

Preventing Malpractice in **General and Vocational Qualifications**

Guidance for Examinations Officers

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1 Introduction

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance and support to Examinations Officers in centres offering CCEA qualifications. Its aim is to support you as the Examinations Officer in the prevention of incidents of malpractice.

This guide should be read in conjunction with the current Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) documents.

- **Suspected Malpractice Policies: and Procedures**; and **Instructions for Conducting Examinations** available at www.jcq.org.uk.

You should also read all JCQ and CCEA instructions and regulations that relate to any other area of responsibility in your centre. All JCQ regulations and instructions are updated annually, so make sure you know and understand the most recent version.



2 What is malpractice?

JCQ regulations explain that malpractice, which includes maladministration and non-compliance, means any act, default or practice which is in breach of CCEA and/or JCQ regulations;

- a breach of the awarding body requirements regarding how a qualification should be delivered; and or
- a failure to follow established procedures in relation to a qualification; which:
 - gives rise to prejudice to candidates; and/or
 - compromises public confidence in qualifications; and/or
 - compromises, attempts to compromise or may compromise the process of assessment, the integrity of any qualification or the validity of a result or certificate; and/or
 - damages the authority, reputation or credibility of any awarding bodies or centre or officer, employee or agent of CCEA or a centre.



Failure by a centre to notify, investigate and report to CCEA allegations of malpractice or suspected malpractice or a failure to take action as required by CCEA or to co-operate with CCEA's investigation also constitute malpractice.

Staff malpractice

This is malpractice committed by a staff member that gives rise to prejudice to candidates and/or compromises public confidence in qualifications and/or may compromise the process or integrity of any assessment, result or certificate and/or cause reputational damage to the centre or related bodies or personnel.

The term staff includes:

- a member of staff, contractor (whether engaged under a contract of employment or contract for services) or a volunteer at a centre; or
- an individual appointed in another capacity by a centre, for example an invigilator, a Communication Professional, a Language Modifier, a practical assistant, a prompter, a reader or a scribe.

Examinations Officer malpractice therefore is any action you may take that could call into question the integrity of the examination you have any involvement with, either directly or indirectly.

Examples of Examinations Officer malpractice would include:

- allowing unauthorised persons to access the centre's secure storage facility;
- failure to check question paper packets and lock them away in secure storage, within the given time frame;
- failure to organize supervision for candidates with timetable clashes;
- not displaying the JCQ **Warning to Candidates** poster and the JCQ **Unauthorised Items** poster outside an examination room;



- no training for new invigilators or those facilitating an access arrangement for a candidate or no annual update meeting for existing invigilators;
- not informing invigilators of candidates with access arrangements and the particular access arrangements awarded; and
- releasing question papers to centre staff before the completion of the examination.

All allegations of malpractice or suspected malpractice must be reported to CCEA and investigated by your employing school/college to ensure the integrity and authenticity of the assessment.



3 The role of the Examinations Officer in preventing malpractice

There are a number of guidance documents available on the JCQ website that provide vital information for the conduct of examinations and assessments in a centre. Knowledge and implementation of the information contained within these documents protects you, as Examinations Officer, from committing malpractice.

You must make yourself familiar with the JCQ and CCEA regulations that relate to your Examinations Officer responsibilities in any assessment or examination delivery or conduct in your centre. It is your responsibility to be aware of the appropriate regulations in relation to this area and any other area for which you have responsibility. JCQ is clear that ignorance of the regulations will not, of itself, be considered a mitigating factor in a malpractice case.

There are a number of things you can do to support malpractice not taking place in your centre. Some examples are listed below and points can be read in more detail in the JCQ [Instructions for conducting examinations document](#). You can also watch the JCQ video [Question Paper Security](#) available on the JCQ website.

3.1 Delivery and security

Your centre needs to be open and have designated members of centre staff available Monday to Friday between 8.30 am and 3.30pm during term time to receive deliveries of question papers and other confidential examination material. Also, you, (or a senior member of staff) must be ready to receive an Inspector throughout the examination period and must cooperate with them throughout their visit to your centre. The Examinations Officer (or a senior member of staff) must be available until all afternoon examinations are finished, examination scripts despatched or placed in your secure storage facility until the following working day.

