

Preventing Malpractice in **General and Vocational Qualifications**

Guidance for Centre Staff

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1 Introduction

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance and support to centres offering CCEA qualifications. Its aim is to support centres and staff in the prevention, reporting and investigation of incidents of malpractice.

This guide should be read in conjunction with the current Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) document **Suspected Malpractice: Policies and Procedures** available at www.jcq.org.uk

You should also read all JCQ and CCEA instructions and regulations that relate to your area of responsibility in your centre. All JCQ regulations and instructions are updated annually, so make sure you are familiar with any recent changes made.



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; and/or

- 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, 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.

2.1 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 employed 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.

Examples of staff malpractice include:

- breaches of security of confidential assessment materials;
- deception, for example inventing or changing marks in internal assessment where there is no evidence of candidate achievement to justify the marks awarded, or fabricating authentication statements;
- improper assistance to candidates, for example any act where assistance is given beyond that permitted by the specification or regulations to a candidate or group of candidates, which results in a potential or actual advantage in an examination or assessment;



- failure to co-operate with an investigation; and
- maladministration, for example failing to adhere to the regulations regarding the conduct of coursework, controlled assessment or exams and non-exam assessments.

2.2 Candidate malpractice

This is malpractice committed by a candidate in connection with of any examination or assessment, including during:

- the preparation, completion and authentication of any controlled assessment, coursework or non-exam assessment;
- the presentation of any practical work;
- the compilation of portfolios of assessment evidence; or
- the writing of any exam paper.

Examples of candidate malpractice include:

- breaching examination conditions, for example disruptive behaviour, failing to abide by supervision conditions;
- including inappropriate or offensive material in any work that they submit;
- plagiarism;
- introducing unauthorised material into the exam room, for example a mobile phone, a watch, notes or a calculator in the exam or assessment;
- sharing what may be considered assessment-related information, for example by means of talking, electronic, written or non-verbal communication; and
- copying or colluding with another candidate.



3 Your role 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 both you and your candidates from committing malpractice.

3.1 Preventing staff malpractice

You must make yourself familiar with the JCQ and CCEA regulations that relate to your area of involvement 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 your areas of 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.

3.1.1 Exams

- All staff involved in examination delivery must be familiar with and abide by the requirements for conducting examinations as specified in the JCQ **Instructions for conducting examinations**.
- Do not enter the exam room unless you have been given permission by your Head of Centre to do so. If you are a subject teacher responsible for preparing candidates for the exam, you should not enter the exam room whilst your subject exam is underway unless this is specifically required, for example for Health and Safety management in GCSE Science practical exams or if a candidate has an issue with the paper that the invigilator cannot address. A member of staff may only leave the exam room with an exam paper if this is to be used to check a problem with CCEA.
- All staff administering and facilitating access arrangements/reasonable adjustments for candidates must be trained before involvement in this work and should make sure they carry out all duties in line with the requirements of the JCQ **Access arrangements and reasonable adjustments** guidance. Evidence of candidate need must be maintained by the centre and be available for review during centre inspection visits.
- Training must be provided for all invigilators and staff involved in the examination process. A record of this training must be retained in the centre.
- Appropriate arrangements must be in place to maintain the security of all confidential examination and assessment materials as detailed in the booklet **Instructions for conducting examinations** and the JCQ video **Question Paper Security**.
- If your subject examination involves pre-release materials, ensure that all rules in relation to access to these materials are strictly followed. If as Head of Department you are required to check these materials prior to the exam/assessment, you are advised not to carry out any revision work with your class between this check and the completion of the exam/assessment so as to protect yourself from any possible allegation of malpractice.



3.1.2 Internal assessment: coursework, controlled assessment, portfolio and practical work

- All staff involved in the delivery of internally assessed units must be familiar with and abide by the requirements for controlled assessments and coursework. These are specified in the relevant subject specification and the CCEA **Instructions for conducting controlled assessments** (GCSE) and JCQ **Instructions for conducting coursework** (GCE, ELC and Project qualifications).
- All staff and candidates must be familiar with and understand the JCQ guidance **Plagiarism in assessments – guidance for teachers/assessors**. Make sure your students are aware of the referencing rules in your subject area.
- Make sure your centre and/or department has a policy on controlled assessment/coursework which meets the needs of the subject and the JCQ guidelines. Policies will be checked as part of a centre inspection visit.
- Do not assist candidates in the production of controlled assessment or coursework beyond what is permitted in the subject specification and JCQ regulations.
- Candidates should not be allowed to work collaboratively beyond what is permitted in the subject requirements, so as to ensure an individual piece of work, representing individual candidate effort and ability, is submitted for assessment for each candidate entered.
- Do not sign authentication statements for internally assessed candidate work that you cannot stand over. Should it be found that candidates in a class group have copied, colluded or plagiarised significant parts of their submitted work which you marked and authenticated as individual students' work, this will be investigated as teacher malpractice as well as candidate malpractice.
- Make sure that all candidate work is stored securely as required.

