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# Statistical Bulletin

## Malpractice in GCSE and GCE: June 2011 Examination Series

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## **Key findings**

Awarding organisations have procedures in place for dealing with malpractice on the part of candidates, centre staff or others involved in providing a qualification. Malpractice includes any breach of the regulations that might undermine the integrity of an exam, from deliberate attempts by candidates to communicate with each other during an exam to inadvertent failures by centre staff to comply with awarding organisation instructions.

Penalties issued for candidate malpractice in the June 2011 examination series remained limited to a very small proportion of the total assessments taken. The 3,678 penalties issued represents 0.02 per cent of the total examinations sat by candidates, and a decrease of 11 per cent from summer 2010. This is in the context of 4 per cent fewer examinations being taken when compared with summer 2010.

The most common type of malpractice was the introduction of unauthorised material into the examinations room (1,725 penalties issued). In the majority of cases, this was a mobile phone or other electronic communications device (1,251 penalties issued) representing 34 per cent of all penalties. This compares with 1,377 penalties for a mobile phone or other electronic communications device in 2010 which represented 33 per cent of penalties. This is not a statistically significant change.

For the June 2011 examination series there were 87 penalties issued to centre staff (see Table 4) and 54 penalties issued to centres (see Table 6).

Any cases still being investigated at the time of publication are not included in this year's data, but revised figures will be published in next year's report.

## **Introduction**

This statistical bulletin, published on behalf of the regulators for England, Wales and Northern Ireland, presents data on malpractice in GCSE and GCE examinations during the June 2011 examination series. These qualifications are offered by six awarding organisations in England, Wales and Northern Ireland:

- Assessment and Qualifications Alliance (AQA)
- Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (Northern Ireland) (CCEA)
- Edexcel
- International Curriculum & Assessment Agency (Examinations) ICAAE
- Oxford, Cambridge and RSA Examinations (OCR)
- WJEC.

Once published, data may be revised in subsequent bulletins due to late-received data or if an error is identified. In this bulletin some figures have therefore been revised since last year's report.

## **Malpractice**

The regulators in England (Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation – Ofqual), Wales (Department for Education and Skills – DfES) and Northern Ireland (Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment – CCEA) have worked together to produce the *General Conditions of Recognition* (2011). The conditions set out the requirements that all regulated awarding organisations have to meet.

Condition A8, ‘Malpractice and maladministration’, requires all awarding organisations to investigate and manage the effect of any malpractice where they have established that malpractice or maladministration has occurred. They must take steps to prevent reoccurrence and take action against those responsible that is proportionate to the gravity and scope of the occurrence. In addition, the *GCSE, GCE, Principal Learning and Project Code of Practice* (2011) aims to promote quality, consistency, accuracy and fairness in assessment and awarding. This code of practice helps maintain standards, both within and between awarding organisations, and from year to year. The code lays down agreed principles, processes and practices for the awarding organisations that develop and deliver these qualifications.

Section 8 of the code of practice requires awarding organisations to have procedures in place for dealing with malpractice on the part of candidates, centre staff or others involved in providing a qualification. Malpractice includes any breach of the regulations that might undermine the integrity of an exam, from deliberate attempts by candidates to communicate with each other during an exam to inadvertent failures by centre staff to comply with awarding organisation instructions.

The code requires that awarding organisations investigate any instances of alleged or suspected malpractice in either the internally or externally assessed components and take such action, with respect to the candidates and centres concerned, as is deemed necessary to maintain the integrity of the examination. Centres must report all incidents of malpractice to the relevant awarding organisations and cooperate with subsequent investigations. Each case of malpractice, whether reported by the centre or identified by the awarding organisation, is considered and judged on an individual basis in the light of all information available, and the outcome should be commensurate with the gravity of the malpractice as determined by the awarding organisation.

