



UHI Shetland, University of the Highlands and Islands

Misconduct & Malpractice Policy
QA 003 PO

Lead Officer (Post):	Principal
Responsible Office/ Department:	SMG
Responsible Committee:	Academic Board
Review Officer (Post):	Depute Principal
Date policy approved:	01/08/2021
Date policy last reviewed and updated:	19/10/2023
Date policy due for review:	01/09/2026
Date of Equality Impact Assessment:	01/08/2021

Accessible versions of this policy are available upon request. Please contact the Student Engagement Officer on 01595 771206.

Policy Summary

Overview	To ensure high quality curriculum activity and a fair and open approach is adopted
Purpose	Ensure the safety and security of SQA or other awarding body assessment requirements.
Scope	All staff and students
Consultation	This policy is communicated by inclusion in all Student Handbooks and in the Staff Induction Process. Whenever this document is updated and approved by Quality Improvement Committee (QIC) all relevant staff will be informed and are responsible for familiarising themselves with the content
Implementation and Monitoring	Quality Improvement Committee
Impact Assessment	Equality Impact Assessment: 01/08/2021
	Privacy Impact Assessment: n/a

Introduction

The following definitions and guidance are taken from both the UHI's Academic Standards and Quality Regulations, and the SQA Quality Assurance Criteria for Advanced/Higher National and Vocational Qualifications which UHI Shetland has agreed to abide by.

This policy is communicated by inclusion in all Student Induction Brightspace areas and in the Staff and Student Induction Processes. Whenever this document is updated and approved by Quality Improvement Committee (QIC) all relevant staff will be informed and are responsible for familiarising themselves with the content.

Malpractice as defined within SQA/Awarding Body guidelines means any act, default or practice (whether deliberate or resulting from neglect or default) which is a breach of SQA or other awarding body assessment requirements including any act, default or practice which:

- compromises, attempts to compromise or may compromise, the process of assessment, the integrity of any SQA/Awarding body qualification, or the validity of a result or certificate; and/or
- damages the authority, reputation or credibility of SQA/Awarding Body or any officer, employee or agent of SQA/Awarding body.

Malpractice can arise for a variety of reasons:

- Some incidents are intentional and aim to give an unfair advantage or disadvantage in an examination or assessment (deliberate non-compliance);
- Some incidents arise due to ignorance of SQA/Awarding body requirements, carelessness or neglect in applying the requirements (maladministration).

Malpractice can include both maladministration in the assessment and delivery of SQA/Awarding Body qualifications and deliberate non-compliance with SQA/Awarding Body requirements. Any suspicions of Malpractice by Students or Staff should be reported to the Depute Principal who will be responsible for instigating an investigation in every instance, and ensuring the investigation and subsequent reporting is carried out in a timely manner.

Any suspected cases of centre malpractice relating to SQA/Awarding Body awards should be reported to the Depute Principal who will be responsible for reporting to SQA/Awarding Body. **This shall be done immediately upon a case being suspected; and no later than 48 hours.** In addition, for those qualifications that are subject to statutory regulation by SQA Accreditation, centres are required to report any suspected case of candidate malpractice to SQA/Awarding Body.

Student Malpractice

Academic malpractice by students will be taken to include plagiarism, cheating, collusion, falsification or fabrication, personation, or bribery as further defined below:

Plagiarism

The unacknowledged incorporation in a student's work either in an examination or assessment of material derived from the work (published or unpublished) of another.

Plagiarism may, therefore, include:

- The use of another person's material without reference or acknowledgement
- The summarising of another person's work by simply changing a few words or altering the order of presentation without acknowledgement
- The use of the ideas of another person without acknowledgement of the source
- Copying of the work of another student with or without that student's knowledge or agreement
- Use of commissioned material presented as the student's own.

For some specific modules / units, information and guidance relating to what may or may not constitute plagiarism will need to be made explicit to students in student handbooks or specific module / unit information. For example, use of mathematical formulae, principals or theories. The centres librarian will offer advice and, if available, will give a talk to students when they commence their studies.

