

Didac Malpractice & Maladministration

Introduction

Didac is committed to maintaining the integrity of our assessment process, qualifications, and certificates. This policy is designed to guide our customers, including learners registered on our programmes or courses, in how Didac deals with reports of malpractice/maladministration. It also serves as a guide for our staff to deal with malpractice and maladministration thoroughly and consistently.

Scope

This policy applies to all individuals involved in the management, assessment, and quality assurance of our qualifications and learners. It is crucial that everyone understands the risks posed by malpractice and maladministration and that we conduct ourselves properly and ethically in all our operations.

Responsibilities

The centre is responsible for ensuring that all staff and learners are fully aware of the contents of the policy and that arrangements are in place to prevent and investigate instances of malpractice and maladministration.

Management

Management is responsible for staying up to date with the risks associated with malpractice and maladministration. They are expected to ensure that all guidelines and policies are current and accurately reflect the regulatory requirements and best practices. Management should also foster an environment where adherence to these policies is the standard, and any deviations are promptly addressed.

Employees

All employees are required to adhere to this policy fully. They should be vigilant in their daily activities and immediately report any concerns or suspicions of malpractice or maladministration. This includes any malpractices they become aware of involving colleagues. Employees should understand that reporting such issues is crucial for maintaining the integrity of our assessment process, qualifications, and certificates and that making such reports will have no negative repercussions.

Definition of Malpractice

Malpractice is any activity or practice which deliberately contravenes regulations and compromises the integrity of the internal or external assessment process and/or the validity of certificates. It covers any deliberate actions, neglect, default or other practice that compromises or could compromise:

- The assessment process.
- The integrity of a regulated qualification
- The validity of a result or certificate
- The reputation and credibility of Didac
- The qualification or the wider qualifications community

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Malpractice may include various issues, from failing to maintain appropriate records or systems through to the deliberate falsification of records to claim certificates. This term also covers misconduct and forms of unnecessary discrimination or bias towards certain groups of learners.

Examples of malpractice include, but are not limited to:

- Failure to carry out initial assessment, internal moderation, or internal verification in accordance with requirements.
- Deliberate failure to adhere to learner registration and certification procedures.
- Deliberate failure to continually adhere to centre recognition and/or qualification approval requirements or actions assigned to your centre.
- Deliberate failure to maintain appropriate auditable records, e.g., certification claims and/or forgery of evidence.
- Fraudulent claim(s) for certificates
- Intentional withholding of information which is critical to maintaining the rigour of quality assurance and standards of qualifications.
- Collusion or permitting collusion in exams/assessments.
- Learners still working towards qualification after certification claims have been made.
- Plagiarism by learners/staff
- Copying from another learner (including using ICT to do so)

Definition of Maladministration

Maladministration is any activity or practice which results in non-compliance with administrative regulations and requirements and includes the application of persistent mistakes or poor administration.

Examples of maladministration include, but are not limited to:

- Persistent failure to adhere to our learner registration and certification procedures.
- Persistent failure to adhere to our centre recognition and/or qualification requirements and/or associated actions assigned to the centre.
- Late learner registrations (both infrequent and persistent)
- Unreasonable delays in responding to requests and/or communications from management, regulators, Awarding Organisations, or learners.
- Inaccurate claim for certificates
- Failure to maintain appropriate auditable records, e.g., certification claims and/or forgery of evidence.
- Withholding of information by deliberate act or omission

Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Malpractice/Maladministration

When used appropriately, AI technologies can enhance the learning experience and streamline administrative tasks. However, misuse of AI, such as using AI to cheat in assessments or using AI tools that are biased or discriminatory, is considered a form of malpractice or maladministration. Didac is committed to the ethical use of AI and will investigate any instances of AI-related malpractice or maladministration.

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Process for Making an Allegation of Malpractice or Maladministration

Any individual who identifies or is made aware of suspected or actual cases of malpractice or maladministration must immediately notify the Lead Quality Assurer. Allegations should be in writing, including email and include appropriate supporting evidence.

Investigation of Allegations

Upon receipt of an allegation, the Lead Quality Assurer will conduct an initial investigation to ensure that the investigation is carried out fairly, reasonably, and legally, ensuring that all relevant evidence is considered without bias. If the issue cannot be resolved at this level or if the allegation is of a serious nature, the case will be escalated to the Education Director.

The investigation process may include:

- Gathering and reviewing evidence related to the allegation. This could include documents, electronic records, CCTV footage, and interviews with the individuals involved.
- Evaluating the evidence and determining whether malpractice or maladministration has occurred.
- If malpractice or maladministration is confirmed, determining the severity of the incident and the impact on the integrity of the assessment process, qualifications, and certificates.
- Recommending appropriate action to prevent future occurrences and to rectify any damage caused by the incident.

Throughout the investigation, all parties involved are expected to cooperate fully. This includes providing complete and accurate information and not interfering with the investigation process. Failure to cooperate with the investigation may be considered a breach of this policy and may result in disciplinary action.

Please note that the investigation process is confidential. Information about the investigation will only be disclosed to those who need to know to carry out the investigation and take appropriate action. All information gathered during the investigation will be securely stored and only kept for as long as necessary per our data retention policy.

The outcome of the investigation will be communicated to the relevant parties once the investigation is complete. If the allegation is substantiated, we will take appropriate action, which may include disciplinary action in accordance with the company's disciplinary procedure, reporting the matter to relevant authorities, and taking steps to prevent future occurrences.

Investigation Outcomes

If the investigation confirms that malpractice or maladministration has taken place, we will take appropriate action to minimise the risk to the integrity of certification, maintain public confidence in the delivery and awarding of qualifications, discourage others from carrying out similar instances of malpractice or maladministration, and ensure there has been no gain from compromising our standards.

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Confidentiality and Whistleblowing

We are committed to protecting the identity of the 'informant' in accordance with our duty of confidentiality and/or any other legal duty. If the informant wishes to remain anonymous, we will respect this request.

Review & Monitoring

We will implement a process to audit our operations on a regular basis, including an evaluation of the safeguards in place to prevent malpractice and maladministration. This policy will be evaluated on a regular basis and may be updated as needed to ensure that it promotes the highest levels of corporate responsibility and ethical behaviour.

Version Control

Date	Section(s) amended	Brief Description	Author
30/05/2023	N/A	Policy complete rewrite	Gavin Lewis
05/07/2023	N/A	Formal review and adoption by Didac Board of Directors	