

Malpractice and Maladministration Policy

Introduction and scope

1. progress minded is an End Point Assessment Organisation (AO) recognised by Ofqual.
2. As a recognised AO, progress minded is subject to external quality assurance by Ofqual on behalf of the Department for Education.
3. Assessments are also delivered in accordance with UK Equalities Law.
4. progress minded aims to ensure that equality of opportunity is promoted in access to apprenticeship assessments and that unlawful or unfair discrimination, whether direct or indirect, is eliminated.
5. The purpose of this policy is to set out the process for preventing and investigating malpractice and maladministration.

Definitions

6. Incident is any unplanned or unexpected event that occurs during the assessment process which may temporarily disrupt the assessment or potentially impact its smooth running, but does not compromise the integrity, validity, or fairness of the assessment to the extent that it constitutes malpractice or maladministration. For example,
 - a. Technical disruptions, such as temporary loss of internet connection, system failure, or audio/visual issues.
 - b. Environmental interruptions, such as fire alarms, external noise, or unplanned entry into the assessment space.
 - c. Candidate welfare pauses, such as short comfort breaks or addressing sudden illness.
 - d. Administrative delays or minor errors, such as incorrect assessment material initially provided but promptly rectified.
 - e. Short pauses to resolve logistical issues (e.g. moving to an alternative room or equipment replacement).
7. Malpractice is taken to mean any deliberate act, default or practice that compromises the integrity of the assessment or quality assurance, the validity of any results and certificates, or the reputation and credibility of progress minded. For example,
 - a. Breaching assessment requirements.
 - b. Providers, employers, or apprentices intentionally providing inaccurate or misleading submissions of declaration forms and/or other evidence, within the gateway process, or during the assessment.
 - c. Providers or employers helping apprentices to answer assessment questions or producing assessment evidence, beyond what assessment requirements allow.
 - d. Any staff or apprentices undertaking the assessment on behalf of someone else.
 - e. Submitting or plagiarising work that is not the apprentice's own original work (such as using a project writing service to buy work and submit it as their own).
 - f. Work submitted that is produced by artificial intelligence (AI) such as (but not limited to) ChatGPT, Claude and Gemini.
 - g. Deliberate destruction or tampering with work or assessment records.
 - h. Giving a false declaration of authenticity of assessment evidence.

- i. Deliberately giving false assessment evidence, records, results and other documents relating to the assessment.
 - j. Intentionally accessing or trying to access and share confidential assessment material.
 - k. Apprentices offering a bribe of any type to invigilators, employer or provider staff or progress minded staff (assessors or internal quality assurers).
 - l. Use of unauthorised material or devices during the assessment.
 - m. Breaching the invigilation conditions, including inappropriate behaviour, such as apprentices communicating with one another or failing to follow the instructions of the invigilator.
 - n. Anyone failing to cooperate with an investigation or act as requested by progress minded.
8. Maladministration includes any actions, neglect, default or other practice that compromises the assessment or quality assurance process, including the integrity of the assessment, the validity of any results or certificates, or the reputation and credibility of progress minded. For example:
- a. Failing to maintain and keep accurate records about apprentices' assessments.
 - b. Failing to provide accurate records about apprentices to progress minded.
 - c. Incidents of not complying with assessment invigilation requirements.
 - d. Any actions that lead to apprentices having an unfair advantage or disadvantage.

Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Our position

9. At progress minded, we believe that technology, including AI, can support high quality preparation and reflection when used ethically and responsibly.
10. However, all work submitted for assessment must represent the apprentice's own understanding and competence.
11. Where AI is used appropriately, it can contribute to meaningful learning. Where it is misused, it may be considered and treated as malpractice.

Permitted use of AI

12. Apprentices may use AI tools to support their learning and assessment preparation as long as the final submitted work and assessment materials reflect their own original thinking.
13. Permitted uses include:
 - a. Apprentices may use AI to help explain the knowledge, skills and behaviours (KSBs) or grading descriptors in clearer terms.
 - b. AI may be used to help break down complex requirements and prepare confidently for the assessment.
 - c. AI may be used to explore ideas, consider different perspectives, or brainstorm approaches to a written task.
 - d. Apprentices may use AI to structure their thoughts before drafting their own written work.
 - e. Apprentices may use AI to gather factual information or definitions to support their knowledge base before starting a task.

- i. This includes comparing sources or reviewing background content, in the same way they might use a search engine.
- f. AI may be used to check grammar, spelling, clarity or sentence structure.
- g. Suggestions from AI should be reviewed and understood by the apprentice before any changes are made.

