

Malpractice Policy

1. Policy Statement

GSS are dedicated to the professionalism, quality, and integrity of our teaching and learning, and we are committed to assuring these standards, as well as those of industry and Awarding Body best practice, across all of our work. GSS take any suspected or actual case of malpractice very seriously, and will manage such cases, as per the detail contained in this policy.

The purpose of this policy is to set out the steps that GSS Staff and Learners are to follow when reporting suspected or actual cases of malpractice, as well as our responsibilities in dealing with such cases, and the procedures that are in place to mitigate against such occurrences of malpractice. It is also in place to review those processes which led to the suspected or actual case of malpractice and to support any investigations. GSS will act upon any reports of suspected or actual cases of malpractice we receive about activities of staff or Learners, which may affect the integrity of our training programmes and quality assurance systems.

This policy provides a comprehensive statement of the principles and processes that govern any potential occurrences of malpractice at GSS. It establishes principles, processes and good practice in all aspects of the management of Malpractice. It is, therefore, an essential reference point for Internal Verifiers, Quality Managers, Assessors, course teams and Learners.

2. Definition

Malpractice is essentially any activity or practice which deliberately contravenes regulations and compromises the integrity of the Assessment process and / or the validity of Certificates. For the purpose of this policy this term also covers professional misconduct.

The categories listed below are examples of centre and candidate malpractice. Please note that these examples are not exhaustive:

- Forgery of evidence / any documents
- Failure to maintain accurate and appropriate records
- Plagiarism of any nature by Learners
- Submission of false information to gain a proxy or a qualification
- Discriminatory, bullying or harassing behaviour
- Unprofessional conduct
- Behaviour likely to endanger the health or safety of the public

- Breach of confidentiality of Learners or Staff
- Failure to meet the awarding body or regulator's requirements
- Falsifying assessment records

3. Reporting Procedure

Anybody identifying cases of malpractice should report them to GSS Directors. GSS will investigate all cases of malpractice in liaison with the parties concerned. If an investigation finds evidence of maladministration, GSS will take the necessary steps to ensure that the Learners' interests are protected as far as is reasonably possible. This may include making arrangements for re-assessment. If the investigation reveals that certification is inappropriate we will have to take the necessary steps to revoke the certification in order to maintain the integrity and robustness of the qualification and Awarding Body.

Following contacting GSS Directors by telephone in the first instance, the reporter of malpractice should submit the information in writing and accompanied by supporting evidence. Written reports should include:

- The Learner's name / GSS Staff members name
- The title of the GSS programme affected or nature of the service affected
- The date(s) suspected malpractice occurred
- The full nature of the suspected malpractice

GSS Directors will acknowledge any report of malpractice within 3 working days of receipt and will arrange for appropriate staff to review the report and commence the investigation.

GSS aim to action and resolve all malpractice investigations within 14 days of receipt of the report and will communicate the outcome of the investigation within 2 working days of a decision being made.

4. Investigation Procedure

The investigation may typically involve:

- Review of evidence submitted
- A request for further information
- Interviews (face to face or by telephone) with Personnel / Learners involved
- Arranging a workplace visit
- Informing the Regulatory/Awarding body

GSS investigation staff commit to:

- Making informed decisions based on the evidence
- Protecting the identity of the 'informant' as required
- Sharing information with other external parties, as required, while adhering to data-protection regulations

5. Consequences for Learners

Any report that suggests reasonable grounds for suspicion that a Learner has committed or attempted to commit malpractice will be thoroughly investigated by GSS. Where a Learner is strongly suspected, a report will be made to the Awarding Body. Learners should be aware that Awarding Bodies may contact Police Authorities in serious cases and consider prosecution. In addition, Credits and Certificates previously achieved may be withdrawn and details of the offence may be passed to other Awarding Bodies.

Any Learner found to have committed malpractice following investigation will be withdrawn from the course and may be excluded from further enrolments at GSS.

6. Consequences for Staff

Any report that suggests reasonable grounds for suspicion that a member of Staff has committed or attempted to commit malpractice will be thoroughly investigated by GSS. Where a member of Staff is strongly suspected, a report will be made to the Awarding Body. Staff should be aware that Awarding Bodies may contact Police Authorities in serious cases and consider prosecution.

Any Staff member found to have committed malpractice following investigation will be withdrawn from teaching that course, and will be subject to GSS's disciplinary process, which may result in dismissal.

7. Malpractice Prevention Procedure

In order to mitigate against occurrences of malpractice GSS will:

- Communicate clearly at Learner and Staff Induction information explaining the possible consequences of malpractice
- Only use material produced at home as evidence for formal Assessment, at a point in the course when the style and capacity of individual Learners has become known to the Assessor, so that any anomalies in the level or style of working by a given Learner can be readily picked up by the Assessor
- Ensure that Staff engaged in Assessment also contribute regularly to Internal Verification and Standardisation events, where samples of assessed work are seen by more than one Staff member, and where samples are chosen randomly

- Systematically implement robust Internal Verification and Quality Review processes and procedures

8. Monitoring and Reviewing this Policy

This policy will be reviewed in response to changes in legislation and within the setting of awarding body requirements. As a minimum this policy will be reviewed annually and objectively and any changes made will be disseminated to all staff equally.



Signed
Sonia Benjamin-Leach (Director)
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