Rewarding Learning

Preventing Malpractice in **Examinations and Assessments**

Guidance for Candidates

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1 Introduction

This document provides guidance for anyone taking CCEA qualifications. It will support you in understanding what malpractice is and help you to stay within the rules for taking exams and completing controlled assessment or coursework. Please read it carefully.

The Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) provide a range of advice and guidance in their **Information for candidates documents**; these are available at www.jcq.org.uk and will be provided to you by your school/college. You can also read the JCQ **Suspected malpractice: policies and procedures** Appendix 6.

2 What is candidate malpractice?

JCQ define malpractice as any act, default or practice which is:

- a breach of the Regulations; and/or
- a breach of CCEA requirements regarding how a qualification should be delivered; and/or
- a failure to follow established procedures in relation to a qualification;
  - 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 body or school or officer, employee or agent of any awarding body or school.

Candidate malpractice therefore is any action you may take that could call into question the integrity or authenticity of your exam or assessment or that may mean the outcome of your assessment is not a true reflection of your individual ability and effort.

Malpractice can happen during any exam or assessment. This includes while you are:

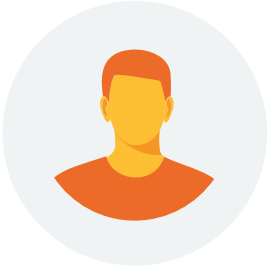
- preparing and authenticating controlled assessment or coursework;
- carrying out practical assessment work;
- compiling portfolios of assessment evidence; or
- completing your exams.

All allegations of malpractice and suspected malpractice must be reported to CCEA and investigated by your school/college to ensure the integrity and authenticity of the assessment and to be fair to you and all other candidates.

Malpractice can be reported to CCEA by your school/college, another school/college, those marking assessments/exams, other students, and members of the public. CCEA also monitors social media to check that information you share does not break the rules.

3 How can I avoid committing malpractice?

Committing malpractice can have very serious consequences for your results in a qualification. You could lose all marks in an assessment unit or be disqualified from a qualification.



Make sure you:

- read and fully understand all the information in the JCQ **Information for Candidates documents** provided to you by your school/college. If you are unsure about anything you should ask your teacher.
- do not take your mobile phone or any unauthorised items into the exam room under any circumstances. If there is a family emergency, make sure the school/college office is aware of it and can manage communications with your family for you. Having notes, AirPods, a watch or a phone in the exam room, even if it is switched off and not used, has serious consequences and can include disqualification from your exam/assessment.
- arrive in good time for your exams/assessments. Arriving late can result in you rushing and possibly bringing in unauthorised materials such as notes or a phone by mistake. This could result in you losing all marks for that exam/assessment.
- only submit your own work for coursework, controlled assessments and portfolio materials. Your teachers and the assessors can easily detect changes in style, language and grammar.
- fully understand what plagiarism is. You cannot present work from sources such as the internet, books and magazines as your own work. Where you use information directly from books, the internet, AI or other sources, make sure it has been referenced as your teacher has requested. Assessors look out for plagiarism, and anti-plagiarism software can check the source of work submitted.
- do not include any inappropriate or offensive material in any work that you submit.
- do not copy from other candidates, allow your work to be copied or lend your work to other candidates. Both allowing work to be copied and lending work without knowing it would be copied are malpractice. Penalties will be applied if you do any of these things.
- understand the risks of discussing exam or assessment-related information on social media. CCEA investigate all inappropriate exam or assessment information found or reported.
- behave appropriately during exams by listening and fully co-operating with relevant staff and JCQ rules. Inappropriate or disruptive behaviour can result in you losing marks or being disqualified from a qualification (including the use of offensive language).

4 What should I look out for?

4.1 Unauthorised items in the exam room

You must not bring an iPod, a mobile phone, a MP3/4 player or similar device or watch into any exam or assessment under any circumstances. If you are found to have one in your possession, you may lose all marks for your paper or assessment. Even if you have not used the item and it is switched off, or the battery is dead, penalties still apply.

If you are caught using any unauthorised item for any reason, even if this is not related to the exam/assessment, you will be disqualified from the unit. This means you cannot get a grade for that subject.

As you should not have a phone during the exam or assessment, you should tell parents/guardians not to contact your mobile phone during this time. For urgent issues they should contact your school/college office, and staff will manage this communication for you.

To find out more, see the **Unauthorised items poster**.

4.2 Plagiarism

Plagiarism involves taking someone else's words, thoughts, outputs or ideas and presenting them as your own. As well as copying from published texts in print or on the internet, plagiarism can refer to essays, pieces of work or artefacts previously submitted for assessment by others. Learning off the content of a text and reproducing this is also plagiarism. It is a form of cheating which is taken very seriously.

Teachers and assessors look out for plagiarism in:

- coursework;
- controlled assessments;
- the presentation of any practical work;
- portfolios of assessment evidence; and
- exam papers.

Teachers and assessors are very experienced and detect plagiarism easily by:

- noticing changes in the style of writing and your use of language;
- being very familiar with work on the topic concerned (they may have read or seen the source you use or even have marked the essay you have copied from); and
- using internet search engines and specialised computer software to match phrases or pieces of text with the original source.

You must properly reference all text and images you use in your work which are not your own original work. Make sure you follow your subject guidance and your teacher's advice in this area. If in doubt, ask.