Cheating

A student will be deemed to be cheating as a result of any of the following:

- Deliberately acquiring advanced knowledge of the detailed content of an examination or
- Obtaining a copy of an 'unseen' written examination paper in advance of the date and time for its authorised release
- Communicating with, or copying from, another candidate during an examination permitting another candidate to copy from his / her examination script
- Being found in possession of any printed, written or electronic material or unauthorised material during an examination which may contain information relevant to the subjects of the examination
- Communicating during an examination with any person other than a properly authorised invigilator or another authorised member of staff
- Copying from another candidate (including using ICT to do so)
- Using a mobile phone, MP3 player or any other unauthorised aid in an assessment/exam
- Undertaking any other action with the intention of gaining an unfair advantage over other candidates.

AI

AI technologies should only be used in line with the UHI policy [Generative Artificial Intelligence Policy \(uhi.ac.uk\)](https://www.shetland.uhi.ac.uk/policies/generative-artificial-intelligence-policy). The wording from UHI's cover page should be briefed at student induction: *UHI recognises that plagiarism, where deliberately engaged in, is unacceptable and is considered serious academic malpractice. Students are responsible for ensuring the work they submit is their own. Submission of information produced by Artificial Intelligence (AI) platforms, such as ChatGPT, is considered academic misconduct as this is not*

the student's own original work. If you have any queries, you should contact your Tutor or Student Adviser before submitting your assignment.

Collusion

Collusion may exist where a student:

- Working with others when an assessment must be completed by an individual student.
- Knowingly permits another student to copy all or part of his / her own work and to submit it as that student's own work (including using ICT to do so) and/or working collaboratively with other students on an individual task.

Falsification

- Falsification or fabrication of data: the presentation of data in laboratory reports, projects etc. based on work falsely presented as to have been carried out by the student; obtained by unfair means; or to present fictitious results.

Personation

- The assumption of one student of the identity of another person, or permitting himself / herself to be impersonated with the intent to deceive or gain unfair advantage.

Bribery

- The paying, offering or attempted exchange of an inducement for information or material intended to advantage the recipient in an assessment.

Other examples of Malpractice by a Student

- Inappropriate, offensive, discriminatory or obscene material in assessment/exam evidence.
- Inappropriate behaviour during an internal assessment that causes disruption to others. This includes shouting and/or aggressive behaviour or language.
- Frivolous content —producing content that is unrelated to the assessment
- Prohibited items – physical possession of prohibited materials (including mobile phones, electronic devices and handwritten notes etc) during a controlled assessment.
- Breaching the security of assessment materials in a way which threatens the integrity of any exam or assessment.

Prevention

During induction, students will be advised as to the difference between acceptable and unacceptable forms of work. Examples will be provided of expected standards (and methods) of referencing and students will be encouraged to develop study techniques which allow them clearly to identify sources used and ideas acknowledged. Warnings regarding academic malpractice should be repeated prior to submission deadlines for projects, coursework and dissertations. In addition, a copy of the academic disciplinary

policy and procedures, along with these guidelines, should be included in the student induction VLE area, with full policies and procedures made available for all students. The Student Induction Checklist is signed by the student to confirm receipt/understanding of this policy & procedure.

UHI subscribes to an externally hosted software program that may be used for originality checking, anonymous marking and peer review of students' text based work. The originality checking function assists staff in assessing instances of plagiarism. The programme leader will advise students if this service will be utilised. Students should also note that formal acknowledgement of acceptance of these regulations is included as part of the enrolment process (see UHI Admissions Regulations).

Student Guidelines

A student should:

- Complete their assigned work by themselves, in their own words and using their own notes, figures or rough workings (except where group work specifically forms part of the assignment).
- Acknowledge fully any sources used either by means of reference list or bibliography in a form acceptable to the programme being undertaken.
- Endeavour to ensure that their work is not available to copy by other students (with or without permission). Check with programme lecturer/tutor(s) if ever they are in any doubt concerning proper forms of referencing.

