

CURRICULUM MALPRACTICE POLICY

For staff and students

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CURRICULUM MALPRACTICE POLICY

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Curriculum Malpractice Policy provides accessible and clear information for all staff and students about the malpractice policy and procedure for Further Education (FE) and ensures that UCS College Group complies with Awarding Organisation requirements.
- 1.2 This policy must be referred to as part of the student induction period and be referenced in programme information. It is available on the Student Hub [Policies, Roles, Responsibilities & Professional Expectations for apprentices](#), and on SharePoint for staff.

2. Policy Statement

- 2.1 UCS College Group strives to ensure that appropriate practice is implemented and upheld, and that curriculum malpractice or maladministration does not occur. A suitable induction and/or relevant training for staff in line with job roles is provided to support appropriate practice. Students partake in an induction appropriate for the level, type of course and awarding organisation they are registered with. Any claims of suspected malpractice and/or maladministration made against the College Group or any individuals employed by the College Group, either directly or indirectly, or a student of the College Group, will be fully investigated and appropriate action taken. This will be in line with our associated Awarding Organisations, if appropriate.

3. Scope

- 3.1 This policy is relevant to all staff, FE students and any relevant third parties involved with the College Group and must be followed under any circumstances.

4. Responsibilities

- 4.1 It is ultimately the responsibility of the Group Vice Principal – TLA, Curriculum & Quality to ensure that this procedure is implemented, published and accessible to all staff, students and any relevant third parties. However, the Deputy Head specific to each qualification is responsible for ensuring this information is fully understood by their qualification team and by the students who commence courses/programmes in their area.
- 4.2 It is the responsibility of tutors and Trainer Assessors to ensure that students understand what malpractice might look like at their particular level of study and know how to avoid it. Further information can be found on the Student Hub [Policies](#) and [Roles, Responsibilities & Professional Expectations for apprentices](#).

5. Definitions

- 5.1 **Malpractice** is defined by the College Group as any **deliberate** activity, neglect, default, or other practice that is unethical or unlawful, which breaches regulations or conditions placed upon us by Awarding Organisations. Such **deliberate** activity, neglect, default or other practices may compromise the integrity of our organisational statuses, financial stability, reputation, the reputation of our stakeholders and the qualifications and related assessments we are approved to deliver. As a result, this is unacceptable. This includes deliberate non-compliance with any College Group policy, procedure, or guidance.
- 5.2 **Maladministration** is any activity which is **not deliberate**, but which neglects or defaults on regulations and conditions placed upon us by Awarding Organisations for the qualifications and related assessments we are approved to deliver. Accidental non-compliance with any College Group policy, procedure or guidance that could compromise the integrity of our

organisational statuses, financial stability, reputation, or the reputation of our stakeholders might constitute maladministration.

5.3 **Plagiarism** is defined as any instance where a student attempts to use other people's thoughts, writings, inventions or Artificial Intelligence (AI) generated work as their own. This could include:

- using a phrase or sentence that you have come across in a book or other publication without acknowledging sources appropriately
- copying word-for-word directly from a text, website or another student's work without acknowledging sources appropriately
- copying or downloading figures, photographs, pictures or diagrams without acknowledging sources appropriately
- using AI to generate part or all of your work and claiming it as your own.

5.4 **Artificial Intelligence (AI) generated content** is work that has been generated by AI, such as a chatbot. Chatbots generate relevant answers or responses to prompts or questions, including analysing, evaluating, improving, summarising, generating ideas, and can include quotes. Chatbots can also write computer code and generate images. Use of AI does not demonstrate a student's own ability or own work, whether used for part or all of an assessment, and is likely to be considered to be malpractice (unless explicitly allowed within the assessment guidance).

This could include:

- copying or paraphrasing sections or a whole piece of work
- failing to acknowledge the use of AI.

As with any sources used, AI sources should be used appropriately and referenced.

AI does not refer to the use of pre-approved or acknowledged assistive technologies for dyslexia support.

6. Examples

6.1 Examples of Centre Malpractice (associated with curriculum provision or the administration of curriculum provision)

Failure to meet our associated Awarding Organisation requirements as stated in the various contracts with our associated Awarding Organisations.

