
Professional Futures Ltd

Malpractice and Maladministration Policy

Version Number – 5
Date published - July 2023
Written by Marie O'Donnell
Approved by Lynsey Heeks
Review Date - July 2026

Contents

1. Introduction	3
2. Malpractice by students	3
3. Malpractice by centre employees and stakeholders	4
4. Possible malpractice sanctions	5
5. Reporting a suspected case of malpractice	6
6. Administering suspected cases of malpractice	6
7. Confirming the Identity of Learners	7

Malpractice and Maladministration Policy

Professional Futures Ltd treats all cases of suspected malpractice* very seriously and will investigate all suspected and reported incidents of possible malpractice. The purpose of this procedure is to set out how allegations of malpractice in relation to all qualifications are dealt with. The scope of the procedure is to provide:

- a definition of malpractice
- examples of student and centre malpractice and maladministration;
- possible sanctions that may be imposed in cases of malpractice.

*The term 'malpractice' in this procedure is used for both malpractice and maladministration.

1. Introduction

1.1. For the purpose of this document 'malpractice' is defined as:

Any act, or failure to act, that threatens or compromises the integrity of the assessment process or the validity of qualifications and their certification. This includes: maladministration and the failure to maintain appropriate records or systems; the deliberate falsification of records or documents for any reason connected to the award of all qualifications; acts of plagiarism or other academic misconduct such as using AI software to generate answers to assignment questions; and/or actions that compromise the reputation or authority of *Professional Futures Ltd*, its employees, or of the awarding bodies we certificate through.

1.2. Professional Futures Ltd will report all relevant cases of suspected malpractice to the appropriate awarding body accepting that in certain circumstances they may take action of their own, including imposing sanctions.

2. Malpractice by students

2.1 Some examples of student/apprentice malpractice are described below. These examples are not exhaustive and all incidents of suspected malpractice, whether or not described below, will be fully investigated, where there are sufficient grounds to do so.

- 2.1.1 Obtaining examination or assessment material without authorisation.
- 2.1.2 Arranging for an individual other than the student/apprentice to sit an assessment or to submit an assignment not undertaken by the student.
- 2.1.3 Impersonating another student/apprentice to sit an assessment or to submit an assignment on their behalf.
- 2.1.4 Collaborating with another student/apprentice or individual, by any means, to complete a coursework assignment or assessment, unless it has been clearly stated that such collaboration is permitted.
- 2.1.5 Damaging another student's/apprentice's work.
- 2.1.6 Inclusion of inappropriate or offensive material in coursework assignments or assessment scripts.
- 2.1.7 Disruptive behaviour or unacceptable conduct, including the use of offensive language, at centre or assessment venue (including aggressive or offensive language or behaviour).
- 2.1.8 Producing, using or allowing the use of forged or falsified documentation, including but not limited to:

Malpractice and Maladministration Policy

- a) personal identification;
 - b) supporting evidence provided for reasonable adjustment or special consideration applications; and
 - c) awarding body results documentation, including certificates.
- 2.1.9 Falsely obtaining, by any means, a qualification certificate.
- 2.1.10 Misrepresentation or plagiarism
- 2.1.11 Using AI (Artificial intelligence) software such as ChatGPT etc. Unless otherwise stated, PFL considers the use of AI tools in assessments to constitute malpractice, which is an academic offence under the this policy.
- 2.1.12 Fraudulent claims for special consideration while studying.

3. Malpractice by centre employees and stakeholders

Examples of malpractice by, teachers, tutors and other officers, are listed below. These examples are not exhaustive and all incidents of suspected malpractice, whether or not described below, will be fully investigated, where there are sufficient grounds to do so.

3.1 Generic Awarding Body Regulations

- Failure to adhere to the relevant regulations and procedures, including those relating to centre approval, security undertaking and monitoring requirements as set out by the awarding body.
- Knowingly allowing an individual to impersonate a student/apprentice.
- Allowing a student/apprentice to copy another student's/apprentice's assignment work, or allowing a student/aprentice to let their own work be copied.
- Allowing students/apprentices to work collaboratively during an assignment assessment, unless specified in the assignment brief.
- Completing an assessed assignment for a student/apprentice or providing them with assistance beyond that 'normally' expected.
- Damaging a student's/apprentices work.
- Disruptive behaviour or unacceptable conduct, including the use of offensive language (including aggressive or offensive language or behaviour).
- Allowing disruptive behaviour or unacceptable conduct at the centre to go unchallenged, for example, aggressive or offensive language or behaviour.
- Divulging any information relating to student performance and / or results to anyone other than the student/apprentice.

Producing, using or allowing the use of forged or falsified

- a) Personal identification;
 - b) Supporting evidence provided for reasonable adjustment or special consideration applications; and
 - c) Awarding body results documentation, including certificates
- Falsely obtaining by any means a qualification certificate.

