

Sanctions Policy

Introduction

Elevate EPA Ltd (Elevate) is committed to maintaining the integrity and credibility of the end-point assessment (EPA) process for apprentices. This sanctions policy outlines the procedures and measures that will be taken in response to malpractice by apprentices during the EPA.

Types of Malpractice

Malpractice includes, but is not limited to:

- Plagiarism or cheating in assessments
- Falsification of evidence or information
- Collusion with other apprentices or external parties
- Unauthorised communication during assessments
- Any behaviour that compromises the fairness and validity of the EPA process

Reporting Malpractice

Any suspicion or evidence of malpractice should be reported to the Managing Director immediately. Reports can be made by training providers, assessors, employers, or any other relevant party. Reports should be submitted in writing and include detailed information and evidence.

Preliminary Investigation

Upon receiving a report of malpractice, Elevate will conduct a preliminary investigation to determine the validity and seriousness of the allegations. This may involve gathering additional evidence, interviewing relevant parties, and assessing the impact on the EPA process.

Conflicts of Interest

If a conflict of interest arises in the investigation process, an independent and impartial investigator will be appointed. Elevate will maintain transparency and ensure that the investigation is conducted without bias.

Investigation Process

a. **Notification:** The apprentice will be formally notified of the allegations and provided with an opportunity to respond.

b. **Evidence Gathering:** Relevant evidence will be collected, including statements, documents, and any other pertinent information.

c. **Interviews:** Interviews may be conducted with the apprentice, assessors, witnesses, and/or any other relevant parties.

d. **Assessment of Impact:** Elevate will assess the impact of the malpractice on the EPA process and the overall fairness of the assessment.

Sanctions

If malpractice is substantiated, Elevate may impose the following sanctions:

- **Written warning:** For minor instances of malpractice.
- **Invalidation of assessment results:** For more serious cases, the assessment results may be invalidated, requiring the apprentice to retake the assessment.
- **Ban from future assessments:** In severe cases, the apprentice may be banned from participating in future EPA assessments.

Appeals

Apprentices have the right to appeal against sanctions. Appeals must be made in writing within a specified timeframe, and an independent appeals panel will review the case. Please refer to the Elevate Complaints and Appeals Policy.

Record Keeping

Details of all malpractice cases, investigations, and sanctions will be recorded and maintained by Elevate for audit and quality assurance purposes.

Review and Update

This policy was last reviewed in February 2024 and will be regularly reviewed and updated to ensure its effectiveness and compliance with relevant regulations. Any changes will be communicated to all relevant stakeholders.

Purpose of this Policy

This sanctions policy is designed to preserve the integrity of the assessment process, ensure fairness, and address violations of ethical and professional conduct.

Scope

We remain committed to ensuring fair and proportionate actions in response to suspected or alleged malpractice, tailoring our approach to best address the unique challenges posed by each assessment scenario.

This policy should be read alongside the Elevate Artificial Intelligence (AI) Usage Policy, Malpractice and Maladministration Policy and Complaints and Appeals Policy.

Oversight Responsibilities

The Managing Director, Melanie Feek, serves as the Responsible Officer for the implementation and enforcement of this policy.

Sanctions and Penalties

Following a rigorous and effective investigation of suspected or alleged malpractice, in cases where malpractice has been confirmed, Elevate will impose sanctions and penalties proportionate to the severity and associated risk of the suspected or alleged malpractice.

Where appropriate, Elevate will seek the cooperation of third parties in taking such action. Receiving a written warning that specifies further sanctions will apply if a subsequent offence occurs

Reporting suspected or alleged malpractice involves various stakeholders, and the investigation process aims to establish facts, minimise risks, and take appropriate actions while respecting confidentiality and individuals' rights.

Elevate responsibilities include conducting a full investigation in all instances of suspected or alleged malpractice.

In the first instance, the Responsible Officer at Elevate is responsible for:

- Determining, based on the severity, scope, and associated risk of the suspected or alleged malpractice, the most appropriate person(s) to investigate the suspected or alleged malpractice.
- Taking reasonable steps promptly to prevent any potential adverse effects and, where any adverse effect occurs, mitigating it as far as possible and correcting it.
- Establishing that the correct procedures are followed in the investigation.
- Considering all the evidence submitted.
- Confirming that there is sufficient evidence to conclude (and, if not, taking such steps is considered necessary to acquire sufficient evidence).
- Establishing whether malpractice has been committed and, where established, determining an appropriate penalty.
- Taking action against those responsible, which is proportionate to the gravity and scope of the occurrence or seeking the cooperation of third parties in taking such action.
- Notifying Ofqual if it is believed that there has been an incident of malpractice that could either invalidate the award of a qualification, which Elevate makes available, or could affect another awarding organisation.

