

# **BLESSED ROBERT SUTTON CATHOLIC VOLUNTARY ACADEMY**



## **Suspected Malpractice in Examinations and Assessments Policies and Procedures**

Policy Review Date: September 2022

## Malpractice

“Malpractice” means any act, default or practice which is a breach of the regulations or which:

- compromises, attempts to compromise or may compromise the process of assessment, the integrity of any qualification or the validity of an examination result or certificate
- damages the authority, reputation or credibility of any awarding body or centre, or any officer, employee or agent of any awarding body or centre

A failure by a centre to investigate allegations of suspected malpractice in accordance with the requirements in this document also constitutes malpractice.

## Centre Staff Malpractice

“Centre Staff Malpractice” means malpractice committed by a member of staff at a centre, or an individual appointed as an oral language modifier, a practical assistant, a prompter, a reader, a sign interpreter or a scribe to a candidate.

## Candidate Malpractice

“Candidate Malpractice” means malpractice by a candidate in the course of any examination or assessment, including the preparation and authentication of any coursework, the presentation of any practical work, the compilation of portfolios of assessment evidence and the writing of any examination paper.

## Procedures for dealing with allegations of malpractice

Any suspicion of malpractice should be brought to the attention of the exams officer in the first instance who will inform the head of the centre who will deal with the matter and follow the NAA guidelines.

The handling of malpractice complaints and allegations involves the following phases:

- the allegation
- the awarding body’s response
- the investigation
- the report
- the decision
- the appeal

## Communications

Awarding bodies will normally communicate with the head of centre when reporting allegations of malpractice, except when the head of centre is under investigation.

## Suspected malpractice identified by a centre

Where suspected malpractice is identified by a centre, the head of centre must submit the full details of the case at the earliest opportunity to the relevant awarding body. Malpractice in coursework



components of a specification discovered prior to the candidate signing the declaration of authentication need not be reported to awarding bodies, but must be dealt with in accordance with the centre's internal procedures. Centres should not normally give credit for any work submitted which is not the candidate's own work, but if any assistance has been given, a note must be made of this on the cover sheet of the coursework or other appropriate place.

## Investigations carried out by the head of centre

It will normally be expected that investigations into allegations of malpractice will be carried out by the head of centre. The head of centre should seek to deal with the investigation in a timely manner. Those responsible for conducting an investigation should establish the full facts and circumstances of any alleged malpractice. It should not be assumed that because an allegation has been made, it is true.

## Sanctions for centre staff malpractice – individuals

In cases of centre staff malpractice, the role of the awarding body is confined to considering whether the integrity of its examinations and assessments has been placed in jeopardy and whether that integrity might be jeopardised if an individual found to have indulged in malpractice were to be involved in the future conduct, supervision or administration of the awarding body's examinations or assessments.

Where a member of staff or contractor has been found guilty of malpractice, an awarding body may impose the following sanctions or penalties:

- 1. Written Warning** - Issue the member of staff with a written warning that if the offence is repeated within a set period of time, further specified sanctions will be applied.
- 2. Special Conditions** - Impose special conditions on the future involvement in its examinations and/or assessments by the member of staff, whether this involves the internal assessments, the conduct, supervision or administration of its examinations and assessments.
- 3. Training** - Require the member of staff, as a condition of future involvement in its examinations, to undertake specific training or mentoring, within a particular period of time and a review process at the end of the training.
- 4. Suspension** - Bar the member of staff from all involvement in the delivery of its examinations and assessments for a set period of time. Other awarding bodies and the regulators will be informed when a suspension is imposed.

These sanctions will be notified to the head of centre who will be required to ensure that they are carried out.

If a member of staff moves to another centre while being subject to one of the above sanctions, the head of centre should notify the awarding body of the move. Awarding bodies reserve the right to inform the head of centre to which the staff member is moving of the nature of, and the reason for, the sanction.



## Sanctions for centre staff malpractice – centres

Awarding bodies may, at their discretion, impose the following penalties and special conditions against centres. These penalties and special conditions may be applied individually or in combination. Awarding bodies will determine the appropriateness of a sanction depending on the evidence presented, the nature and circumstances of the malpractice, and the type of qualification involved.