Unacceptable use of AI

14. Whilst AI can support preparation, it must never replace the apprentice's own understanding or misrepresent their abilities.
15. The following uses are not permitted:
 - a. AI must not be used to produce full or partial responses that The Apprentice submits as their own. This includes copying AI-generated text into submissions without adapting or understanding it.
 - i. Assessment must reflect the apprentice's own ideas, not the tool's output.
 - b. AI must not be used to complete written tasks on the apprentice's behalf where they have not engaged with the learning or developed the required competence.
 - i. Using AI to respond without a solid understanding of the topic risks undermining the validity of the assessment.
 - c. Apprentices must not use AI tools and present the work as entirely their own without acknowledging support.
 - i. If AI has been used in a significant way, this should be clearly stated within the submission
16. Progress minded utilise AI detection technology and tools to scan the contents of assessment and evidence submissions.
17. Where AI tools have been used during the preparation or drafting of a submission, we expect apprentices to:
 - a. Be open about how they used the tool.
 - b. Appropriately reference the AI tool within their evidence.
 - c. Only include content they understand and can explain.
 - d. Ensure the final submission is fully their own work, meeting the assessment requirements independently.
18. Assessors may ask additional questions in the assessment to verify the apprentice's understanding of the work submitted, especially where AI use is suspected.
19. If an apprentice is found to have used AI in a way that is not permitted within their assessment, the incident will be investigated as malpractice as per the definition in the above section.

Reporting

20. You must report any incident of reported, suspected or actual:
 - a. Malpractice or attempted malpractice by employer or provider staff;
 - b. Maladministration by employer or provider staff;
 - c. Malpractice or attempted malpractice by apprentices; and
 - d. Incidents that are unplanned or unexpected during an assessment.
21. When reporting incidents, complete the Incident Report Form and send it to the EPA Team at epateam@progressminded.co.uk

22. If our staff encounter an incident or find or suspect malpractice when conducting an assessment, this will be referred to their IQA using the Incident Report Form.
23. During quality assurance activities, if an IQA finds or suspects malpractice, this will be referred to the Head of Quality using the Incident Report Form.
24. Anyone wishing to anonymously report actual or suspected malpractice can do so by contacting us by email at epateam@progressminded.co.uk. Where requested, we will not disclose an informant's identity unless legally obliged to do so. As our investigations are confidential, we will not be able to disclose to informants' details of the outcome of the investigation or what action has been taken.

Investigation

25. We may need to carry out an independent investigation, and it is important that you support us with the investigation.
26. When dealing with alleged malpractice or maladministration in a centre we will deal mostly with the key personnel named within your Service Level Agreement (SLA). We may require full access to the premises for investigation purposes.
27. As part of the investigation, we retain the right to:
 - a. Involve the apprentice and others in the investigation process.
 - b. Contact the apprentice (and/or the apprentice's representative) directly, and
 - c. Contact staff members directly.
28. This may occur, for example, when an apprentice's account of events is different with that of the employer or provider. Anyone being interviewed can be accompanied by another person.
29. During the investigation period, we may:
 - a. Refuse apprentice bookings.
 - b. Request that DfE withhold the release of certificates, and
 - c. Withhold test papers if the security of a test is considered at risk, pending the outcome of the investigation.
30. If malpractice or maladministration is suspected by a progress minded representative (for example, assessors) or has been reported directly to us by a third party, we will investigate it in a form appropriate to the nature of the alleged malpractice/maladministration. Such an investigation will require the full support of the key personnel named within your SLA, and all staff linked to the allegation.
31. Any alleged incident of malpractice or maladministration brought to our attention after the issue of certificates will result in a full investigation by us. Depending on the outcome of the investigation, certificates may be recalled by DfE and declared invalid.
32. We may need to access any documents you store in relation to alleged malpractice or maladministration. In some incidents, such as provider or employer staff malpractice, we may be required to:
 - a. Report the incident to the relevant regulatory bodies and other stakeholders, including the action that has been taken by the key personnel named within your SLA, or employer, governing body or the responsible employer.
 - b. Notify or share information with fellow AOs or other organisations.

Penalties and sanctions

33. Where malpractice/maladministration is proven, we will consider whether the integrity of our assessments might be at risk if the provider, employer, staff member or apprentice in question were to be involved in future progress minded assessments to protect the integrity of our assessment service. This action may include:
- a. Refusing to accept assessment registrations and/or bookings from a provider or employer in cases where malpractice is proven for specific apprenticeship standards.
 - b. Stopping access to an assessment or suspending delivery of an assessment.
 - c. Termination of the assessment Service agreement.
 - d. Refusing to issue assessment results.
 - e. Invalidating claims for an apprenticeship certificate.
 - f. Debarring an employer or provider staff member from involvement in the delivery of our endpoint assessments for several years/life.
 - g. Disqualifying an apprentice from taking any component of the assessment.

Appeals

34. Appeals will be handled in accordance with the Appeals Policy

Version control

Version	Date	Change	By whom
V2.1	07.07.2025	Add a version control table. Updated terminology. Combined with the AI Statement.	Cherie Heaven Owen Twidale
V2.2	29.07.2025	Added definition for incidents. Added Incident Reporting process.	Cherie Heaven Owen Twidale