Examples of this type of malpractice include (list not exhaustive):

- failure to advise our Awarding Organisations of Centre changes related to the delivery of their qualifications
- external quality assurance action plans repeatedly not implemented within agreed timescales
- repeated short-notice cancellation of external quality assurance visits by a Centre
- continued failure to meet Awarding Organisation requirements for registration, assessment, internal verification and certification
- failure to keep student portfolios of evidence secure
- providing deliberately erroneous advice to students
- assisting students over and beyond normal levels of supervision such as to put in doubt student ownership of work
- inventing or changing judgements for internally assessed work (coursework or portfolio evidence) without following agreed internal policies and processes

- repeated incidences of insufficient evidence of student achievements to justify the marks given or assessment decisions made (fraudulent claims for certificates)
- inappropriate retention of certificates
- failure to meet the requirements of the regulations for the conduct of timed assessments or other forms of assessment under controlled conditions
- amendments to assessment materials without permission
- failure to provide access arrangements for assessment in accordance with our associated Awarding Organisation requirements
- unauthorised use of inappropriate materials/equipment in assessment settings (e.g. mobile phones or watches)
- loss or theft of, or a breach of confidentiality in, any assessment materials.

Malpractice also includes failure to deal appropriately with student malpractice such as:

- plagiarism of any nature (including the use of AI)
- collusion with others
- copying (including the use of ICT to aid copying)
- deliberate destruction of another's work
- false declaration of authenticity in relation to the contents of a portfolio or coursework
- impersonation
- fraudulent claims for special considerations
- inappropriate conduct in an examination/assessment session.

6.2 Examples of Centre Maladministration (associated with curriculum provision or the administration of curriculum provision)

Examples of this type of maladministration include (list not exhaustive):

- delay in issuing certificates to students
- unreasonable delay in responding to requests for information or other communications from our associated Awarding Organisations
- inaccurate claims for certificates
- incorrect action or failure to take any action when requested by our associated Awarding Organisations
- failure to provide appropriate information when reasonably requested to do so by students or our associated Awarding Organisations
- inadequate record keeping, for example, in relation to the assessment of student work
- failure to investigate complaints.

7 Reporting and Handling Procedure

7.1 Instances of suspected minor student malpractice such as plagiarism should be handled by the assessor/lecturer, for example, refusal to accept work for marking and students being made aware of the Curriculum Malpractice Policy and other sources of support to appropriately reference sources (see appendix A). The student should then be given the chance to resubmit the work in line with Awarding Organisation regulations.

Students should be made aware that subsequent plagiarism offences, or those of a more serious nature, will result in the disciplinary process being triggered and assessors will be supported by Course Leaders and/or

Deputy Heads when dealing with student plagiarism (see appendix B). In any instance where the disciplinary process is used, the Quality Nominee/Head of Centre should be informed, and the details will be passed on to the Awarding Organisation as appropriate (please contact the Quality Team for more details – quality@ucscollegegroup.ac.uk).

Suspected Centre maladministration or malpractice should be reported to quality@ucscollegegroup.ac.uk. If there is a conflict of interest with the Quality Team, it will be investigated by the relevant department (see appendix C).

- 7.2 The College Group staff, students and any relevant third party should submit any allegations of suspected malpractice or maladministration and any evidence thereof in writing to quality@ucscollegegroup.ac.uk.

The Group Vice Principal - TLA, Curriculum & Quality, or their nominee, will acknowledge receipt of the allegation within five working days. The Quality team will then:

- notify the associated Awarding Organisation in accordance with the Awarding Organisation's requirements where appropriate
- evaluate the evidence and identify outcomes where evidence supplied is fully sufficient and consistent
- carry out or nominate a suitable person to conduct an investigation where additional evidence needs to be collected and/or validated. The evidence will be evaluated in line with the Awarding Organisation policy and procedure where appropriate.

Once all reasonable steps have been taken to collect and authenticate the evidence, outcomes will be identified. All outcomes will be notified to appropriate parties including the associated Awarding Organisation where applicable.

This may result in further action being taken under the College Group disciplinary/capability procedures.

8 Appeals

8.1 Curriculum malpractice findings can be appealed by the person it is pertaining to if:

- they believe the decision to be inaccurate and/or unfair relating to the malpractice outcome and the relevant policies.
- there is evidence that there has been an internal administrative error or that the investigation was not conducted in accordance with the policy.

8.2 Appeal process

Students have the right to appeal the outcome of a malpractice investigation, this should be done within 7 working days. In the first instance they should discuss their appeal with the member of staff that has informed them of the outcome. They will be advised by the member of staff whether they are required to put their appeal in writing within 5 working days.