Concerning suspected or alleged malpractice by apprentices:

Any incidents should be immediately reported to Elevate. Upon receiving notification, the Responsible Officer at Elevate will determine, based on the severity and associated risk of the suspected or alleged malpractice, whether it is appropriate to carry out an initial investigation before Elevates' investigation or whether it is appropriate for Elevate to conduct the entire investigation. When the Centre is authorised to carry out the investigation, it must:

- Inform the apprentice in writing of the suspected or alleged malpractice, the procedures to be followed, and possible penalties should the suspected or alleged malpractice be proven.
- Investigate the suspicion or allegation.
- Provide the apprentice with an opportunity to contest or refute the allegation or suspicion, either in writing, at a hearing or both.
- Allow the learner to be accompanied at any hearing.
- Decide based on the investigation and hearing.
- Ensure that the persons conducting the investigation, hearing, or deciding are not the same persons making the allegation or raising the suspicion.
- Have sufficient professional standing, authority, and knowledge.
- Inform the Responsible Officer at Elevate of the outcome in writing.
- Inform the apprentice of the outcome in writing.
- Keep a full case record, which should be made available to Elevate upon request, and should include a statement of facts, a detailed account of the circumstances, names of all persons involved and their roles in the case, and copies of all written statements.

For suspected or alleged malpractice by Elevate staff, the Responsible Officer must be notified of any incidents immediately in writing. Elevate is responsible for investigating suspected or alleged malpractice by its staff.

The investigation should determine the outcome and, in cases where the suspected or alleged malpractice is upheld, implement the appropriate penalty. Elevate must comply with its own Staff Disciplinary Policy and procedures and be compliant with relevant employment legislation. In cases where the suspected or alleged malpractice may involve a criminal offence, the Responsible Officer is required to inform the police.

In cases of suspected or alleged malpractice by Centre staff, the Head of the Centre must notify the Responsible Officer at Elevate immediately in writing. In cases where the notification is not from the Centre, the Responsible Officer at Elevate will notify the Head of the Centre of the suspected or alleged malpractice.

It is the responsibility of the Centre to investigate suspected or alleged malpractice by its staff. The investigation should determine the outcome, and in cases where the suspected or alleged malpractice is upheld, the Centre must impose the appropriate penalty. The Centre must comply with its own employment and disciplinary policy and procedures and be compliant with relevant employment legislation.

In cases where the suspected or alleged malpractice may involve a criminal offence, the Head of the Centre and the Responsible Officer at Elevate should consult on whether the Centre is required to inform the police. The Head of the Centre must inform the Responsible Officer at Elevate of the outcome in writing.

Concerning suspected or alleged malpractice by Centres, the Responsible Officer at Elevate will notify the Head of the Centre of the suspected or alleged malpractice. Upon receiving notification, the Responsible Officer at Elevate will determine, based on the severity and associated risk of the suspected or alleged malpractice, whether it is appropriate to request the Head of the Centre to carry out an initial investigation before Elevates' investigation or whether it is appropriate for Elevate to conduct the entire investigation. When the Centre is authorised to carry out the investigation, it must:

- Investigate the suspicion or allegation.
- Conclude whether it accepts that the suspected or alleged malpractice is well-founded, and if upheld, plan actions to prevent a recurrence of the malpractice.
- Inform the Responsible Officer at Elevate of the outcome in a written report.
- Inform the apprentice of the outcome in writing.
- Keep a full case record, which should be made available to Elevate upon request, and should include a statement of facts, a detailed account of the circumstances, names of all persons involved and their roles in the case, copies of all written statements, and other records and documents appropriate to the case.

Appealing against decisions and penalties

A Centre (if applicable) or apprentice has the right to appeal against any decisions made regarding malpractice or maladministration. Please refer to our Complaints and Appeals Policy available on request and the Elevate website (TBC).

If you have any questions or queries relating to this policy or the procedures, please contact us.

Att: Responsible Officer	Melanie Feek, Managing Director	Melanie.feek@elevate-epa.co.uk
Att: Internal Quality Assurance Lead	TBC. IQA Lead	info@elevate-epa.co.uk

Policy Review

This policy was last updated in February 2024.