## Summer 2011 examinations series

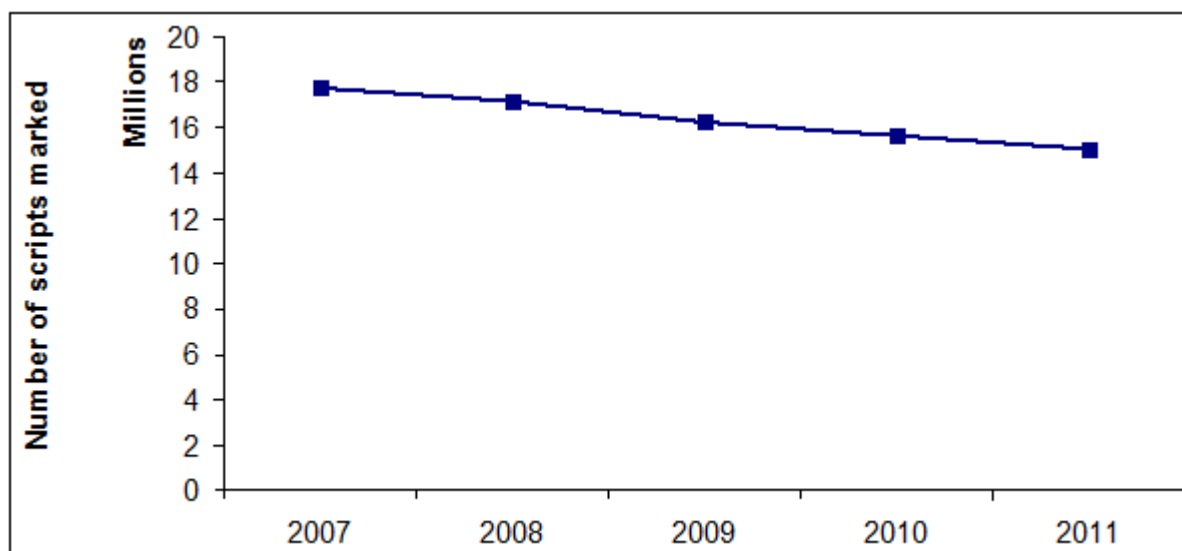
### Awards made

In the June 2011 examination series there were over 2.5 million GCE A level (AS and A level) awards made. Over 5.5 million GCSE qualifications were awarded in England, Wales and Northern Ireland during the June 2011 series.

### Scripts

In the June 2011 examination series 15.1 million scripts were marked (see Table 1 and Figure 1). Figure 1 covers GCE, Applied GCE, GCSE, Applied GCSE, GCSE Short Course and overseas entries.

Figure 1: Total scripts marked for GCSE and A level, summer examination series 2007–2011



Penalties for malpractice may relate to specific assessments/scripts or may be applied at qualification level.

## Candidate malpractice

The penalties for candidate malpractice vary depending on the type of offence, and include warnings, loss of marks and disqualification from units, components or qualifications. For example, candidates who bring a mobile phone into an examinations room but do not have their phone at their desk might receive a warning, whereas candidates found using a mobile phone during an exam might be disqualified from the unit or the qualification in that examination series.

Awarding organisations issued 3,678 penalties to candidates in response to malpractice during the June 2011 examinations series, a decrease of 11per cent from the previous year. This is in the context of 4 per cent fewer examinations being taken when compared with summer 2010 (see Table 2).

An individual candidate may be penalised more than once and by more than one awarding organisation.

Penalties for candidate malpractice in the June 2011 examination series remained extremely rare across all six awarding organisations. The 3,678 penalties issued represent 0.02 per cent of the total scripts marked (see Figure 2 and Table 2).