Centre/Staff Malpractice

Malpractice as defined within SQA/Awarding Body guidelines relates to any deliberate neglect, default, act or acts that *threatens the integrity of the examination or assessment process and / or the validity of certificates*, and breach the Awarding Body standards and assessment regulations by those of a candidate, Assessor, Internal verifier, or any other person involved in the candidate registration/assessment/certification process. Many cases of administrative maladministration are also considered malpractice.

Any suspected cases of centre malpractice should be reported to the Depute Principal who will be responsible for reporting to SQA/Awarding Body. **This shall be done immediately upon a case being suspected; and no later than 48 hours.**

The following are just some examples of malpractice by staff. These are not exhaustive and only intended for guidance:

- Unauthorised copying and distributing of assessment/exam papers prior to use.
- Assessors/invigilators providing unfair help and hints during an assessment/exam.
- Assessors/invigilators permitting collusion between candidates during an assessment/exam.
- Misuse of assessments, including repeated re-assessment contrary to requirements, or inappropriate adjustments to assessment decisions.
- Insecure storage of assessment instruments and marking guidance.
- Failure to comply with requirements for accurate and safe retention of candidate evidence, assessment and internal verification records.

- Excessive direction from assessors to candidates on how to meet national standards. *(Should not direct candidates to any specific response. For example, assessors should not provide specific advice on how to improve responses or provide model answers. The requirements of the assessment should be made clear to candidates at the outset. Assessors can clarify with candidates how to approach the assessment and generally guide candidates in producing their response. Assessors may also prompt candidates where appropriate to clarify that they have met the requirements)*
- Unfair marking/submission of results to gain a unit or qualification
- Deliberate falsification of records in order to claim certificates
- Failure of assessors/internal verifiers to follow Awarding Body requirements/regulations
- Failure of assessors/internal verifiers to declare a personal interest
- Failure to comply with SQA/Awarding Body's procedures for managing and transferring accurate candidate data.

Centre/staff maladministration:

Any actions, neglect, default, or other practice that compromises the accreditation or quality assurance process including the integrity of accredited qualifications, the validity of any certificates, or the reputation and credibility of SQA Accreditation.

Further examples of maladministration:

- Failure to adhere to Awarding Organisation learner registration and certification procedures.
- Failure to adhere to Awarding Organisation centre agreement and/or qualification requirements and/or associated actions assigned to the Centre.
- Late or incorrect learner registrations (both infrequent and persistent).
- Unreasonable delays in responding to requests and/or communications from the Awarding Organisation
- Inaccurate claim for certificates.
- Failure to maintain appropriate auditable records, for example, certification claims.

Prevention

- The most important tool in aiding prevention of any of the many types of malpractice is knowledge, understanding and communication.
- All staff involved with the assessment, internal verification, or candidate registration, assessment, and certification processes will be required to familiarise themselves with this document as detailed in Section 1. The SUHI Academic Staff Checklist is completed at induction which includes a requirement to be familiar with the Malpractice policy. This is signed by the new staff member and shared with the line manager and stored with HR.

- All staff involved with the assessment, Internal verification, or candidate registration, assessment, and certification processes will be required to familiarise themselves with the following Policies and procedures as appropriate to their role:
 - Staff Responsibilities for Academic Quality
 - Assessment Procedures
 - Examinations
 - Internal Verification Procedures
 - Assessment Development and Storage
 - Conflict of Interest in Assessments Policy
 - Award Data
 - Managing Course Procedures for SQA Awards
 - Appeals

Procedures for reporting and investigating incidents of academic malpractice along with guidance on appeals and record keeping can be found in procedure QA003 PR Academic Misconduct and Malpractice.

Version Control and Change History

Version	Date	Approved by	Amendment(s)	Author
1	01/08/2021			Quality Consultant
2	19/10/2023	Quality Improvement Committee and Academic Board	Role titles and branding Clarification on linked procedure Form name amendment	Depute Principal
3	10/09/23	QIC	Additional definitions of malpractice for Highfield Qualifications on Page 7	Vice Principal
4	13/09/24	QIC	Additional paragraph on AI and linked to the policy	Head of Student Experience.
5	26/09/25	Academic Board	Additional timescale for reporting to awarding body added on Page 3 and 6	Vice Principal