



Joint Council for  
Qualifications<sup>CIC</sup>

# Suspected Malpractice Policies and Procedures

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## Definition

### Candidate malpractice

‘Candidate malpractice’ means malpractice by a candidate in connection with any examination or assessment, including the preparation and authentication of any controlled assessments, coursework or non-examination assessments, the presentation of any practical work, the compilation of portfolios of assessment evidence and the writing of any examination paper. Examples of candidate malpractice are set out in Appendix 2, Part 2. The list is not exhaustive and does not limit the scope of the definitions set out in this document. Other instances of malpractice may be considered by the awarding bodies at their discretion.

## 10 Sanctions applied against candidates

**10.1** Candidates may be subject to one or more sanctions (see Appendix 6).

**10.2** Awarding bodies may, at their discretion, impose the following sanctions against candidates:

### **1. Warning**

The candidate is issued with a warning that if he/she commits malpractice within a set period of time, further specified sanctions will be applied.

### **2. Loss of all marks for a section**

The candidate loses all the marks gained for a discrete section of the work. A section may be part of a component, or a single piece of non-examination assessment if this consists of several items.

### **3. Loss of all marks for a component**

The candidate loses all the marks gained for a component.

A component is more often a feature of a linear qualification than a unitised qualification, and so this sanction can be regarded as an alternative to sanction 4. Some units also have components, in which case a level of sanction between numbers 2 and 4 is possible.

### **4. Loss of all marks for a unit**

The candidate loses all the marks gained for a unit. This sanction can only be applied to qualifications which are unitised.

For linear qualifications, the option is sanction 3. This sanction usually allows the candidate to aggregate or request certification in that series, albeit with a reduced mark or grade.

### **5. Disqualification from a unit**

The candidate is disqualified from the unit. This sanction is only available if the qualification is unitised. For linear qualifications the option is sanction 7.

The effect of this sanction is to prevent the candidate aggregating or requesting certification in that series, if the candidate has applied for it.

### **6. Disqualification from all units in one or more qualifications**

If circumstances justify, sanction 5 may be applied to other units taken during the same examination or assessment series. (Units which have been banked in previous examination series are retained.) This sanction is only available if the qualification is unitised. For linear qualifications the option is sanction 8.

### **7. Disqualification from a whole qualification**

The candidate is disqualified from the whole qualification taken in that series or academic year. This sanction can be applied to unitised qualifications only if the candidate has requested aggregation. Any units banked in a previous examination series are retained, but the units taken in the present series and the aggregation opportunity are lost. If a candidate has not requested aggregation, the option is sanction 6. It may also be used with linear qualifications.

## **8. Disqualification from all qualifications taken in that series**

If circumstances justify, sanction 7 may be applied to other qualifications. This sanction can be applied to unitised qualifications only if the candidate has requested aggregation. Any units banked in a previous examination series are retained, but the units taken in the present series and the aggregation opportunity are lost. If a candidate has not requested aggregation, the option is sanction 6. It may also be used with linear qualifications.

## **9. Candidate debarral**

The candidate is barred from entering for one or more examinations for a set period of time. This sanction is applied in conjunction with any of the other sanctions above, if the circumstances warrant it.

**10.3** Unless a sanction is accompanied by a bar on future entry, all candidates penalised by loss of marks or disqualification may re-take the component(s), unit(s) or qualification(s) affected in the next examination series or assessment opportunity if the specification permits this.

**10.4** Heads of centre may wish to take further action themselves in cases of candidate malpractice.

## Appendix 6 Indicative sanctions against candidates

This table is for guidance only and sanctions can be flexibly applied according to the details of each individual case.

In instances where the box is blank, the sanction may still be used.

The structure of awarding bodies' qualifications can differ and therefore all the available sanctions may not be relevant for every qualification.