**Figure 2: Penalties issued as a percentage of total scripts for summer examination series, 2007–2011**

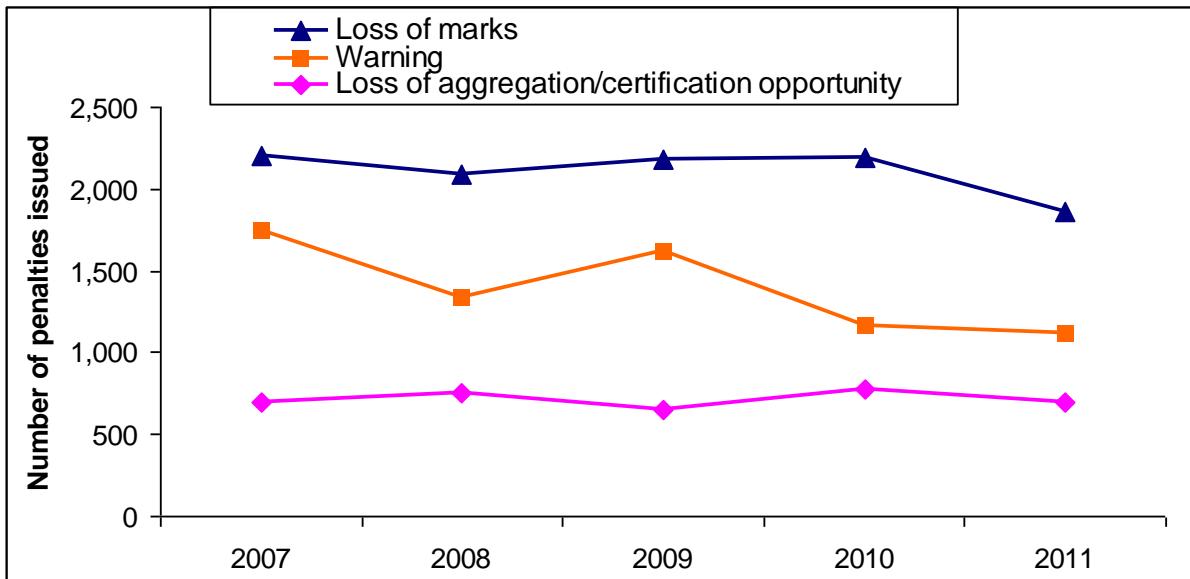


## Type of penalty

The penalties issued in June 2011 comprised 1,120 warnings (30 per cent of penalties), 1,864 loss of marks (51 per cent of penalties), and 694 loss of aggregation or certification opportunities (19 per cent of penalties). (See Table 2 and Figure 3).

Compared with the previous year there were fewer warnings (a decrease of 3 per cent). The number of lost aggregation or certification opportunities decreased by 11 per cent, and the number of cases of reduced marks decreased by 15 per cent.

Figure 3: Number of penalties issued to candidates for malpractice, 2007–2011



## Category of malpractice

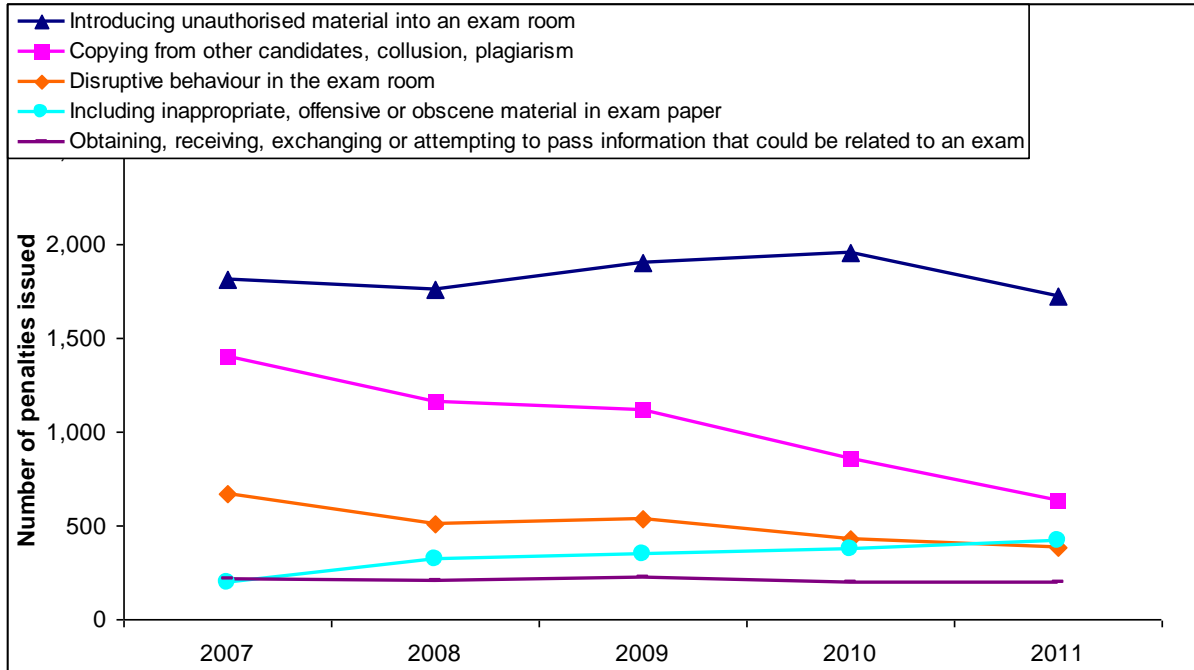
There was variation across the categories of malpractice for the June 2011 series, with some increases and decreases in penalties issued when compared with the previous year. As in 2010, the most common type of malpractice penalised was for the introduction of unauthorised material into the examination room (1,725 penalties issued, representing 47 per cent of all penalties). In the majority of cases the unauthorised material was a mobile phone or other electronic communications device (1,251 penalties; 73 per cent of the 1,725 penalties for unauthorised material).