The aim of each assessment is to enable a mark to be given for work which is the candidate's own and is a true reflection of their individual efforts and ability. Any actions on your part, or that of a candidate, which could compromise the integrity of an assessment may be seen as malpractice.

Check your centre's procedure for reporting malpractice and ensure that all alleged, suspected and actual incidents of malpractice are reported to CCEA either directly to **malpractice@ccea.org.uk** or through your centre's senior management.



3.2 Preventing candidate malpractice

You and your centre can take action to support candidates and reduce or eliminate the risk of malpractice by candidates, for example by ensuring that:

- all candidates are aware of behaviour that constitutes malpractice;
- all candidates are aware of the penalties imposed on those who commit malpractice;
- the JCQ **Information for candidates** (available at www.jcq.org.uk) is given to all candidates prior to assessments/examinations taking place and the importance of the content emphasised;
- systems are in place to ensure candidates should not bring unauthorised materials into the exam/assessment room or be in a position to access such materials in another location, for example a bathroom, during the exam/assessment;
- the JCQ **Unauthorised items poster** and **Warning to candidate posters** are displayed prominently;
- candidates know that a mobile phone, watch, AirPods or other unauthorised item in their possession will lead to loss of marks even if it is switched off/dead, they did not use it, or they had forgotten they had it with them, and that use of a device will lead to disqualification;
- candidate work being completed for internal assessment is stored securely and cannot be accessed by other candidates;
- candidates and teachers know what is meant by plagiarism and are familiar with the JCQ document **Plagiarism in assessments – guidance for teachers/assessors** and the subject-specific referencing requirements;
- you challenge coursework or controlled assessment content submitted that is not reflective of a candidate's observed level of performance in your subject;
- candidates submit individual work for internally assessed units and do not work collaboratively beyond what is permitted;
- you monitor and report similar content being submitted by candidates in your class for internally assessed units;
- candidates have a copy of the JCQ document **Information for Candidates - Social Media** and have an opportunity to discuss this; and
- candidates know that the sharing/exchange/receipt of information which may be exam related, or the attempt to do so, is malpractice and can have serious consequences for their assessment outcomes.

Candidates rely on centre staff to establish parameters that will protect them from malpractice. You have the knowledge of the risks specific to your area of responsibility or your subject and have the expertise to guide candidates in order to protect them from possible malpractice.

Where your candidates choose to ignore the rules, this will be progressed as candidate malpractice. Where the rules have not been put in place or enforced, resulting in the integrity of the candidate assessment being compromised, this may be progressed as staff malpractice.



4 Reporting malpractice

If you have concerns about alleged, suspected or actual malpractice you should report this to your Head of Centre so this can be progressed appropriately. You can also report it directly to CCEA, confidentially at your request, at malpractice@ccea.org.uk.

4.1 Suspected malpractice identified by a centre

4.1.1 Staff malpractice

All potential staff malpractice identified in a centre must be reported to CCEA as soon as it is suspected.

In cases where the Head of Centre or a senior member of staff is implicated in any alleged malpractice, CCEA reserves the right to investigate directly. In other cases, the Head of Centre or designated senior member of staff will be asked to investigate in line with the JCQ procedures and provide a detailed report along with all supporting evidence to CCEA.

4.1.2 Candidate malpractice

If candidate malpractice in an internal assessment is discovered before authentication forms have been signed, this should be dealt with internally by the centre and need not be reported to CCEA. The only exception to this is where CCEA's confidential assessment material has been breached. In such a case, the breach must be reported to CCEA. If a candidate has not been entered with CCEA for the unit, any malpractice in this should also be dealt with in line with the centre's internal procedures. In all other instances candidate malpractice must be reported to CCEA and it will be necessary to submit a centre investigation.

4.2 Malpractice reported by others

Allegations of malpractice are sometimes reported directly to CCEA by centre staff, regulators, candidates, parents, other awarding bodies and members of the public. Sometimes these reports are anonymous.

CCEA will not disclose the identity of individuals reporting cases of suspected malpractice unless legally obliged to do so. CCEA will not report the outcome of cases to persons making allegations.