Arrangements must be in place to sign for all question paper packets and any other confidential examination material. Procedures should be in place to log these deliveries, carefully and precisely – JCQ Material Receipt Logs are available for centres to use. They must only be delivered to those authorised by the Head of Centre. All deliveries, still in their despatch packaging, must be moved to your secure storage facility immediately and should be checked by you (or an authorised person) as soon as possible after delivery, no later than the next working day, against despatch notes and centre entries. Check carefully that you have all what you require (or if you have received material that you do not require) and no packaging is open or damaged in any way. A log of this check must be kept. CCEA must be informed immediately if there are any problems. Following the checking, question paper packets should be arranged in timetable order to reduce the possibility of opening a packet at the wrong time. Packets must then be immediately locked in the secure storage facility.

3.2 Storage and security

Sealed examination packets, examination stationery and other confidential examination material must be in your designated secure storage facility (only current and 'live' confidential awarding body material should be in this facility) and must meet JCQ requirements, as outlined in JCQ



Instructions for Conducting Examinations – only 2-6 authorised staff (key holders, one of which must be the Exams Officer) should have access to this facility. Staff named and approved by the Head of Centre must be accompanied by a keyholder at all times. Procedures must be in place for the opening of question papers at the correct times in the secure storage facility room – a ‘second pair of eyes’ (see JCQ form) should check subject, time, date, unit/component, tier and record this. If it is subsequently identified following the second pair of eyes check that the wrong question paper packet has been opened, it must be resealed and the incident reported immediately to CCEA Compliance and Malpractice. You must check that all conditions are met for opening packages when computer readers, Language Modifiers/Live Speakers are being used. You must also adhere to the arrangements detailed in Section 4 of the JCQ Instructions for Conducting Examinations when handling secure electronic materials. **The awarding body must be contacted immediately if the security of the question papers/other confidential examination material is at risk, with respect to delivery or storage issues.**

3.3 Starting times for examinations and timetable clashes

You must adhere to regulations for starting an examination early/late, if required (candidates must always be allowed the full amount of time for an examination), especially with regard to centre supervision. If there are timetable clashes, candidates must be supervised strictly, according to regulations – overnight supervision should only be used as a last resort but strict guidance must be followed if it is needed. As JCQ **Instructions for Conducting Examinations** states, ‘Centre Supervision means that a member of centre staff/invigilator will always be in the same room as the candidate(s)’. Candidates may revise using their own resources but there must be no access to electronic equipment, internet, candidates who have already sat the examination and there must be no coaching/teaching by a member of centre staff.

3.4 The examination room

The conditions of an examination room must be conducive to the sitting of important, formal examinations. It should be a designated examination room (used solely for external examinations during an examination session) and it should be checked regularly and thoroughly – correct seating arrangements need to be in place, there should be adequate lighting, ventilation and heating, noise levels need to be checked and monitored, there must be a reliable, visible, working clock, a board/whiteboard/flipchart showing centre number, subject title and paper number, start/finishing times and date of the current examination, all according to regulations. A seating plan must be available and show the exact position of each candidate, any changes to it noted and those who have access arrangements noted. The JCQ **Warning to Candidates Poster** and JCQ **Unauthorised Items poster** must be displayed clearly outside the designated examination room. (Candidates must sit their examinations at the centre’s registered address – if there is going to be another site for the conduct of examinations you must notify JCQ Centre Inspection Service no later than six weeks before the start of the examination series and all regulations regarding question paper security must be adhered to.) Candidates must have received all JCQ **Information for candidates** documents before the examination period commences.

3.5 Invigilation

It is the responsibility of the Head of Centre to ensure that invigilators are appropriately trained in their duties. Invigilators must be trained and a record of training content made available for inspection. (Existing invigilators must be given an annual update with reference to any changes in regulations.) Invigilators must be asked to declare if they have any current maladministration/



malpractice sanctions applied to them. This will allow the Head of Centre to be satisfied that the person is a competent invigilator. Centres should consider devising a standard template which each invigilator is required to complete. You should ensure they have been given the **Checklist for Invigilators** (for written examinations) and must be aware of the JQC **Warning to Candidates** document, the JQC **Unauthorised Item poster** and **Instructions for Conducting Examinations**, with respect to their role during an examination session, for example, how to start an examination, the opening of question papers, distribution of stationery, not assisting candidates (rephrasing a question for a candidate, commenting on the content of the examination paper), discovery of unauthorised technical equipment, dealing with candidates who arrive late and completing the attendance register. Centres may use the Exam Room Incident Log provided by JQC.

For candidates with access arrangements you must follow regulations relating to the use of a 'roving' invigilator, a Language Modifier, Practical Assistant, computer reader, Scribe, Prompter and the Examinations Officer must ensure such people have the appropriate cover sheet before the examination starts.

Regulations must be followed when candidates are using resources such as amplification equipment, coloured overlays, bilingual translation dictionaries, colour naming, laptops, use of calculators and your invigilators must be aware of these.

