



Malpractice and Maladministration Procedure

What is its purpose?

Squaricle Group has a responsibility to ensure that malpractice, non-compliance and maladministration is addressed effectively. This document details the processes around dealing with these situations should they occur.

Why is it important?

This procedure supports Squaricle Group to operate consistently and fairly, ensuring for our clients, learners and employees that we take matters of malpractice seriously and take responsibility for ensuring any activities which compromise the integrity of our qualifications is dealt with appropriately.

Who or what within the organisation does it apply to?

All employees and associates of Squaricle Group, any learners registered with a centre that is part of the Squaricle Group and any persons employed by third party organisations with whom Squaricle Group is working in partnership to deliver qualifications.

When will it be effective from?

September 2021

The procedure to be followed:

Squaricle Group requires any of the above indicated individuals to report immediately to the Director of Operations: Brands, People & Quality any suspected case of malpractice, maladministration committed in direct relation to Squaricle Group recognised centre requirements and/or any qualification-specific criteria.

Definition of malpractice / maladministration:

Any act, default, or practice which is in breach of the regulations, or compromises, or attempts to compromise the integrity of any qualifications. Any activity or practice which results in non-compliance with administrative regulations and requirements and includes the application of persistent mistakes or poor administration within a centre.

Malpractice/ maladministration could involve centre staff, learners, external verifiers and awarding organisation staff.

- Examples of malpractice/ maladministration by centre or third party employees or associates:



- failure to meet Squaricle Group approval requirements including the provision and updating of information relating to assessment locations, assessment, verification staff and learner details
 - failure to meet action plans required by external verifiers
 - failure to meet Squaricle Group requirements for quality assurance of assessments
 - failure to meet Squaricle Group requirements for registration and certification of learners including fraudulent claims for certificates
 - failure to meet Squaricle Group requirements for the safeguarding of learner evidence
 - improper assistance to learners and/or insufficient evidence to justify assessment decision
- Examples of malpractice by learners
 - plagiarism of any nature
 - collusion with others
 - deliberate destruction of another's work
 - false declaration of authenticity in relation to learner evidence
 - impersonation
 - introduction of unauthorised material into the on-line testing room
 - use of mobile phone while undertaking on-line testing
 - disruptive or offensive behaviour while undertaking on line tests
 - failure to abide by the instructions when undertaking on line tests

Responsibility to report malpractice / maladministration

Squaricle Group employees or associates who discover or suspect malpractice should immediately report the matter to the Director of Operations: Brands, People & Quality. The Director of Operations: Brands, People & Quality will follow the relevant awarding body guidelines to report any suspected cases of Malpractice.

The Director of Operations: Brands, People & Quality will decide, in consultation with the Operations Board, whether an investigation will be required and by whom such an investigation will be undertaken.

Any individual may report suspected malpractice to the awarding body.

External verifiers are required to report any suspected or actual malpractice, identified when undertaking external verifier activities, to Squaricle Group.

Investigations

Squaricle Group will conduct full investigations into instances of alleged or suspected malpractice/ maladministration and will take action, with respect to learners and centres concerned as is necessary to maintain the integrity of the qualification. These actions will be commensurate with the gravity of the malpractice.



Failure by any individual to co-operate with awarding organisation investigations may lead to certificates not being issued and future entries and/or registrations not being accepted.

Process

Once notification of actual or suspected malpractice has been received, the Director of Operations: Brands, People & Quality will determine whether the investigation should be undertaken by the relevant member of Squaricle Group staff or by (an independent consultant on behalf of) the awarding organisation.

Investigations undertaken by Squaricle Group:

The investigating employee is required to supervise the investigation personally, establish the full facts and circumstances. As both learners and Squaricle Group employees or associates may be responsible for malpractice, the responsibility for investigating the matter should not be delegated to the assessor involved in the allegation. When it is necessary to interview a learner or a member of staff in connection with a malpractice investigation, this should be conducted in accordance with Squaricle Group's own disciplinary procedures.

A report should be submitted to the Squaricle Group Operations Board no later than 30 working days and should include:

- a statement of facts including a detailed account of the circumstances of the allegation and the investigation undertaken
- records of any interviews undertaken
- written statements from learners and/or employees
- learner evidence

The relevant assessor will be informed of the outcome of any investigation as part of the actions following investigation (detailed below).

Investigations undertaken by the awarding organisation:

Investigations undertaken by awarding organisations will be managed and undertaken by staff or consultants who are independent of the management of normal working relationships with the centres and external verifiers concerned.

The investigation will be initiated by the Director of Operations: Brands, People & Quality who will contact the independent consultant who has been contracted to investigate malpractice, and provide all relevant data and documentation. The independent consultant will be appointed to carry out the investigation on behalf of the awarding body. A report will be produced within 30 working days of being notified which will be submitted to the Director of Operations: Brands, People & Quality and the awarding body. The relevant assessor will be informed of the outcome of any investigation as part of the actions following investigation (detailed below).



Failure by any individual to co-operate with malpractice or maladministration investigations can lead to certificates not being issued and future entries and/or registrations not being accepted.

Squaricle Group will report any cases of malpractice where evidence is found that certificates may be invalid and will co-operate with any follow up investigations and action required by the regulatory authorities.

Actions to be taken following an investigation

Squaricle Group will consider the information received from the investigation in determining the appropriate action. If the investigation confirms that malpractice has taken place, sanctions may be imposed.

The following sets out examples of the possible sanctions:

- Learners:
 - Internal assessment and external assessment evidence will be disallowed
 - Certificates will not be issued
 - Learner(s) will be disqualified from the assessment
 - Disqualification from the whole qualification

- Squaricle Group employees / association
 - The Squaricle Group Disciplinary Procedure would be observed, outcomes of which may include:
 - Written warning
 - Dismissal (if the scale and severity of the malpractice is deemed to be Gross Misconduct)
 - Imposition of conditions on the individual's involvement in awarding organisation assessment
 - Training or mentoring
 - Increased IQA and / or approval of specific assessment activity

- Implications for centres
 - Awarding body approval of assessment activity
 - Additional external verification visits
 - Suspension of learner registrations

Outside authorities that are responsible or require the procedure

Any awarding bodies which Squaricle Group is accredited by to deliver qualifications.

Related documents and links to other procedures

Squaricle Group Disciplinary Procedure

Impact and effectiveness



Justin Smith-Essex is responsible for the management and monitoring of effectiveness of this policy.

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