Type of offence	Warning (Sanction 1)	Loss of marks (Aggregation still permitted) (Sanctions 2-4)	Loss of aggregation or certification opportunity (Sanctions 5-9)
<b>Introduction of unauthorised material into the examination room, for example:</b>			
Own blank paper	used for rough work	used for final answers	
Calculators, dictionaries (when prohibited)	not used	used or attempted to use	
Bringing into the examination room notes in the wrong format or prohibited annotations	notes/annotations go beyond what is permitted but do not give an advantage; content irrelevant to subject	notes/annotations are relevant and give an unfair advantage	notes/annotations introduced in a deliberate attempt to gain an advantage
Unauthorised notes, study guides and personal organisers	content irrelevant to subject	content relevant to subject	relevant to subject and evidence of use
Mobile phone or similar electronic devices (including iPod, MP3/4 player, memory sticks, smartphone, smartwatch, AirPods, earphones and headphones)	not in the candidate's possession but makes a noise during the examination	in the candidate's possession but no evidence of being used by the candidate	in the candidate's possession and evidence of being used by the candidate
Watches (not smartwatches)	in candidate's possession		
<b>Standard sanctions:</b>			
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. warning;</li> <li>2. loss of all marks gained for a section;</li> <li>3. loss of all marks gained for a component;</li> <li>4. loss of all marks gained for a unit;</li> <li>5. disqualification from the unit;</li> </ol>		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. disqualification from all units in one or more qualifications taken in the series;</li> <li>7. disqualification from the whole qualification;</li> <li>8. disqualification from all qualifications taken in that series;</li> <li>9. barred from entering for examinations for a set period of time.</li> </ol>	

Type of offence	Warning (Sanction 1)	Loss of marks (Aggregation still permitted) (Sanctions 2-4)	Loss of aggregation or certification opportunity (Sanctions 5-9)
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#### Breaches of examination conditions

A breach of the instructions or advice of an invigilator, supervisor, or the awarding body in relation to the examination rules and regulations	minor non-compliance: e.g. sitting in a non-designated seat; continuing to write for a short period after being told to stop	major non-compliance: e.g. refusing to move to a designated seat; significant amount of writing after being told to stop	repeated non-compliance
Failing to abide by the conditions of supervision designed to maintain the security and integrity of the examinations	leaving examination early (no loss of integrity); removing script from the examination room, but evidence of the integrity was maintained	removing script from examination room but with no proof that the script is safe; taking home materials	deliberately breaking a timetable clash supervision arrangement; removing script from the examination room and with proof that the script has been tampered with; leaving examination room early so integrity is impaired
Disruptive behaviour in the examination room or assessment session (including use of offensive language)	minor disruption lasting a short time; calling out, causing noise, turning around	repeated or prolonged disruption; unacceptably rude remarks; being removed from the examination room; taking another's possessions	warnings ignored; provocative or aggravated behaviour; repeated or loud offensive comments; physical assault on staff or property

#### Standard sanctions:

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|--|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. warning;</li> <li>2. loss of all marks gained for a section;</li> <li>3. loss of all marks gained for a component;</li> <li>4. loss of all marks gained for a unit;</li> <li>5. disqualification from the unit;</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. disqualification from all units in one or more qualifications taken in the series;</li> <li>7. disqualification from the whole qualification;</li> <li>8. disqualification from all qualifications taken in that series;</li> <li>9. barred from entering for examinations for a set period of time.</li> </ol> |
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Type of offence	Warning (Sanction 1)	Loss of marks (Aggregation still permitted) (Sanctions 2-4)	Loss of aggregation or certification opportunity (Sanctions 5-9)
<b>Exchanging, obtaining, receiving, or passing on information which could be examination related (or the attempt to):</b>			
Verbal communication	isolated incidents of talking before the start of the examination or after papers have been collected	talking during the examination about matters not related to the exam; accepting examination related information	talking about examination related matters during the exam; whispering answers to questions
Communication	passing/receiving written communications which clearly have no bearing on the assessment	accepting assessment related information	passing assessment related information to other candidates; helping one another; swapping scripts
<b>Offences relating to the content of candidates' work</b>			
The inclusion of offensive or obscene material in scripts, controlled assessments, coursework, non-examination assessments or portfolios	Isolated offensive words or drawings	Frequent offensive words or drawings; isolated obscenity or offensive comments directed at an individual or group	Frequent obscenities; discriminatory language, remarks or drawings directed at an individual or group.
<b>Standard sanctions:</b>			
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. warning;</li> <li>2. loss of all marks gained for a section;</li> <li>3. loss of all marks gained for a component;</li> <li>4. loss of all marks gained for a unit;</li> <li>5. disqualification from the unit;</li> </ol>		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. disqualification from all units in one or more qualifications taken in the series;</li> <li>7. disqualification from the whole qualification;</li> <li>8. disqualification from all qualifications taken in that series;</li> <li>9. barred from entering for examinations for a set period of time.</li> </ol>	

