

Policy Name:	Malpractice Policy (Exams)
Policy Type:	Statutory
Issue Date:	7 th March 2026
To be reviewed:	7 th March 2027
Approved by:	Board of Trustees
Policy Owner:	Steph Brown

Glossary of abbreviations

JCQ	Joint Council of Qualifications
JCQ GR	Joint Council of Qualifications: General Regulations
JCQ SMPP	Joint Council of Qualifications: Suspected Malpractice

Summary of updates for 2025 - 26

Upon review, no centre-specific updates or changes were applicable to this document.

Under AI use in assessments, additional text added to reflect slight changes in JCQ SMPP

Under Reporting suspected malpractice to Awarding Body, text amended to reflect changes to JCQ SMPP

1. Aims

- 1.1. To confirm the Centre has in place for inspection that must be reviewed and updated annually, a written malpractice policy which covers all qualifications delivered by the centre detailing:
 - 1.1.1. how candidates are informed and advised to avoid committing malpractice in exams or assessments
 - 1.1.2. how suspected malpractice issues should be escalated and reported to the awarding body
- 1.2. The policy must acknowledge the use of AI (e.g. what AI is, when it may be used and how it should be acknowledged, the risks of using AI, what AI misuse is and how this will be treated as malpractice) (GR 5.3)
- 1.3. In accordance with the regulations the Centre will:
 - 1.3.1. take all reasonable steps to prevent the occurrence of any malpractice (which includes maladministration) before, during and after assessments have taken place (GR 5.11)
 - 1.3.2. inform the awarding body **immediately** of any alleged, suspected or actual incidents of malpractice or maladministration, involving a candidate or a member of staff, by completing the appropriate documentation (GR 5.11)
 - 1.3.3. as required by an awarding body, gather evidence of any instances of alleged or suspected malpractice (which includes maladministration) in accordance with the current JCQ document **Suspected Malpractice - Policies and Procedures** and provide such information and advice as the awarding body may reasonably require (GR 5.11)

2. Legislation and Guidance

- 2.1. 'Malpractice' and 'maladministration' are distinct but related concepts, the common theme being that they involve a failure to follow the rules of an examination or assessment.

2.2. This policy uses the word 'malpractice' to cover both 'malpractice' and 'maladministration' and it means any act, default or practice which is:

- 2.2.1. a breach of the Regulations
- 2.2.2. a breach of awarding body requirements regarding how a qualification should be delivered
- 2.2.3. a failure to follow established procedures in relation to a qualification which:
 - gives rise to prejudice to candidates
 - compromises public confidence in qualifications
 - compromises, attempts to compromise or may compromise the process of assessment, the integrity of any qualification or the validity of a 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 (SMPP 1)

2.3. Candidate malpractice normally involves malpractice by a candidate in connection with any examination or assessment, including: (SMPP 2)

- 2.3.1. the preparation and authentication of any controlled assessments
- 2.3.2. coursework or nonexamination assessments
- 2.3.3. the presentation of any practical work
- 2.3.4. the compilation of portfolios of assessment evidence
- 2.3.5. the completion of any examination

2.4. Centre staff malpractice means malpractice committed by: (SMPP 2)

- 2.4.1. a member of staff
- 2.4.2. a contractor (whether employed under a contract of employment or a contract for services)
- 2.4.3. a volunteer at a centre
- 2.4.4. 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

2.5. Centre malpractice normally involves malpractice where there is: (SMPP 2)

- 2.5.1. an element of systemic failure
- 2.5.2. a breach in policies
- 2.5.3. widespread malpractice such that a centre-level sanction is appropriate Suspected malpractice

2.6. For the purposes of this policy, suspected malpractice means all alleged or suspected incidents of malpractice (regardless of how the incident might be categorised, as described in SMPP, section 1.9). (SMPP 2)

3. Preventing malpractice

3.1. The centre has in place a robust process to prevent and identify malpractice, as outlined in section 3 of the JCQ document Suspected Malpractice: Policies and Procedures. (SMPP 4.3)

