



Authenticating coursework

A teacher's guide



Qualifications and
Curriculum Authority



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FOR WALES



- ▶ Do you have coursework to mark?
- ▶ Are you sure it's the candidate's own work?
- ▶ Do you know what to do if you think a candidate has cheated?

This leaflet will give you advice on how to check that the work is the candidate's own independent work or attributable contribution; what to do if you think someone has cheated; and useful sources of information and help.



Assessing candidates' work

When you mark candidates' work you are also assessing whether you think it is their own work. Here are some ideas of ways you can reassure yourself that candidates have submitted their own work.

The following questions can help you check that you have done your best to minimise opportunities for malpractice.

Were candidates told about the rules of coursework?

Candidates must have read *Notice for candidates coursework and portfolios*, the Joint Council for Qualifications document that outlines candidates coursework responsibilities (see 'Where to find out more').

Do I have a signed declaration from the candidate?

Candidates must sign a declaration to confirm that all work they are submitting is their own.

Did I try to minimise the chance of a candidate colluding or copying?

If you have to set all the candidates in the group the same task, did you have strategies to stop collusion such as completing parts of the task under supervision? In some subjects the setting of individual or personalised tasks helps

to reduce collusion and can engage candidates more personally with their work.

The following questions can help you check that the work is the candidate's own independent work or attributable contribution.

Is the coursework the standard that I expect of the candidate?

If their work is significantly different from that anticipated it could be a sign that the work is not their own. You should also check that the use of specialised words and phrasing is typical of the candidate's work. Records detailing the assistance candidates have had with their coursework will help reassure you that the work you are assessing is the candidate's own.

Are the spelling and structure consistent throughout the coursework?

Any changes in spelling and structure may indicate that parts have been copied from elsewhere. If the work is word-processed, check that the font size and margins are consistent throughout the work.

Does the standard of the candidate's coursework completed under supervision match the standard of the rest of the candidate's coursework?

If you set part of the task to be completed under your supervision, does the standard of that part of the work match the standard of work throughout the rest of the candidate's coursework? Inconsistencies may be a sign that the work is not the candidate's own.

If you still have doubts....

If you've asked yourself all the questions above, but you still have some doubts as to whether some of the work really is the independent or attributable contribution of the candidate, here are some additional checks that you can make.



Ask the candidate oral questions about the coursework they have completed

If they are unable to answer your questions, and display a lack of understanding of the issues discussed in the coursework, then it could indicate that the work is not their own.

Ask the candidate to acknowledge the sources correctly

Ask the candidate whether they have listed all their sources correctly to give them a further opportunity to fully acknowledge their sources. This will ensure that candidates do not break the rules inadvertently.

Familiarise yourself with websites that offer writing services

This will ensure that you are better able to identify plagiarised work downloaded from the internet. Another way to check if work has been plagiarised is to run any unusual phrases through an internet search engine.

Ask the candidate to complete a further exercise

This enables you to check the level of knowledge, the standard, structure and spelling against the original piece of work.

Next steps

Once you've considered all the issues outlined above you will be able to come to a decision about whether the work is the candidate's own. If you believe that the coursework is not the candidate's own there are two courses of action:

- for candidates who *have not* signed a declaration, follow the procedure set out by your centre
- for candidates who *have signed* a declaration, you should follow the procedures set out by your centre. These will involve making a report to the awarding body. The awarding body will advise your examinations office on how to take the matter forward.

Your role

You play a vital role in ensuring that candidates receive the mark their work deserves. When submitting coursework to the moderator you must sign to say that you

are confident that the work you are submitting is the candidate's own. You will be aware that the submission of work that you are not confident is the candidate's own could be considered professional misconduct.



In the future

There are a number of other ways you can make sure work submitted is a candidate's own independent work or attributable contribution. For example, you can:

- use practice tasks to teach coursework techniques and structuring. The real coursework task should be completed independently by candidates
- consider ways the task could be personalised for individual candidates to prevent collusion rather than set the same task for the whole group
- provide candidates with practical examples of good and bad referencing, including referencing web pages and the date of access (see 'Where to find out more')
- encourage candidates to value the process of completing their coursework as well as the product of coursework
- highlight the deficiencies of online essay banks
- liaise with the librarian to help with the collection of electronic information such as information available on essay writing websites, useful search engines and awarding body and JCQ updates.

Where to find out more

The following organisations can provide advice and support when marking coursework.

Qualifications and Curriculum Authority

Website includes information on qualifications and a version of this leaflet and the coursework leaflet for parents (www.qca.org.uk/courseworkleaflet)

Qualifications, Curriculum and Assessment Authority for Wales

Website includes information on qualifications available in Wales (www.accac.org.uk)

Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessments

Website includes information on qualifications available in Northern Ireland (www.ccea.org.uk)

Awarding bodies

Each awarding body provides similar support for teachers on coursework:

- ▶ AQA (www.aqa.org.uk)
- ▶ CCEA (www.ccea.org.uk)
- ▶ Edexcel (www.edexcel.org.uk)
- ▶ OCR (www.ocr.org.uk)
- ▶ WJEC (www.wjec.co.uk)

Local authorities

Contact local authorities for guidance and support on local policies.

General Teaching Council for England

Website includes the Council's Code of Conduct and Practice for Registered Teachers, which identifies activities that may amount to unacceptable professional misconduct (www.gtce.org.uk)

General Teaching Council for Wales

Website includes information on the professional values and practice for teachers in Wales (www.gtcw.org.uk)

General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland

Website includes information on the professional values and practice for teachers in Northern Ireland (www.gtcni.org.uk)

Joint Council for Qualifications

Website includes information on candidate's coursework and examinations responsibilities, plagiarism and potential malpractice (www.jcq.org.uk). Enter 'coursework' in the 'search box' to access *Coursework in examinations*, *Notice for candidates coursework and portfolios* and *Plagiarism in examinations documents*

The Plagiarism Advisory Service

Website includes advice and guidance on all aspects of plagiarism (www.jiscpas.ac.uk)



Teacher and lecturer associations

Teaching associations provide guidance and support. More information and contact details can be found on their websites.

- ▶ Association of Colleges
(www.aoc.co.uk)
- ▶ Association of School and College Leaders (www.ascl.org.uk)
- ▶ Association of Teachers and Lecturers
(www.atl.org.uk)
- ▶ NATFHE: The University and College Lecturers' Union (www.natfhe.org.uk)
- ▶ National Association of Head Teachers
(www.naht.org.uk)
- ▶ National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers
(www.nasuwt.org.uk)
- ▶ National Union of Teachers
(www.nut.org.uk)
- ▶ Professional Association of Teachers
(www.pat.org.uk)
- ▶ Society of Headmasters and Mistresses of Independent Schools
(www.shmis.org.uk)
- ▶ The Girls' Schools Association
(www.gsa.uk.com)
- ▶ The Headmasters' and Headmistresses' Conference (www.hmc.org.uk)
- ▶ UCAC (www.athrawon.com)

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