The second most common type of malpractice penalised, as in 2010, was for plagiarism, failure to acknowledge sources, copying from other candidates or collusion, with 638 penalties issued – representing 17 per cent of all penalties. The number of penalties issued for this category of malpractice has steadily declined over the last five years.



Other common types of malpractice for which penalties were issued were the inclusion of inappropriate, offensive or obscene material in the exam paper or coursework (422 penalties, representing 11 per cent of all penalties) and disruptive behaviour in the examination room (384 penalties, representing 10 per cent of all penalties). (See Table 3 and Figure 4).

**Figure 4: Number of penalties issued for five most common categories of malpractice, 2007–2011**



## Centre malpractice

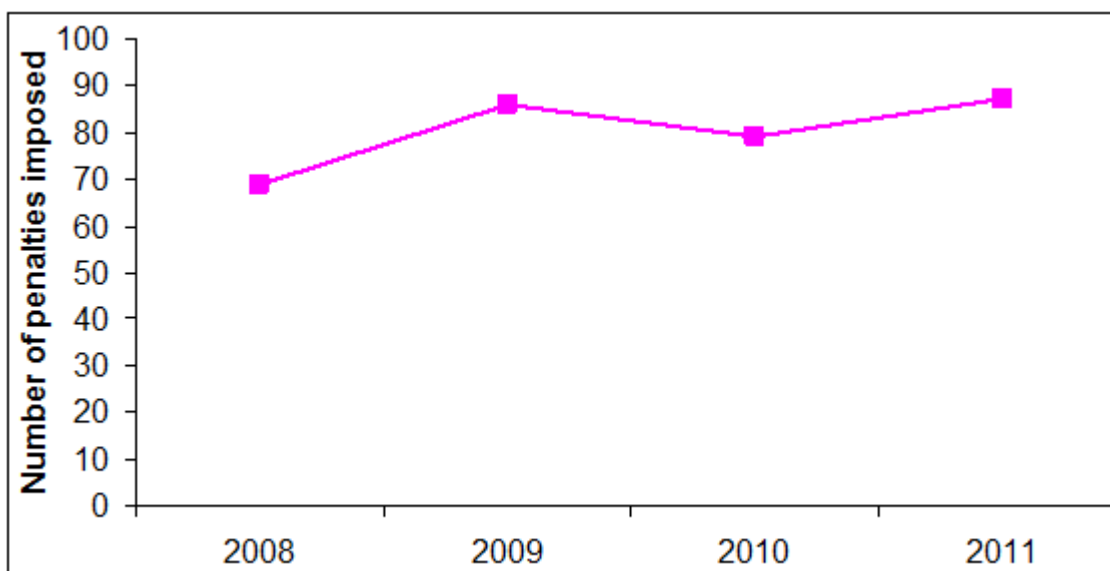
Awarding organisations must investigate and, where necessary, penalise centres and centre staff involved in malpractice. Instances of centre staff malpractice can range from actions that are intended to give an unfair advantage to candidates in an exam or assessment, to ignorance of, or inappropriate application of the assessment regulations.