- **Written warning**

A letter to the head of centre advising of the breach (including the report) and advising of the further action that may be taken (including the application of penalties and special conditions) should there be a recurrence of this breach, or subsequent breaches at the centre.

- **Review and Report (Action Plans)**

The head of centre will be required to review the centre's procedures for the conduct or administration of a particular examination/assessment, or all examinations/assessments in general and to report back to the awarding body on improvements implemented by a set date.

## Sanctions and penalties applied against candidates

Awarding bodies may, at their discretion, impose the following sanctions and penalties against candidates found guilty of candidate malpractice:

### **Penalty 1 – Warning**

The candidate is issued with a warning that if the offence is repeated within a set period of time, further specified sanctions will be applied.

### **Penalty 2 – Loss of 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 coursework or controlled assessment if this consists of several items.

### **Penalty 3 – Loss of marks for a component**

The candidate loses all the marks gained for a component.

### **Penalty 4 – Loss of all marks for a unit**

The candidate loses all the marks gained for a unit. This penalty usually allows the candidate to aggregate or request certification in that series, albeit with a reduced mark or grade.

### **Penalty 5 – Disqualification from a unit**

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

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

If circumstances suggest, penalty 5 may be applied to other units taken during the same examination or assessment series. (Units which have been banked in previous exam series are retained.)

### **Penalty 7 – Disqualification from a whole qualification**

The candidate is disqualified from the whole qualification taken in that series or academic year. Any units banked in a previous series are retained, but the units taken in the present series and the aggregation opportunity are lost.

### **Penalty 8 – Disqualification from all qualifications taken in that series**

If circumstances suggest, penalty 7 may be applied to other qualifications. Any units banked in a previous series are retained, but the units taken in the present series and the aggregation opportunity are lost.

### **Penalty 9 – Candidate debarral**



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

## **Examples of Malpractice**

The following are examples of malpractice. Other instances of malpractice may be identified and considered by the awarding bodies at their discretion.

### **Part 1: Centre Staff Malpractice**

#### **Breach of security**

Breaking the confidentiality of question papers or materials and their electronic equivalents, or the confidentiality of candidates' scripts or their electronic equivalents.

It could involve:

- failing to keep examination material secure prior to an examination
- moving the time or date of a fixed examination (beyond the arrangements permitted by the regulations within the JCQ publication – Instructions for Conducting Examinations) without notifying the relevant awarding body. Conducting an examination before the published date is centre staff malpractice and a clear breach of security
- failing to supervise adequately candidates who have been affected by a timetable variation. This would apply to candidates subject to overnight supervision by centre personnel or where an examination is to be sat in an earlier or later session on the scheduled day
- permitting, facilitating or obtaining unauthorised access to examination material prior to an examination
- failing to retain and secure examination papers after an exam in cases where the life of the paper extends beyond the particular session (such papers are always clearly marked). For example, where an examination is to be sat in a later session by one or more candidates due to a timetable variation
- tampering with candidate scripts or coursework after collection and before despatch to the awarding body / examiner / moderator
- failing to keep student computer files which contain coursework secure

#### **Deception**

Any act of dishonesty in relation to any examination or assessment, but not limited to:

- inventing or changing marks for internally assessed components (eg. Coursework & controlled assessment) where there is no actual evidence of the candidates' achievement to justify the marks being given
- manufacturing evidence of competence against national standards
- fabricating assessment and/or internal verification records or authentication statements
- entering fictitious candidates for examinations or assessments, or otherwise subverting the assessment or certification process with the intention of financial gain (fraud)

#### **Improper assistance to candidates**

Giving assistance beyond the requirements of the specification to a candidate or group of candidates, which results in a potential or actual advantage in an examination or assessment.

For example:

- assisting candidates in the production of coursework or controlled assessment, or evidence of achievement, beyond that permitted by the regulations
- assisting or prompting candidates with the production of answers



- permitting candidates in an examination to access prohibited materials (dictionaries, calculators etc)
- prompting candidates in language speaking examinations by means of signs or verbal or written prompts
- assisting candidates granted the use of an oral language modifier, a practical assistant, a prompter, a reader, a scribe or a sign interpreter beyond that permitted by the regulations

### **Maladministration**

Failure to adhere to the regulations regarding the conduct of coursework, controlled assessments, portfolios and examinations. Malpractice in the conduct of the examinations or assessments and/or the handling of examination papers, candidate scripts, marksheets, cumulative assessment records and certificate claim forms etc.

