Malpractice and Maladministration Policy

1. Introduction

ARCA / ATaC are Trade Associations delivering training and qualifications to members and non-members. The Associations' operate in the highly regulated field of vocational qualifications. We are an approved centre with CITB and RSPH Awarding Bodies and are committed to ensuring that all aspects of the delivery of these qualifications meet these Awarding Bodies standards for professionalism and integrity.

2. Definition

2.1. Definition – Malpractice (by centres/providers)

Malpractice is any activity or practice which deliberately contravenes procedures and regulations. It means that there are serious concerns about the integrity of the assessment or the validity of certificates we take it very seriously.

Examples of malpractice:

- Deliberate misuse of the Awarding Organisation logos by the ARCA / ATaC.
- Contravention of examination regulations by ARCA / ATaC.
- Falsification of documents.

2.2. Definition – Malpractice (by learners)

Malpractice is any activity or practice which deliberately contravenes procedures and regulations. It means that there are serious concerns about the integrity of the assessment or the validity of certificates we take it very seriously.

Examples of malpractice:

- Cheating of any nature by learners, including plagiarism
- Contravention of examination regulations by the learner
- Repeated maladministration (normally three consecutive incidents).

For specific guidance on plagiarism and cheating please see the ARCA - ATaC - Plagiarism, Collusion and Cheating Policy.

2.3. Definition – Maladministration

Maladministration is an activity or practice which results in non-compliance with regulations, but it's normally the result of a genuine mistake rather than any deliberate plan to gain an unfair advantage.

Examples of maladministration:

- Late registration of learners with awarding bodies
- Claiming certification for incorrect units

Staff and Candidates should take all reasonable steps to prevent malpractice and/or maladministration from occurring throughout the development, delivery and assessment of the Awarding Organisation's qualifications and programmes. For more general concerns or complaints please see the ARCA - ATaC - Complaints Policy.

3. Process

All staff have a responsibility to be aware of the serious nature of malpractice and maladministration. Such situations must be carefully managed to ensure that it does not impact on the standards of delivery of any qualification.

Senior Management will communicate the Policy to all training and administration staff as part of the Induction process.

All documented instances of malpractice or maladministration are to be reported via the Training Manager / Lead IQA as part of their Standardisation meetings.

When a potential malpractice or maladministration is identified, the individual and Line Manager should document this and the activities that must be avoided to prevent any further malpractice in the delivery of the qualification. The document should be signed by both parties and brought to the attention of the Lead IQA.

ARCA/ATaC Lead IQA must report all suspected or alleged cases of malpractice or maladministration straight away to the Quality Team at the appropriate Awarding Organisation. The Quality Team will appoint a lead independent investigator who will prepare a response within 30 days.

In cases where breaches have occurred due to maladministration rather than malpractice, the matter will be referred to the Quality Team and External Verifier to agree action to prevent any future occurrences.

The outcome will be communicated to the Senior Management team at ARCA/ATaC and other relevant parties no more than 10 days later. The report and any actions arising will be communicated to the Quality Team and the External Verifier.

4. Action

The Awarding Organisation Quality Management Team will oversee the investigation process and will ratify the outcome.

- If the investigation confirms that malpractice by a centre/provider has taken place, dependant on the gravity and scope, one or more of the following actions will be taken:
    - Disallowing all or part of a candidate(s) assessment evidence or marks
    - The candidate(s) certificates will not be issued, or previously issued invalid certificates for that candidate(s) will be withdrawn
    - No further registrations will be accepted for the candidate(s)
    - Your centre or provider risk rating will be reviewed which could lead to the suspension of registrations, suspension of certification or suspension of centre approval and/or qualification approval

- A report will be made to the relevant regulatory bodies and may be shared with other awarding organisations and/or other agencies such as funding bodies or the police
- Awarding Organisation membership may be withdrawn for the candidate(s)

If a candidate wishes to appeal against a decision to take action as recommended in the investigation report, they will be referred to the ARCA - ATaC – Appeals Policy.