### Centre staff malpractice

Awarding organisations will normally impose sanctions and penalties on centre staff found guilty of malpractice. These can include a written warning about the implications of repeating the offence, imposing special conditions on an individual's future involvement in examinations and assessments, requiring specific training or mentoring as a condition of future involvement in examinations, or suspending an individual from all involvement in delivering examinations and assessments for a set period of time.

For the June 2011 examination series there were 87 penalties issued to centre staff, an increase of 10 per cent from the previous year (see Figure 5 and Table 4). This figure represents the number of penalties issued; more than one penalty may have been imposed for an individual case.

Figure 5: Number of penalties imposed on centre staff for malpractice, 2008–2011



The most common penalty issued to centre staff was a written warning (34 cases, representing 39 per cent of penalties). The second most common penalty was the imposition of special conditions to an individual's future involvement in examinations and assessments (26 cases, representing 30 per cent of penalties). There were also

8 staff suspensions from future involvement in exams or assessments and 19 requirements for training or mentoring of staff (see Table 4).

The majority of these penalties were issued as a result of centre staff giving inappropriate assistance to candidates (60 cases, representing 69 per cent of all penalties imposed on centre staff). The second most common cause for a penalty being issued was as a result of other reasons (18 cases, representing 21 per cent of penalties) (see Table 5). Other reasons can involve but are not limited to, entering the examination room to coach or prompt candidates, and allowing candidates to carry on working for an extended period of time after the official finishing time.

### Centre malpractice penalties

When malpractice is judged to be the result of a serious management failure an awarding organisation may apply sanctions against the whole department or centre. For the June 2011 examination series there were 54 penalties issued to centres, a decrease of 38 per cent from the previous year (see Figure 6 and Table 6).

This figure represents the number of penalties issued; more than one penalty may have been imposed in relation to an individual case. Penalties and special conditions on centres may be applied individually or in combination, depending on the circumstances and the evidence.

Figure 6: Number of penalties imposed on centres for malpractice, 2008–2011



The penalties that an awarding organisation can issue as a result of centre malpractice range from a written warning about the implications of repeating the offence to withdrawing approval for a centre to offer some or all qualifications. For the June 2011 examination series the most common penalty issued was a written warning (35 cases, representing 65 per cent of penalties). The second most common penalty was the requirement for the Head of a centre to review and provide a report

on an incident of malpractice (17 cases, representing 32 per cent of penalties issued). There were also 2 withdrawals of centre recognition to offer examinations (see Table 6).

There were 24 penalties imposed as a result of centres breaching the security of confidential examination materials (representing 44 per cent of penalties imposed on centres). There were 7 penalties imposed for centres giving inappropriate assistance to candidates (13 per cent of penalties). The remainder, 23 cases, representing 43 per cent were imposed for 'other reasons'. Other reasons can involve centres not adhering to the requirements of an examination, such as opening question papers early without authorisation, allowing candidates to sit an examination at the wrong time and a lack of appropriate invigilation during an examination (see Table 7).

## Tables

**Table 1: Total scripts marked for GCSE and A level summer examination series, 2007–2011**

England, Wales & Northern Ireland							
Year	Number of scripts						Total
	AQA	Edexcel	OCR	WJEC	CCEA	ICAAE	
2007	7,370,974	4,329,425	4,269,737	1,255,627	553,782		<b>17,779,545</b>
2008	7,300,482	3,836,345	4,217,159	1,317,327	523,449		<b>17,194,762</b>
2009	6,800,493	3,778,240	3,829,081	1,335,063	492,576		<b>16,235,453</b>
2010	6,411,172	3,619,804	3,660,339	1,423,949	538,131		<b>15,653,395</b>
2011	6,089,628	3,661,614	3,238,906	1,610,075	444,771	19,858	<b>15,064,852</b>

*Source: EPG exams monitoring data*

**Notes:**

1. Data are supplied by awarding organisations.
2. 2008 includes GCE, GCSE and overseas and coursework entries.
3. 2009 includes GCE, GCSE, PL, and overseas entries.
4. 2010 includes GCE, GCSE and overseas entries.
5. ICAAE awarded GCSEs for the first time in 2011. In previous years specifications were delivered in conjunction with CCEA.