- 3.1.1. This includes ensuring staff involved in delivering assessments and exams understand the requirements for conducting these as specified in the following JCQ documents or awarding body guidance:
 - General Regulations for Approved Centres 2025-2026
 - Instructions for conducting examinations (ICE) 2025-2026
 - Instructions for conducting coursework 2025-2026
 - Instructions for conducting non-examination assessments 2025-2026
 - Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments 2025-2026
 - A guide to the special consideration process 2025-2026
 - Suspected Malpractice: Policies and Procedures 2025-2026 (this document)
 - Plagiarism in Assessments
 - AI Use in Assessments: Protecting the Integrity of Qualifications
 - Post Results Services June 2025 and November 2025
 - A guide to the awarding bodies' appeals processes 2025-2026
 - Guidance for centres on cyber security (SMPP 3.2)
- 3.2. Candidates are informed and advised to avoid committing malpractice during a briefing session before the assessment period. Communications in exams, plagiarism are discussed along with the potential ramifications of committing malpractice.
- 3.3. Candidates are informed and advised on appropriate uses of AI e.g.
 - 3.3.1. what AI is
 - 3.3.2. when it may be used
 - 3.3.3. how it should be acknowledged
 - 3.3.4. the risks of using AI
 - 3.3.5. what AI misuse is
 - 3.3.6. how this will be treated as malpractice
- 3.4. With reference to the JCQ guidance for Teachers & Assessors - AI Use in Assessments: Protecting the Integrity of Qualifications, students complete their exams and several other assessments under close staff supervision with limited access to authorised materials and no permitted access to the internet.
 - 3.4.1. The delivery of assessments should be unaffected by developments in AI tools as students must not be able to use such tools when completing these assessments, although care must be taken when a student is allowed to use a laptop or similar device for exams, to remove access to AI tools.
 - 3.4.2. There are some assessments in which access to the internet is permitted in the preparatory, research or production stages. These will be Non-Examined Assessments (NEAs), coursework and internal assessments for General Qualifications (GQs) and Vocational & Technical Qualifications (VTQs).
- 3.5. The following JCQ support materials are also used to help teachers understand and prevent AI misuse and to help students to better understand the rules for use of AI in assessments:
 - 3.5.1. AI information sheet for teachers,
 - 3.5.2. AI poster for students,
 - 3.5.3. AI senior leader presentation for teachers,
 - 3.5.4. AI teacher presentation for students.
- 3.6. Candidates will be issued with of the JCQ **Information for candidates - AI (Artificial Intelligence and assessments)** prior to signing the declaration of authentication.

4. Identification and reporting of malpractice

- 4.1. Once suspected malpractice is identified, staff at the centre can report it using the appropriate channels. (SMPP 4.3) At the Centre, a report of malpractice should be to the head of centre and exam officer.
- 4.2. The head of centre will notify the awarding body immediately of all alleged, suspected or actual incidents of malpractice, using the appropriate forms, and will conduct any investigation in accordance with the requirements of the JCQ document Suspected Malpractice: Policies and Procedures (SMPP 4.1.3)
 - 4.2.1. Form JCQ/M1 will be used to notify an awarding body of an incident of candidate malpractice.
 - 4.2.2. Form JCQ/M2 will be used to notify an awarding body of an incident of suspected staff malpractice/maladministration (SMPP 4.4, 4.6)
 - 4.2.3. Form JCQ/M3 will be used for centre staff (SMPP 5.37)
- 4.3. The head of centre will ensure that, where a candidate is at risk and is the subject of a malpractice investigation, the candidate's parent/carer/ appropriate adult is kept informed of the progress of the investigation (SMPP 4.1.3)
- 4.4. Candidate malpractice offences relating to the content of work (i.e. inappropriate/offensive content, copying/collusion, plagiarism (including AI misuse) and/or false declaration of authentication) which are discovered in a controlled assessment, coursework or non-examination assessment component prior to the candidate signing the declaration of authentication, do not need to be reported to the awarding body. Instead, they will be dealt with in accordance with the centre's internal procedures.
- 4.5. Malpractice by a candidate discovered in a controlled assessment, coursework or non-examination assessment where the offence does not relate to the content of candidates' work (e.g. possession of unauthorised materials, breach of assessment conditions) or where a candidate has signed the declaration of authentication, must be reported using a JCQ M1 to the relevant awarding body.
- 4.6. If, at the time of the malpractice, there is no entry for that candidate (who the centre intended to enter), the centre is required to submit an entry by the required entry deadline. (SMPP 4.5)
- 4.7. If, in the view of the investigator, there is sufficient evidence that an individual may have committed malpractice, that individual (the candidate or the member of staff) will be informed of all the required information and the accused individual informed of their rights and responsibilities (SMPP 5.33-3.4)
- 4.8. Once the information gathering has concluded, the head of centre (or other appointed information gatherer) will submit a written report to the relevant awarding body summarising the information obtained and actions taken, accompanied by the information obtained during their enquiries (5.35)
- 4.9. The awarding body will decide on the basis of the report, and any supporting documentation, whether there is evidence of malpractice and if any further investigation is required.
- 4.10. The head of centre will be informed accordingly (SMPP 5.40)

5. Communicating malpractice decisions

- 5.1. Once a decision has been made, it will be communicated in writing to the head of centre as soon as possible.

5.2. The head of centre will communicate the decision to the individuals concerned and pass on details of any sanctions and action in cases where this is indicated.

5.3. The head of centre will also inform the individuals if they have the right to appeal. (SMPP 11.1)

6. Appeals against decisions made in cases of malpractice

6.1. The Centre will provide the individual with information on the process and timeframe for submitting an appeal and where relevant refer to further information and follow the process provided in the JCQ document 'A guide to the awarding bodies'