Type of offence	Warning (Sanction 1)	Loss of marks (Aggregation still permitted) (Sanctions 2-4)	Loss of aggregation or certification opportunity (Sanctions 5-9)
Collusion: working collaboratively with others beyond what is permitted	collaborative work is apparent in a few areas, but possibly due to teacher advice; candidate unaware of the regulations	collaborative work begins to affect the examiner's ability to award a fair mark to an individual candidate	candidates' work reflects extensive similarities and identical passages; due to a deliberate attempt to share work
Plagiarism: unacknowledged copying from or reproduction of third party sources (including the internet and AI tools); incomplete referencing	minor amount of plagiarism/poor referencing in places	plagiarism from work listed in the bibliography or referenced/ <b>acknowledged</b> ; <b>or</b> minor amount of plagiarism from a source not listed in the bibliography or referenced / <b>acknowledged</b>	plagiarism from work not listed in the bibliography or referenced/ <b>acknowledged</b> ; <b>or</b> plagiarised text consists of the substance of the work submitted and the source is listed in the bibliography or referenced / <b>acknowledged</b>
Making a false declaration of authenticity		sections of work done by others, but most still the work of the candidate	most or all of the work is not that of the candidate
Copying from another candidate or allowing work to be copied (including the misuse of technology)	lending work not knowing it would be copied	permitting examination script/work to be copied; showing other candidates' answers	copying from another candidate's script, controlled assessment, coursework, non-examination assessment; borrowing work to copy
<b>Undermining the integrity of the examinations/assessments</b>			
The deliberate destruction of work	minor damage to work which does not impair visibility	defacing scripts; destruction of candidate's own work	significant destruction of another candidate's work
The alteration or falsification of any results document, including certificates			falsification/forgery
<b>Standard sanctions:</b>			
1. warning; 2. loss of all marks gained for a section; 3. loss of all marks gained for a component; 4. loss of all marks gained for a unit; 5. disqualification from the unit;		6. disqualification from all units in one or more qualifications taken in the series; 7. disqualification from the whole qualification; 8. disqualification from all qualifications taken in that series; 9. barred from entering for examinations for a set period of time.	



Type of offence	Warning (Sanction 1)	Loss of marks (Aggregation still permitted) (Sanctions 2-4)	Loss of aggregation or certification opportunity (Sanctions 5-9)
Misuse of, or attempted misuse of, assessment material and resources	attempting to source assessment related information online	accepting assessment related information without reporting it to the awarding body	misuse of assessment material or exam related information including: attempting to gain or gaining prior knowledge of assessment information; improper access to assessment related information (including electronic means); improper disclosure (including electronic means); receipt of assessment information from the examination room; facilitating malpractice on the part of others; passing or distributing assessment related information to others
Removing or stealing any candidate's work			Unauthorised removal of any candidate's work (e.g. project/coursework)
Personation			deliberate use of wrong name or number; personating another individual; arranging to be personated
Behaving in a way as to undermine the integrity of the examination/assessment			for example, attempting to obtain certificates fraudulently; attempted bribery; attempting to obtain or supply exam materials fraudulently
<b>Standard sanctions:</b>			
1. warning; 2. loss of all marks gained for a section; 3. loss of all marks gained for a component; 4. loss of all marks gained for a unit; 5. disqualification from the unit;		6. disqualification from all units in one or more qualifications taken in the series; 7. disqualification from the whole qualification; 8. disqualification from all qualifications taken in that series; 9. barred from entering for examinations for a set period of time.	

Type of offence	Warning (Sanction 1)	Loss of marks (Aggregation still permitted) (Sanctions 2-4)	Loss of aggregation or certification opportunity (Sanctions 5-9)
Use of social media for the exchange and circulation of real or fake assessment material	attempting to source secure assessment related information online/via social media	accepting/receiving real or fake assessment related information via social media without reporting it to the awarding body	misuse of assessment material (real or fake) including: attempting to gain or gaining prior knowledge of assessment information via social media; improper disclosure of real or fake assessment information; passing or distributing real or fake assessment related information to others
Obstructing or hindering a malpractice investigation	failing to report suspected malpractice by other candidates	providing incomplete information to those gathering information for a malpractice investigation	providing misleading and/or significantly incomplete information to those gathering information for a malpractice investigation
<b>Standard sanctions:</b>			
1. warning; 2. loss of all marks gained for a section; 3. loss of all marks gained for a component; 4. loss of all marks gained for a unit; 5. disqualification from the unit;		6. disqualification from all units in one or more qualifications taken in the series; 7. disqualification from the whole qualification; 8. disqualification from all qualifications taken in that series; 9. barred from entering for examinations for a set period of time.	