You can find out more in the JCQ guidance **Plagiarism in assessments – guidance for teachers/ assessors**.

4.3 Copying and collusion

You must only submit work that is your own. You should not copy work from another person's exam script, controlled assessment or coursework, nor should you borrow work to copy.

You must not lend your work to anyone or show anyone else your answers. Even if you lend work and did not know it was going to be copied, you have still committed malpractice. If you allow someone to copy your work this is even more serious.

Each of these circumstances will result in penalties being applied to you.

Some subjects allow you to work with classmates when you are preparing for assessment, for example in planning a piece of controlled assessment. However, most subjects ask that you complete an individual piece of work that you will hand in for the actual assessment. If you work with your classmates or friends on an assessment submission beyond what is allowed in a subject, this is known as collusion. Where this sharing of work results in similarities in the work submitted by you and others, this is malpractice. A range of penalties will apply, depending on how much the work has been shared and the extent of the similarities. Make sure you do not work with other candidates more than is allowed.

Remember, the aim of any assessment is to allow you as an individual to receive a fair mark for work that is your own and reflects your own efforts and abilities.

4.4 Sharing information and using social media

You should be careful about sharing or attempting to share information which could be exam/assessment-related. This includes speaking about it or sharing it in written form, including via social media or mobile phone applications. It can be easy to breach the rules without realising it. Make sure you don't:

- ask others about what questions your exam will include (even if no one tells you);
- post assessment work on social media which may allow it to be copied;
- know confidential exam/assessment-related information in advance of an exam/assessment;
- exchange, obtain, receive or pass on exam/assessment-related information by any means – or attempt to do this;
- fail to report to your school/college any exam/assessment-related information being shared; and
- pass on rumours of exam or assessment content.

You must tell CCEA or your school/college about exam information being shared.

Misusing or attempting to misuse assessment material resources can have very serious consequences.

CCEA monitor social media and will investigate any inappropriate information shared. Your school/college will give you advice on this, and you can read the JCQ's guidance on **Information for Candidates - Social Media** available at **www.jcq.org.uk**

4.5 Having unauthorised material in the exam/assessment

You should not bring any unauthorised materials into the exam/assessment room. As well as phones, watches etc, as detailed above, this includes:

- calculators or dictionaries where they are not allowed;
- notes, study guides and essay plans, etc, including where they are not relevant to the assessment; and
- bringing in permitted annotations or notes in the wrong format.

4.6 Breach of exam conditions

JCQ set out rules that schools/colleges must follow when conducting exams and assessments. You will have been told by your teachers what these rules are and how you are expected to behave during your exams and assessments. Your teachers will take you through the **Information for candidates documents (available at www.jcq.org.uk)** so you are aware of the rules.

During an exam or assessment session you must:

- sit in your allocated seat and do not start writing until the invigilator tells you to fill in all the details required on the front of the question paper and/or answer booklet;
- stop writing as soon as the time has ended, not remove an exam script from the room, and not engage in any disruptive behaviour;
- not talk before, during or after an exam about exam matters, pass notes or accept notes;
- not write inappropriate offensive or obscene material within scripts such as comments about staff or assessors; and
- not destroy your own work, or that of another candidate, or facilitate malpractice by others.

See also the JCQ **Warning to candidates** poster.

Please note:
It is important you know the rules around your exams and assessment and make sure to follow them. Should you break the rules by mistake or through forgetfulness, this is still malpractice and penalties will be applied as your actions could have had an impact on the integrity of your exam or assessment.

5 What happens if I am suspected of malpractice?

Where candidates breach the rules for:

- exams;
- controlled assessment;
- coursework;
- practical work; or
- compilation of portfolios of assessment evidence,

this must be investigated and CCEA may apply penalties.

You will be interviewed by your 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 other students and relevant school staff.

Other evidence will be gathered appropriate to the category of malpractice. This may include unauthorised materials, checking of your mobile phone record, copies of work you submitted, etc, as required in each individual case.

Where exceptional circumstances may have influenced the reason for malpractice, you should tell your school/college.

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. 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.

6 What happens if I am found guilty of malpractice?

If you are found guilty of malpractice, CCEA will apply penalties in line with the JCQ **Suspected malpractice: policies and procedure** Appendix 6.

These penalties are serious and can impact on your:

- university place;
- chances of returning to school/college; or
- immediate employment opportunities.

Penalties that can be applied include:

- a written warning;
- the loss of marks for a section, component or unit;
- disqualification from a unit or from all units for that subject;
- disqualification from all CCEA qualifications entered for that exam series; or
- a ban from taking assessments or exams for a set period of time, for example one year.

A permanent record will be kept of any penalties applied to your results.

All other information relating to the specific malpractice will be destroyed following the expiry of CCEA's data retention period.

7 Appeals

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. You or your parent/guardian cannot appeal directly to CCEA.

8 Contact information

If you have any concerns in relation to malpractice, you should speak to your teachers.

CCEA cannot communicate with you or your parent/guardian in relation to any exam, assessment or malpractice issue. This must be done by your school/college on your behalf.

If you have information about possible malpractice, you should report this to a teacher or send the details to **malpractice@ccea.org.uk**.

9 Useful links

You can find additional supporting information in the **Information for candidates documents** at **www.jcq.org.uk**

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