3.6 During the examination

You must ensure that invigilators can identify candidates and know candidates who have particular access arrangements. All regulations concerning who should be in the examination room must be adhered to – The **Notice to Centres – The people present in the examination room** provides guidance. Regulations must be followed with respect to candidates who wish to leave an examination room. You must have a written centre policy for dealing with an emergency evacuation of the examination room. At the end of the examination invigilators must collect all scripts and other materials before candidates leave the examination room and these must not be released to staff until the awarding body's published finishing time or until all candidates within the centre have completed the paper concerned. Ensure that scripts are kept secure until they are despatched to the awarding body – they must be packed correctly and despatched on the scheduled day of the examination or no later than the next working day. You must return unused stationery to the secure storage room. All cases of suspected malpractice must be reported to the awarding body immediately.

3.7 Post-results

You must ensure that your centre's procedures for how it will deal with candidates' requests for access to scripts, clerical rechecks, reviews of marking, reviews of moderation and appeals to the awarding bodies are widely available and accessible to all candidates. They must be made aware of the arrangements for post-results service before they sit any examination.



4 What happens if malpractice is suspected?

Where an Examinations Officer breaches the regulations for examinations this must be investigated and CCEA may apply penalties.

Should you find yourself the focus of an allegation of malpractice, you will be advised of the process by those investigating the allegation. If you find yourself in this situation, make yourself aware of the JQC **Suspected Malpractice: Policies and Procedures**.

Any individual accused of alleged malpractice must be made aware of the detail of the allegation and his/her rights within the process. He/she will be made aware of any evidence to support the allegation and the information your centre/the investigator will be submitting in your case. He/she must have the opportunity and sufficient time to respond and provide a statement and can make an additional statement after he/she has reviewed the investigation findings for submission.

You will be interviewed by your employing school/college and asked to provide a signed written statement that will be sent to CCEA. Statements will also be taken from any witnesses, such as invigilators, students and relevant school staff.

Other evidence will be gathered appropriate to the category of malpractice.

Where exceptional circumstances may have influenced the reason for malpractice, you should inform the Head of Centre, who will determine if this is relevant to be submitted to CCEA as mitigation.

As an Examinations Officer you also may be asked to make a statement in relation to a staff or candidate malpractice case or provide evidence for a centre investigation. Failure to co-operate with an investigation is in itself malpractice.

A report of the school/college's investigation, along with all the supporting evidence, will be sent to CCEA for consideration and action will be taken in line with JQC procedures.



5 What happens if malpractice is found to have been committed?

Once a decision has been made, it will be communicated in writing to your Head of Centre as soon as possible. CCEA will inform your Head of Centre of any penalties to be applied to you, and he/she will tell you and support you should this happen.

It is the responsibility of the Head of Centre to communicate the decision to you as the individual concerned and to pass on details of any sanctions/penalties and action in cases where this is indicated. The Head of Centre must also inform you if you have the right to appeal.

The majority of malpractice cases are confidential between the centre, you as the individual who engaged in the malpractice and the awarding body.

However, in cases of serious malpractice, where the threat to the integrity of the examination or assessment is such as to outweigh a duty of confidentiality, it will normally be necessary for information to be exchanged amongst:

- the regulators;
- other awarding bodies;
- other regulatory or investigative bodies; and
- other centres where the malpractice may affect the delivery of an awarding body's qualification.

In accordance with the requirements of the General Conditions of Recognition, the awarding body will report cases of centre staff malpractice to the regulators if the circumstances of the case are likely to meet the definition of an Adverse Effect as defined in Condition B3.2 of the General Conditions of Recognition.

This will include details of the action taken by the Head of Centre, the governing body or the responsible employer. Other awarding bodies and other appropriate authorities will also be informed.

In serious cases of centre staff malpractice, the awarding bodies reserve the right to share information with professional bodies.

It is the responsibility of the Head of Centre to inform the accused individual that the awarding body may share information with other centres and other awarding bodies.

If the penalty imposed contains a suspension you are responsible for informing the awarding body when you will be resuming your duties.



6 Appeals

When a malpractice penalty is imposed on you following an investigation, you will have the opportunity to appeal in line with the JCQ **Appeals** procedure.

You or your Head of Centre may appeal if a sanction is imposed on you as a result of malpractice. This decision will be based on your school/college's internal policies.

7 Useful links

You will find all JCQ guidance relevant to your responsibilities in your centre at:

www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office

8 Contacts

For other queries or matters relating to malpractice which are not addressed by your Head of Centre or in JCQ procedures, please contact malpractice@ccea.org.uk