**Table 2: Penalties issued to candidates for malpractice, by type of penalty, June examination series, 2007–2011**

England, Wales & Northern Ireland								
	Year	Number of penalties issued						Total
		AQA	Edexcel	OCR	WJEC	CCEA	ICAAE	
A warning	2007	732	391	437	164	21		<b>1,745</b>
	2008	570	300	349	100	14		<b>1,333</b>
	2009	701	464	355	85	14		<b>1,619</b>
	2010	467	276	348	52	16		<b>1,159</b>
	2011	435	311	268	101	5	0	<b>1,120</b>
Loss of marks	2007	948	323	758	143	31		<b>2,203</b>
	2008	919	381	599	168	27		<b>2,094</b>
	2009	957	406	549	200	64		<b>2,176</b>
	2010	919	347	699	203	27		<b>2,195</b>
	2011	789	442	437	169	27	0	<b>1,864</b>
Loss of aggregation or certification opportunity	2007	251	213	205	6	20		<b>695</b>
	2008	278	193	257	15	16		<b>759</b>
	2009	228	154	210	33	29		<b>654</b>
	2010	300	154	254	42	27		<b>777</b>
	2011	240	156	201	84	13	0	<b>694</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>1,931</b>	<b>927</b>	<b>1,400</b>	<b>313</b>	<b>72</b>		<b>4,643</b>
	<b>2008</b>	<b>1,767</b>	<b>874</b>	<b>1,205</b>	<b>283</b>	<b>57</b>		<b>4,186</b>
	<b>2009</b>	<b>1,886</b>	<b>1,024</b>	<b>1,114</b>	<b>318</b>	<b>107</b>		<b>4,449</b>
	<b>2010</b>	<b>1,686</b>	<b>777</b>	<b>1,301</b>	<b>297</b>	<b>70</b>		<b>4,131</b>
	<b>2011</b>	<b>1,464</b>	<b>909</b>	<b>906</b>	<b>354</b>	<b>45</b>	0	<b>3,678</b>
Percentage of scripts to which a penalty was applied	2007	0.03%	0.02%	0.03%	0.02%	0.01%		<b>0.03%</b>
	2008	0.02%	0.02%	0.03%	0.02%	0.01%		<b>0.02%</b>
	2009	0.03%	0.03%	0.03%	0.02%	0.02%		<b>0.03%</b>
	2010	0.03%	0.02%	0.04%	0.02%	0.01%		<b>0.03%</b>
	2011	0.02%	0.02%	0.03%	0.02%	0.01%	0.00%	<b>0.02%</b>

Source: EPG exams monitoring data

**Notes:**

1. Data are supplied by awarding organisations.
2. ICAAE awarded GCSEs for the first time in 2011. In previous years specifications were delivered in conjunction with CCEA.

**Table 3: Penalties issued to candidates for malpractice, by category of malpractice, June examination series, 2007-2011**

