



SOLAS

**Approved Quality Assurance
Organisation**

**CSCS and QSCS Procedures for Managing
Assessment System Malpractice**



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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Purpose

A SOLAS approved Quality Assurance Provider, is committed to ensuring CSCS and QSCS assessment integrity is maintained. The SOLAS CSCS and QSCS Assessment Governance and Processes document set out the arrangements for protecting the integrity of its assessment process and the subsequent validity and currency of the candidates' results. Where the contents of this document differ from the regulations of the Awarding Body, regulations of the Awarding Body take precedence.

SOLAS recognises however, that on occasion, the integrity of the assessment process may be breached and consequently place high importance on how such occasions are addressed and managed. In particular, it is the view of the organisation that there must be a strong emphasis on the development and application of procedures that ensure that any assessment malpractices are addressed promptly and appropriately.

It is important that these are applied consistently to maximize opportunity for resolution. Lastly, it is also important to ensure communication of these instances to stakeholders so that lessons can be learned and the process of continuous improvement and quality enhancement can be facilitated. To this end, SOLAS Construction Services has developed and produced these procedures, which will apply to all assessment arising from training organised or procured by SOLAS.

1.2 Scope

This document provides information on:

- a) The definition of assessment system malpractices
- b) Roles and responsibilities
- c) Notification and reporting of assessment system malpractice
- d) Conducting an investigation
- e) Reporting requirements
- f) Outcomes of an investigation

This document is intended for use by all Quality Assurance Provider personnel involved in the management, coordination or invigilation of assessment of CSCS and QSCS programmes.

2.0 What Constitutes Assessment System Malpractice?

2.1 Definition of an Assessment System Irregularity

Assessment system irregularities are typically accidental omissions or mistakes which are detected by mechanisms within the assessment system, are corrected, and which do not impact on the validity of the assessment. These could include test administration errors, missing assessment data, transcription errors, etc., which are detected and rectified. All instances of irregularities should be documented and addressed in line with the Construction Services Quality Assurance System (CSQAS).

It is important to distinguish between irregularities and malpractices. The decision on whether an issue is deemed to be an assessment system irregularity or alleged malpractice will relate to the intent, scale or fraudulent nature of the incident by the offender. An issue that may initially be adjudged to be an assessment system irregularity could after preliminary investigation be determined to be an alleged malpractice issue. Where such an issue is deemed to be an alleged malpractice, the

procedures outlined in this document must be utilised.

2.2 Definition of an Assessment System Malpractice

An assessment system malpractice is any act or practice which brings into question the validity or integrity of the assessment process and normally arises due to one or more non-accidental factors. There are two categories of malpractice:

- a) Candidate Malpractice: malpractice committed by an applicant during the course of the assessment process.
- b) Personnel¹ Malpractice: malpractice committed by personnel involved in the assessment process.

2.3 Candidate Malpractice

In instances where candidates are responsible for assessment system malpractices the Co-ordinating Provider is responsible for investigating the alleged malpractice and for reporting the conclusion of the investigation to the relevant parties. Please see the SOLAS CSCS and QSCS Assessment Governance and Processes document for further information.

2.4 Personnel Malpractice

Malpractice can be committed by personnel relating to the assessment process. The following are examples² of malpractice by personnel:

Serious negligence which results in failure to apply defined assessment processes, for example:

- a) negligence by any persons involved in the assessment process which causes (or is capable of causing) unacceptable loss, damage or injury
- b) failure to follow proper/required procedure

and/or

The conduct of assessment with disregard for prescribed requirements, for example:

- a) non-adherence to health and safety requirements, defined assessment procedures or rules, or not using defined equipment or tools
- b) use of unapproved personnel to conduct or assess an assessment
- c) loss of required applicant assessment evidence

and/or

A deliberate action that compromises the validity of the assessment process, for example:

- a) proven fraudulent activity in relation to the assessment process and/or the issuing of certificates
- b) manipulation of assessment data
- c) deliberate falsification of documentation including assessment results or requests for certificates
- d) providing candidates/other unauthorised personnel with access to a controlled assessment instrument or other information relating to the content in advance of an assessment event

¹ Personnel in this context includes: Second Provider (Grantee) Personnel

² The examples provided do not constitute an exhaustive list

- e) amendment to assessment papers outside the agreed protocol

3.0 Notification and Reporting of Alleged Assessment System Malpractices

3.1 Initial Notification

Any person involved in the assessment process has a responsibility for ensuring the integrity and validity of the SOLAS CSCS and QSCS assessment system. Alleged malpractices may be identified by a variety of sources³. Where an alleged assessment system malpractice is identified, it must be notified to the relevant personnel within the Quality Assurance Provider. Notification may be either verbal and/or in writing.

3.2 Quality Assurance Provider

If a Quality Assurance provider is notified of alleged assessment system malpractice by a candidate or by a staff member of the Collaborating Provider the Quality Assurance Provider will advise the relevant Collaborating Provider and the SOLAS Construction Services Manager of the allegation. The Collaborating Provider is responsible for conducting the investigation and the reporting of the investigation outcomes to the SOLAS Construction Services Manager and the SOLAS approved Quality Assurance Provider.

If a Quality Assurance Provider is notified of an alleged assessment system malpractice by a Quality Assurance Provider staff member the Quality Assurance Provider shall:

- a) Inform the appropriate authorised officer⁴, of the alleged malpractice and to suspend the issuing of results associated with the alleged malpractice.
- b) Initiate the Alleged Assessment System Malpractice Report – *please reference the SOLAS Reporting Forms for an Alleged Malpractice of the Assessment System Booklet*
- c) Record locally the alleged malpractice incident
- d) Inform SOLAS Construction Services and the relevant Collaborating Provider of the alleged malpractice investigation
- e) Facilitate and/manage the investigation into the alleged malpractice in a timely manner

4.0 Conducting an Investigation

Investigations of alleged assessment system malpractice by Quality Assurance Provider staff will be undertaken in accordance with the appropriate Quality Assurance Provider's HR Policies.

4.1 Report Findings and Sanctions

The Quality Assurance Provider will notify the SOLAS Manager of Construction Services of the outcome of the investigation and any sanctions imposed. The Quality Assurance Provider will also advise the relevant Collaborating Provider of the outcome of the investigation.

³ Typically these might be: Appropriate line manager in the first instance

⁴ Detailed descriptions of this and other roles in the assessment system can be found in Introduction Section of the SOLAS CSCS and QSCS Assessment Governance and Processes.