Malpractice and Maladministration Policy

- Failing to report a suspected case of student malpractice, including plagiarism, to the awarding body

4. Possible malpractice sanctions

Following an investigation, if a case of malpractice is upheld, Professional Futures Ltd may impose sanctions or other penalties on the individual(s) concerned. Where relevant we will report the matter to the awarding body and they may impose one or more sanctions upon the individual(s) concerned. Any sanctions imposed will reflect the seriousness of the malpractice that has occurred.

Listed below are examples of sanctions that may be applied to a student/apprentice, or to a tutor or other officer who has had a case of malpractice upheld against them. Please note that

- i) this list is not exhaustive and other sanctions may be applied on a case-by-case basis.
- ii) where the malpractice affects examination performance, the awarding body may impose sanctions of its own.

Possible study centre sanctions that may be applied to students/apprentices

- a) A disciplinary formal warning.
- b) Notification to an employer, regulator or the police.
- c) Removal from the course.

Possible sanctions that may be applied to tutors and other officers

- a) Disciplinary proceedings including investigation, leading to potential sanctions including written warning, final written warning or dismissal.
- b) Imposition of special conditions for the future involvement of the individual(s) in the conduct, teaching, supervision or administration of students and/or examinations.
- c) Informing any other organisation known to employ the individual about the outcome of the case.
- d) Professional Futures Ltd may carry out unannounced monitoring of the working practices of the individual(s) concerned.

Malpractice and Maladministration Policy

Procedure

5. Reporting a suspected case of malpractice

This process applies to tutors, students/apprentices and other centre staff, and to any reporting of malpractice by a third party or individual who wishes to remain anonymous.

Any case of suspected malpractice should be reported in the first instance to the Director of Quality

A written report should then be sent to the Managing Director, clearly identifying the factual information, including statements from other individuals involved and / or affected, any evidence obtained, and the actions that have been taken in relation to the incident.

Suspected malpractice must be reported as soon as possible to the Quality Director and at the latest within two working days from its discovery.

Wherever possible, and provided other students/apprentices are not disrupted by doing so, a student/apprentice suspected of malpractice should be warned immediately that their actions may constitute malpractice, and that a report will be made to the centre.

In cases of suspected malpractice by centre tutors and other officers, and any reporting of malpractice by a third party or individual who wishes to remain anonymous, the report made to the Quality Director should include as much information as possible, including the following:

- a) the date time and place the alleged malpractice took place, if known.
- b) the name of the centre tutor or other person(s) involved
- c) a description of the suspected malpractice; and
- d) any available supporting evidence.

In cases of suspected malpractice reported by a third party, or an individual who wishes to remain anonymous *Professional Futures Ltd* will take all reasonable steps to authenticate the reported information and to investigate the alleged malpractice.

6. Administering suspected cases of malpractice

Professional Futures Ltd will investigate each case of suspected or reported malpractice relating to all qualifications, to ascertain whether malpractice has occurred. The investigation will aim to establish the full facts and circumstances. We will promptly take all reasonable steps to prevent any adverse effect that may arise as a result of the malpractice, or to mitigate any adverse effect, as far as possible, and to correct it to make sure that any action necessary to maintain the integrity of all qualifications and reputation is taken.

Professional Futures Ltd will acknowledge all reports of suspected malpractice within five working days. All of the parties involved in the case will then be contacted within 10 working days of receipt of the report detailing the suspected malpractice. We may also contact other individuals who may be able to provide evidence relevant to the case.

The individual(s) concerned will be informed of the following:

- a) that an investigation is going to take place, and the grounds for that investigation;
- b) details of all the relevant timescales, and dates, where known;

Malpractice and Maladministration Policy

- c) that they have a right to respond by providing a personal written response relating to the suspected malpractice (within 15 working days of the date of that letter);
- d) that, if malpractice is considered proven, sanctions may be imposed either by Professional Futures Ltd or by the awarding organisation, reflecting the seriousness of the case;
- e) that, if they are found guilty, they have the right to appeal.
- f) that Professional Futures Ltd has a duty to inform the awarding organisation and other relevant authorities/regulators, but only after time for the appeal has passed or the appeal process has been completed. This may also include informing the police if the law has been broken and to comply with any other appropriate legislation.

Where more than one individual is contacted regarding a case of suspected malpractice, for example in a case involving suspected collusion, we will contact each individual separately, and will not reveal personal data to any third party unless necessary for the purpose of the investigation.

The individual has a right to appeal against a malpractice outcome if they believe that the procedure or procedure has not been followed properly or has been implemented to their detriment.

Records of all malpractice cases and their outcomes are maintained by Professional Futures Ltd for a period of at least five years and are subject to regular monitoring and review.

7. Confirming the Identity of Learners

PFL will normally require one of the following forms of photographic identification to check the identity of each learner/apprentice. This will be checked either on induction day (for classroom courses) or the ID will be submitted with the enrolment form (for online courses).

Accepted documents are:

- valid current passport
- valid driver's licence