England, Wales & Northern Ireland		Number of penalties issued						
	Year	AQA	Edexcel	OCR	WJEC	CCEA	ICAAE	Total
Introducing unauthorised material into an examination room <sup>1</sup>	2007	841	360	436	136	38		1,811
	2008	793	388	437	126	17		1,761
	2009	799	488	418	157	40		1,902
	2010	817	390	561	153	35		1,956
	2011	770	418	305	204	28	0	1,725
Copying from other candidates, collusion, plagiarism (including misuse of ICT)	2007	576	266	459	73	24		1,398
	2008	375	254	412	86	30		1,157
	2009	434	261	282	74	61		1,112
	2010	244	205	310	76	25		860
	2011	173	198	227	25	15	0	638
Disruptive behaviour in the examination room (including use of offensive language)	2007	291	133	177	58	7		666
	2008	251	110	115	28	9		513
	2009	262	80	156	36	5		539
	2010	250	68	81	28	4		431
	2011	158	88	82	54	2	0	384
Including inappropriate, offensive or obscene material in examination papers or coursework	2007	81	19	82	11	0		193
	2008	154	30	118	16	0		318
	2009	159	48	132	10	0		349
	2010	134	29	196	13	0		372
	2011	136	87	186	13	0	0	422
Obtaining, receiving, exchanging or attempting to pass information that could be related to an examination	2007	53	77	61	26	0		217
	2008	68	45	71	18	1		203
	2009	77	60	51	32	0		220
	2010	85	43	59	11	0		198
	2011	79	50	30	39	0	0	198
Failing to follow awarding organisation supervision requirements	2007	64	21	14	8	3		110
	2008	52	31	8	8	0		99
	2009	50	42	14	2	0		108
	2010	102	7	19	16	0		144
	2011	98	8	22	14	0	0	142
Failing to follow instructions from invigilators, supervisors or the awarding organisation	2007	16	5	160	1	0		182
	2008	20	3	27	1	0		51
	2009	72	9	48	1	2		132
	2010	28	30	68	0	0		126
	2011	34	47	52	4	0	0	137
Other <sup>2</sup>	2007	9	46	11	0	0		66
	2008	33	13	17	0	0		63
	2009	30	36	13	6	1		86
	2010	26	5	7	0	6		44
	2011	16	13	2	1	0	0	32
<b>Total number of penalties issued</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>1,931</b>	<b>927</b>	<b>1,400</b>	<b>313</b>	<b>72</b>		<b>4,643</b>
	<b>2008</b>	<b>1,746</b>	<b>874</b>	<b>1,205</b>	<b>283</b>	<b>57</b>		<b>4,165</b>
	<b>2009</b>	<b>1,883</b>	<b>1,024</b>	<b>1,114</b>	<b>318</b>	<b>109</b>		<b>4,448</b>
	<b>2010</b>	<b>1,686</b>	<b>777</b>	<b>1,301</b>	<b>297</b>	<b>70</b>		<b>4,131</b>
	<b>2011</b>	<b>1,464</b>	<b>909</b>	<b>906</b>	<b>354</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3,678</b>

**Notes:**

Source: EPG exams monitoring data

- Notes or notes in the wrong format, study guides, materials with prohibited annotations, calculators and dictionaries where prohibited, personal stereos and mobile phones.
- Misusing examination materials, deliberate destruction of work, impersonation, theft, altering results documents or other behaviour that undermines the integrity of the examination.
- Data are supplied by awarding organisations.
- ICAAE awarded GCSEs for the first time in 2011. In previous years specifications were delivered in conjunction with CCEA.

**Table 4: Penalties imposed on centre staff for malpractice, June examination series, 2008–2011**

England, Wales & Northern Ireland		
	Year	Penalties imposed
		Total
Written warning	2008	<b>37</b>
	2009	<b>26</b>
	2010	<b>32</b>
	2011	<b>34</b>
Requirement for staff training or mentoring	2008	<b>7</b>
	2009	<b>14</b>
	2010	<b>5</b>
	2011	<b>19</b>
Staff suspension from involvement in examinations or assessments	2008	<b>23</b>
	2009	<b>17</b>
	2010	<b>13</b>
	2011	<b>8</b>
Special conditions to an individual's future involvement in examinations or assessments	2008	<b>2</b>
	2009	<b>29</b>
	2010	<b>29</b>
	2011	<b>26</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>69</b>
	<b>2009</b>	<b>86</b>
	<b>2010</b>	<b>79</b>
	<b>2011</b>	<b>87</b>

Source: EPG exams monitoring data

Notes:

1. Data are supplied by awarding organisations.
2. Data prior to 2008 were not available.



**Table 5: Penalties imposed on centre staff for malpractice, by reason for penalty, June examination series, 2007–2011**

