

BCU Awarding - Procedures for Dealing with Malpractice

July 2007

Guidance for Centres

1 Reporting malpractice by centres

We require all our approved assessment centres to report to us any malpractice that is suspected on the part of candidates, centre staff or any others involved in providing the BCU Awarding Body's UKCC qualifications. The centre representative who is accountable for the quality assurance and management of our qualifications is also responsible for making all centre staff aware of these malpractice procedures and for reporting to us any suspected malpractice brought to his/her notice. Malpractice can also be reported by other centre personnel, candidates and others with the knowledge of the suspect assessment activity or evidence. The BCU Awarding Body's officer to whom malpractice should be reported is the Qualifications Coordinator.

2 Examples of malpractice

Examples of malpractice include:

- impersonation during assessment;
- plagiarism (the evidence supplied not being the candidate's own work);
- claiming certificates on the basis of falsified records (including cases where the candidate is still working towards the qualification after the certificate has been claimed);
- providing unauthorised help to candidates with assessment tasks and not assessing all aspects which are supposed to be assessed.

Centres should note that this list is far from exhaustive and that any suspected malpractice must be reported to us. If you are unsure as to whether the suspect activity or evidence suggests or constitutes malpractice, you should contact the Qualifications Coordinator, who will clarify the position for you.

3 Failure to cooperate with the awarding body

Centres should also note that their failure to cooperate with the requirement to report any suspected malpractice can lead to the withholding of certificates and to future entries and/or registrations not being accepted.

4 Monitoring and investigating malpractice by the awarding body

The BCU Awarding Body will monitor all incidences of malpractice – whether reported by the centre representative who is accountable for the qualifications' quality assurance and management, by other centre staff, by candidates or by others with the knowledge of the suspect assessment activity or evidence, including our External Verifiers, who are obliged to record any suspected malpractice in their reports on centre visits.

Moreover, we will conduct a full investigation of all instances of alleged or suspected malpractice whenever we have grounds to doubt the integrity of the assessment process and/or the legitimacy of claims for certification and will take such action, with respect to the candidates and/or centres concerned, as is necessary to maintain the integrity of the relevant qualifications.

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All centre investigations will be instigated by the Awarding Body Manager, who will call on the External Verifiers or Senior External Verifiers to investigate the allegations/evidence related to the alleged malpractice. The Awarding Body Manager will ensure that the personnel who carry out these investigations on behalf of the awarding body are independent of the management of normal working relationships with the centres concerned in the interests of impartiality.

Whenever we find evidence that certificates may be invalid, we will inform the regulatory authorities and agree with them on an appropriate remedial action.

5 Possible remedial actions

The actions taken as a result of each investigation which confirms malpractice will be commensurate with its gravity. They will range from an entry in the centre's action plan to suspending the right of the centre to claim certificates until we are satisfied that adequate safeguards are in place to guarantee the validity of the certificates being claimed.

In extreme cases, where there has been an irretrievable breakdown in qualifications' management and quality assurance, we may withdraw centre approval in respect of the qualifications affected.