CCEA evaluates all allegations and where the information provided is such as to allow investigation, the centre will be contacted and told the detail of the allegation. If appropriate, the Head of Centre will be required to carry out an investigation. CCEA may also investigate directly or ask an employing authority to carry out the investigation.

CCEA also monitors social media. Any posts which suggest possible candidate or staff malpractice will be investigated.



5 The investigation

Normally an investigation into suspected malpractice will be undertaken by the Head of Centre. Where the Head of Centre delegates responsibility for the investigation, he/she retains overall responsibility for the process.

In a staff case, the Head of Centre or member of senior staff carrying out the investigation will be required to complete a conflict of interest declaration for submission with the investigation documentation.

You 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.

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 his/her 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.

Where special situations have arisen that may have influenced the circumstances for malpractice for either a candidate or a staff member, this information should be provided to the Head of Centre, who will determine if this is relevant to be submitted to CCEA as mitigation.

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

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

Should a malpractice sanction be imposed upon you following an investigation, you will have the opportunity to appeal in line with the **JCQ appeals procedure**.



6 Decision making and sanctions

6.1 Staff malpractice

6.1.1 Decisions

Decisions on staff malpractice will be made on an individual basis in light of the investigation findings and the available evidence submitted. The decision will be made in line with JCQ malpractice procedures and will be based on the balance of probabilities as to whether the malpractice occurred or not. Should a staff member involved decline the opportunity to make a statement, the case will proceed on the basis of all other information.

A letter stating the decision made and details of any sanctions applied will be sent to the Head of Centre for distribution to the member of staff. A copy of the outcome will also be sent to the Head of Centre.

6.1.2 Sanctions

CCEA can impose the following sanctions, either individually or in combination, on centre staff found guilty of malpractice:

- a written warning;
- the requirement for training or mentoring;
- the requirement for special conditions on involvement in future examinations and assessments; and/or
- suspension from involvement in examination work for a set period of time.

Wherever centre staff malpractice has affected the outcomes for candidates, CCEA will take appropriate action to safeguard the integrity of the assessment and the interests of the candidates involved. However, CCEA may find that it is not possible to accept candidate work submitted or undertaken for assessment as it does not represent the efforts of the individual candidates.

Where a member of staff has a sanction imposed and then moves to a new centre, it is the responsibility of the Head of Centre where the malpractice took place to inform CCEA of the move. CCEA reserves the right to inform the Head of Centre to which the member of staff is moving, as to the nature of, and the reason for the sanction. Failure to do so would be malpractice. In cases of serious staff malpractice, CCEA will inform the appropriate regulator and other appropriate authorities.



6.2 Candidate malpractice

6.2.1 Decisions

Decisions on candidate malpractice will be made on an individual basis in light of the investigation findings and the available evidence provided by the centre. The decision will be made in line with JCQ malpractice procedures and will be based on the balance of probabilities as to whether the malpractice occurred or not. Should a candidate involved decline the opportunity to make a statement, the case will proceed on the basis of all other information.

A letter stating the decision made and detailing any sanctions applied will be sent to the Head of Centre, who must inform the candidate. Where possible letters will be issued prior to the issue of results by CCEA. Should a candidate case remain open at the issue of results, candidate statements received by your centre will show a 'Q', indicating an ongoing query. Once the case is closed, a new statement of results will be issued where required.

6.2.2 Sanctions

The possible sanctions imposed by CCEA against candidates include:

- a warning;
- the loss of some or all of the marks in a unit;
- disqualification from a unit or all units in a series, preventing aggregation or certification in that series;
- disqualification from a qualification or all qualifications; and/or
- barring a candidate from entering CCEA examinations for a set time period.



7 Appeals

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. Your Head of Centre can also submit an appeal on behalf of candidates entered or registered through the centre, as candidates and their parents/guardians cannot directly appeal their sanctions. The decision on whether to submit an appeal should be made in line with the centre's internal policies.

8 Useful links

You will find all JCQ guidance relevant to your responsibilities in your centre at www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office

You will find CCEA guidance relevant to your subject area or general responsibilities in your centre at:

www.ccea.org.uk/qualifications/gce

www.ccea.org.uk/qualifications/gcse

<https://ccea.org.uk/key-stage-4/vocational>

<https://ccea.org.uk/post-16/vocational>

9 Contacts

For specific queries or matters relating to malpractice which are not addressed above or in the JCQ procedures, please contact malpractice@ccea.org.uk.

CCEA cannot communicate directly with parents/guardians or candidates in relation to examination, assessment or malpractice matters. Therefore, parental queries will be redirected to centres and may come to you for response. This information should help you deal with parental queries in relation to candidate malpractice.