England, Wales & Northern Ireland								
	Year	Number of penalties imposed						Total <sup>1</sup>
		AQA	Edexcel	OCR	WJEC	CCEA	ICAAE	
Breach of security	2007	2	1	-	0	0		<b>3</b>
	2008	2	0	1	0	0		<b>3</b>
	2009	7	0	4	0	0		<b>11</b>
	2010	14	3	0	0	0		<b>17</b>
	2011	4	0	2	0	3	0	<b>9</b>
Giving assistance to a candidate(s)	2007	13	18	-	8	1		<b>40</b>
	2008	11	14	17	0	3		<b>45</b>
	2009	17	6	30	1	4		<b>58</b>
	2010	35	4	11	1	1		<b>52</b>
	2011	19	8	28	4	1	0	<b>60</b>
Other reasons	2007	2	5	-	2	0		<b>9</b>
	2008	4	6	5	5	1		<b>21</b>
	2009	7	0	10	0	0		<b>17</b>
	2010	0	4	6	0	0		<b>10</b>
	2011	7	2	9	0	0	0	<b>18</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>1</b>		<b>52</b>
	<b>2008</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>		<b>69</b>
	<b>2009</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>		<b>86</b>
	<b>2010</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>		<b>79</b>
	<b>2011</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>87</b>

Source: EPG exams monitoring data

Notes:

1. Totals for 2007 only cover the four awarding organisations where data were available.
2. '-' indicates data not available.
3. Data are supplied by awarding organisations.
4. ICAAE awarded GCSEs for the first time in 2011. In previous years specifications were delivered in conjunction with CCEA.

**Table 6: Penalties imposed on centres for malpractice, June examination series, 2009–2011**

England, Wales & Northern Ireland		
	Year	Penalties imposed
		Total
Written warning	2009	44
	2010	43
	2011	35
Centre to review and provide report on malpractice	2009	16
	2010	53
	2011	17
Increased level of inspection and monitoring of centre	2009	7
	2010	5
	2011	0
Restriction on centre's access to examination materials	2009	3
	2010	3
	2011	0
Withdrawal of centre recognition	2009	0
	2010	2
	2011	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>70</b>
	<b>2010</b>	<b>106</b>
	<b>2011</b>	<b>54</b>

*Source: EPG exams monitoring data*

Notes:

1. Data are supplied by awarding organisations.
2. Data prior to 2009 were not available.
3. An awarding organisation changed their data collection process during 2009/10, so care should be taken when comparing figures from 2010 onwards with previous years.

**Table 7: Penalties imposed on centres for malpractice, by reason for penalty, June examination series, 2007–2011**

England, Wales & Northern Ireland		Number of penalties imposed						
	Year	AQA	Edexcel <sup>1</sup>	OCR	WJEC	CCEA	ICAAE	Total <sup>2</sup>
Breach of security	2007	1	-	-	0	1		2
	2008	2	0	4	0	0		6
	2009	1	0	1	0	0		2
	2010	4	47	4	0	1		56
	2011	0	17	3	0	4	0	24
Giving assistance to a candidate(s)	2007	0	-	-	2	0		2
	2008	1	16	3	0	0		20
	2009	3	12	5	0	0		20
	2010	4	12	1	0	0		17
	2011	1	5	1	0	0	0	7
Other reasons <sup>3</sup>	2007	0	-	-	3	3		6
	2008	7	4	4	6	5		26
	2009	9	35	2	0	2		48
	2010	1	26	1	0	5		33
	2011	1	14	0	0	8	0	23
<b>Total</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>		<b>10</b>
	<b>2008</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>5</b>		<b>52</b>
	<b>2009</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>		<b>70</b>
	<b>2010</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6</b>		<b>106</b>
	<b>2011</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>54</b>

Source: EPG exams monitoring data

Notes:

1. Edexcel changed its data collection process during 2009/10, so comparison of figures for 2010 onwards with previous years is not advised.
2. Totals for 2007 only cover the available data.
3. Other reasons include centres not adhering to the requirements of an examination, such as opening question papers early without authorisation, centres allowing candidates to sit an examination at an incorrect time and a lack of appropriate invigilation during an examination.
4. Data are supplied by awarding organisations.
5. '-' indicates data not available.
6. ICAAE awarded GCSEs for the first time in 2011. In previous years specifications were delivered in conjunction with CCEA.

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