The outcome will then be investigated by an impartial member of staff at an appropriate level. The outcome of the malpractice appeal investigation will then be communicated in writing within 20 working days.

Staff have the right to appeal by following the [Staff Appeals Policy and Procedure](#).

9 Review of Policy

- 9.1 This policy has been informed by external expectations and to maintain the College Group reputation.

The policy will be reviewed annually by the Quality Team to ensure it meets requirements. Any recommendations will be made to the SMT Policy Review Group.

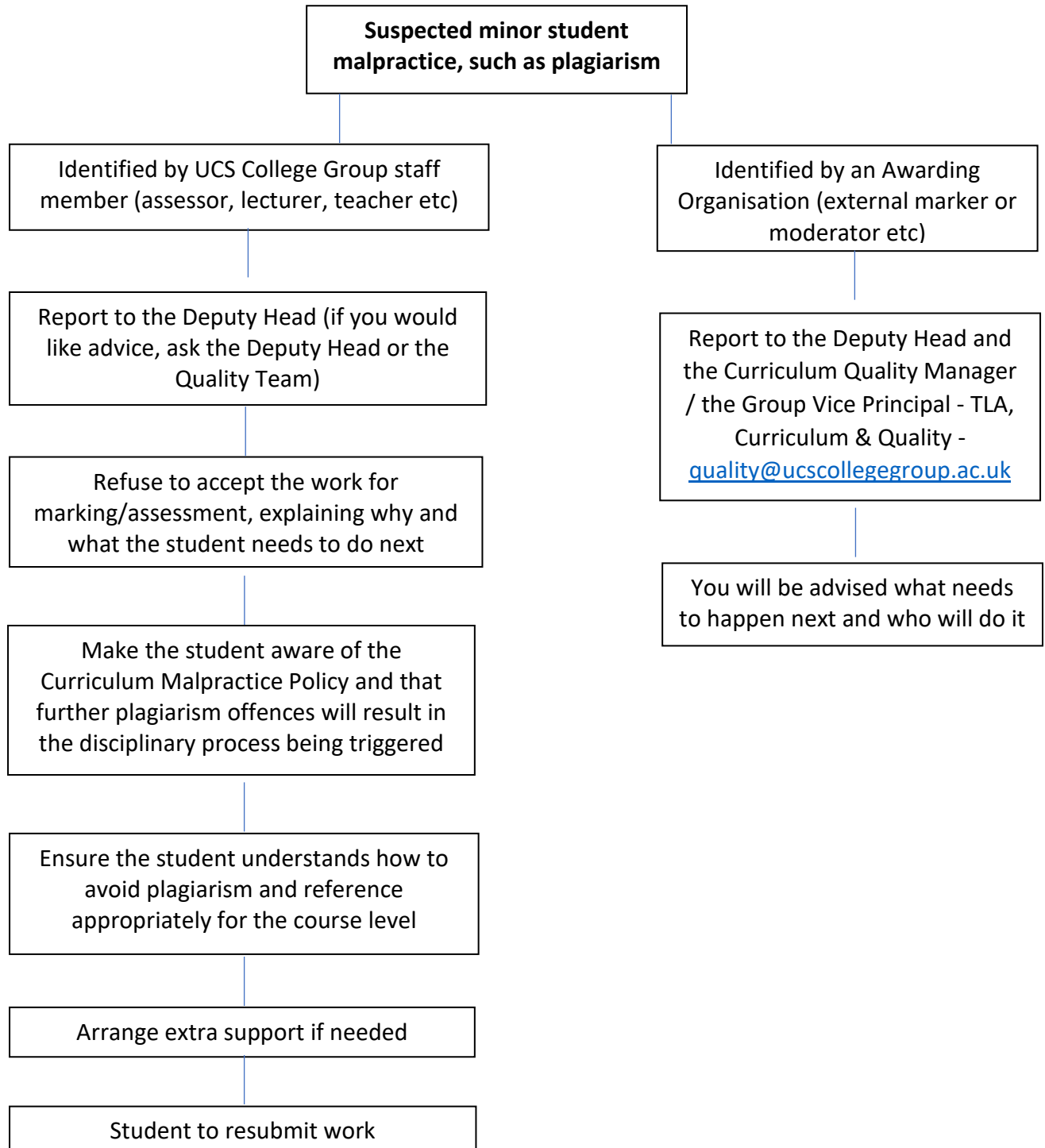
10 Related Policies and Procedures

- 10.1 This policy should also be read in conjunction with the Awarding Organisation Centre Agreements, the Quality Handbook and the Disciplinary Policy. For more information regarding plagiarism and other academic offences in HE, students and staff should refer to the relevant Academic Regulations and the HE Academic Misconduct Policy.