For example:

- failing to ensure that candidates' coursework is adequately monitored and supervised
- inappropriate members of staff assessing candidates for access arrangements who do not meet the criteria as detailed by the JCQ regulations
- failure to use current assignments for assessments
- failure to train invigilators adequately, leading to non compliance of JCQ regulations
- failing to issue to candidates the appropriate notices and warnings
- failure to inform JCQ Centre Inspection Service of alternative sites for examinations
- failing to post notices relating to the examination or assessment on all rooms (including music and art rooms) where examinations and assessments are held
- not ensuring that the examination venue conforms to awarding body requirements
- failing to ensure that mobile phones, smart watches and other electronic devices are placed outside the examination room
- failure to keep accurate records in relation to late arrivals and very late arrivals
- failure to keep accurate and up to date records regarding the conferring of centre delegated access arrangements
- failure to supervise effectively the printing of computer based assignments when this is required
- failing to retain candidates' coursework and controlled assessments in secure conditions after the authentication statements have been signed
- failing to despatch candidate scripts/coursework to the awarding bodies or examiners or moderators in a timely way
- failing to report an instance of suspected malpractice in examinations or assessments to the appropriate awarding body as soon as possible after such an instance occurs or is discovered

### **Part 2 – Candidate Malpractice**

For example:

- a breach of the instructions or advice of an invigilator, supervisor or the awarding body in relation to the examination or assessment rules and regulation
- failing to abide by the conditions of supervision designed to maintain the security of the examinations or assessments
- working collaboratively with other candidates, beyond what is permitted
- copying from another candidate (including the use of ICT to aid the copying)
- allowing work to be copied
- the deliberate destruction of another candidate's work
- disruptive behaviour in the examination room or during an assessment session (including the use of offensive language)



- exchanging, obtaining, receiving, passing on information (or the attempt to) which could be examination related by means of talking, electronic, written or non-verbal communication
- making a false declaration of authenticity in relation to the authorship of coursework or the contents of a portfolio
- the misuse or attempted misuse of examination and assessment materials and resources (eg. exemplar materials)
- being in possession of confidential material in advance of the examination
- the inclusion of inappropriate, offensive or obscene material in scripts, coursework or portfolios
- plagiarism: unacknowledged copying from published sources or incomplete referencing
- theft of another candidate's work
- bringing into the examination room or assessment situation unauthorised material, eg. Notes, study guides, personal organisers, own blank paper, calculators, dictionaries (when prohibited), wordlists, IPODs, mobile phones, smart watches or MP3 players
- behaving in a manner as to undermine the integrity of the examination

## Illustrations of Malpractice

The following illustrations of malpractice are edited examples from the records of all the awarding bodies which are party to the JCQ regulations.

### Centre staff malpractice:

- tampering with candidate's scripts or coursework after collection and before despatch to the awarding body
- assisting candidates in the production of coursework/controlled assessment
- assisting candidates in the production of answers
- fabricating assessment and/or internal verification records or authentication statements
- poor invigilation
- failing to conduct a proper investigation into suspected malpractice

### Candidate malpractice:

- the alteration of any result document, including certificates
- a breach of the instructions or advice of an invigilator, supervisor or the awarding body in relation to the examination or assessment rules and regulations
- failing to abide by conditions of supervision designed to maintain the security of the examinations or assessments
- collusion: working collaboratively with other candidates, beyond what is permitted
- copying from another candidate (including the use of ICT to aid the copying)
- disruptive behaviour in the examination room or during an assessment session (including the use of offensive language)
- exchanging, obtaining, receiving or passing on information which could be examination related (or the attempt to) by means of talking, written or nonverbal communication
- plagiarism: unacknowledged copying from published sources, incomplete referencing
- theft of another candidate's work
- bringing into the examination room or assessment situation unauthorised material, eg. notes, study guides, personal organisers, own blank paper, calculators, dictionaries (when prohibited), personal stereos, mobile phones or other similar electronic devices
- behaving in a manner as to undermine the integrity of the examination



