned person should inform their line manager and Lead IQA as early as possible. No delay should occur in this regard and the reporting of the incident should be done within 24 hours of the event taking place. Lead IQA will notify the CEO within 24 hours of receiving the malpractice incident report. For further information, please refer to Section 8.

5.2. While investigating the matter, line manager and Lead IQA will stop or discontinue all activities which will make the situation worsen. For instance, if lead IQA has been involved in undisclosed conflict of interest, lead IQA will be removed from their position during the investigation of the matter.

5.3. Where you believe that a senior member such as Head of Educational Services is involved in the incident, line manager or Lead IQA should take the concern to CEO to regulate the investigation.

5.4. An action plan set by Lead IQA (or the CEO as described in 4.3) must be followed diligently within the agreed timelines.

5.5. The person involved in the investigation should also review the changes required in the policies or procedures and recommend their findings accordingly.

5.6. Relevant registers and risk assessments (for example risk register, register of interests etc.) should be updated accordingly.

6. Malpractice by learners

6.1. In case of malpractice by learners, investigation will be done by Lead IQA. Investigation will be carried out openly, in a transparent manner.

6.2. The learner will be notified about the malpractice in writing at the earliest possible. In case of proven malpractice by learners, possible consequences would be informed to learner.

6.3. Each incident of malpractice will be dealt individually based on the available information. Where you believe that there is clear evidence of malpractice, following sanctions will be applied:

- i. Informal warning will be given to the learner by tutor enlisting the consequences of malpractice
- ii. Formal written warning will be given to the learner with the indication of severe consequences in case of further instances of malpractice
- iii. A dismissal and withdrawal from the programme
- iv. The withdrawal of the award

7. What other steps BEG will take?

7.1. BEG will take the following additional steps to prevent malpractice and maladministration, also in consideration of BEG003.1 Use of AI Policy:

- i. Ensuring effective communication with staff to meet the learner needs
- ii. Arrangement of induction and training sessions to make the staff and learners aware of the policy
- iii. Adopting a balanced strategy, evaluating the risks and possible benefits. If ethical concerns make AI systems a significant threat to research and information exchange, they will be categorised as high risk.
- iv. Providing Training and Support for Teachers, Staff and Learners in AI Literacy to ensure their understanding of the consequences of AI-assisted cheating, emphasising the importance of academic integrity, ethical considerations, privacy concerns, and potential biases associated with AI technologies.
- v. Regularly update and modify assignments to prevent the reuse of AI-generated content.
- vi. Sanctions will be applied according to Student Handbook in case of proven malpractice
- vii. Arrangements in place required for protection of the learners impacted by the malpractice incident
- viii. Maintenance of the record of the reports of the incidents for three years

8. How we will ensure competence and independence of the investigation process?

8.1. BEG will ensure that individuals carrying out investigation should be adequately experienced, and competent irrespective of Malpractice within BEG (Section 4) and Malpractice by learners (Section 5).

8.2. Lead IQA will maintain the integrity of investigation process by ensuring that BEG members involved in investigation process should possess a clear knowledge of safeguarding, confidentiality, professional code of conduct, record keeping, data retention, malpractice and maladministration. They should also have experience in carrying out interviews, management of incidents, complaints handling including a comprehensive understanding on escalation of matters to third parties such as awarding bodies (where necessary).

8.3. For every malpractice or maladministration incident, Lead IQA will notify the Head of Educational Services within 24 hours of receiving the malpractice or maladministration report. All our senior members have at least 5 years of experience in the education and training sector particularly related to compliance issues. The CEO will appoint the person having relevant experience of dealing the circumstances.

8.4. Where you believe that there is an actual or perceived conflict of interest, reporting must be done and the person involved in conflict of interest should be removed. For further information, please refer to Conflict of Interest Policy.

8.5. All BEG members, including IQAs should work closely with Lead IQA and Head of Educational Services to deal with academic misconduct/malpractice or maladministration incidents. Both our Head of Educational Services and Lead IQA have at least five years of experience to deal with quality assurance and sector related issues.

8.6. The findings of the investigation (see Section 4 and 5) must be shared with the Head of Educational Services, who will take the CEO into confidence on whether or not further measures are required to be taken such as the ones listed in Section 6.

8.7. If the CEO or the Head of Educational Services believe at any point of investigation that the matter in hand is of such complexity or there is perceived conflict of interest that require an independent investigation, an independent investigator must be hired with relevant experience of dealing with the situation in hand.

9. Are you a witness to Malpractice at BEG?

9.1. If you are an external stakeholder to BEG (for example, learner or a member of public), you may want to initiate a complaint using Complaint Policy.

9.2. Where you believe that your complaint has been ignored or the matter is of urgent nature, you can refer to Whistle Blowing policy.

9.3. For any urgent enquiries or notifications, please send an email to support@britanniaeducationgroup.co.uk.

Annex 1 - Some common examples of malpractice and maladministration (the list is not exhaustive)

Academic Misconduct:

- ◆ Plagiarism by a learner
- ◆ Cheating or collusion by learner
- ◆ The use of artificial intelligence (AI), which is not properly cited
- ◆ Common practices of using AI tools for academic purposes:
 - ✓ To structure an assessment or response
 - ✓ To have a guidance on the information that should be included within a response
 - ✓ To seek information and ideas on the course information to complete the tasks required
 - ✓ To take guidance on where to find information
 - ✓ To clear any ambiguity on material that is difficult to comprehend
 - ✓ To proofread the academic documents
 - ✓ To draft feedback on the learner's responses

Malpractice:

- ◆ Breach of confidentiality
- ◆ Conflict of interest concealed
- ◆ Loss or theft of confidential assessment material
- ◆ Assessor/examiner providing assistance to the learner(s)
- ◆ Assessor/examiner allowing collusion
- ◆ Falsifying records
- ◆ Deleting records
- ◆ Maintaining insufficient records
- ◆ Claiming certificates for learners who have not fully met the requirements of the assessment
- ◆ BEG team member accepting gift in exchange of a favor

Maladministration:

- ◆ Continuous failure to adhere to the timely registration of learners
- ◆ Failure to comply with learner registration and certification requirements
- ◆ Failure to meet qualifying requirements and actions issued by awarding authorities
- ◆ Failure to cooperate with awarding organisation during an ongoing investigation
- ◆ Failure to assess learners' eligibility and ability to undertake the qualification
- ◆ Failure to take the inclusive needs of the learners into consideration, including failure to apply reasonable adjustments