Appendix A:

Further Education

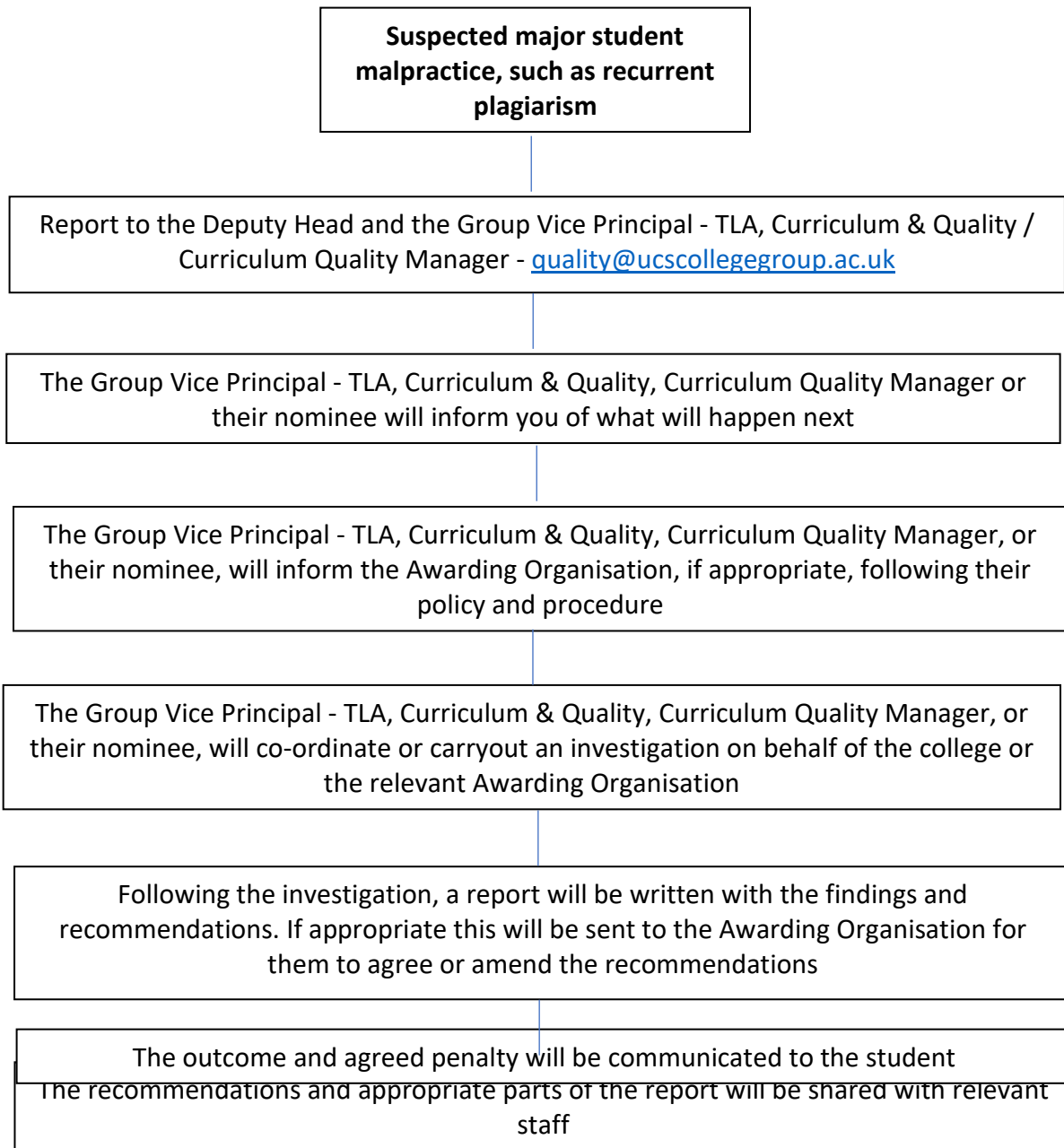
Suspected minor student malpractice, such as plagiarism process



Appendix B:

Further Education

Suspected major student malpractice, such as recurrent plagiarism process.



Appendix C:

Further Education

Suspected centre academic maladministration or malpractice process

