

## 5.6 Malpractice

Malpractice is any action that breaks our regulations and potentially threatens the integrity of our exams and certificates. Malpractice can happen before, during or after timetabled exams or other assessments.

Malpractice can be:

- intentional and aim to give an unfair advantage in an exam or assessment
- caused by people being careless, forgetful or unaware of our regulations
- beyond anyone's control and be a result of circumstance.

A variety of people could be involved in malpractice, for example:

- candidates
- centre staff, for example, exams officers, teachers, invigilators, management, consultants and people who help with access arrangements
- other people, for example, the candidates' relatives or friends.

The Head of Centre must:

- make sure candidates and centre staff know their individual responsibilities as set out in our regulations
- tell us straight away about any potential malpractice you become aware of or that is reported to you.

### 5.6.1 Candidate malpractice

The following are examples of malpractice by candidates. This is not a complete list:

- bringing unauthorised materials into the exam room. See section 5.1.7.2
- **NEW** disruptive behaviour in the exam room (including talking or attempting to talk to other candidates and/or using offensive language)
- copying from another candidate
- collusion
- plagiarism: not giving sources and/or submitting another person's work as if it is their own
- **NEW** looking for, getting, receiving, exchanging or passing on confidential or fake exam material in any way
- not following an invigilator's instructions
- not following supervision rules designed to keep the exams secure
- stealing another person's work
- deliberately destroying another person's work.
- including threatening, offensive or obscene material in scripts or coursework
- impersonation: pretending to be someone else, or arranging for another person to take their place in an exam
- altering, falsifying or misrepresenting any results information, including certificates
- behaving in a way that undermines the integrity of the exam.

### 5.6.2 Centre staff malpractice

The following are examples of malpractice by centre staff. This is not a complete list:

- not keeping exam material confidential
- **NEW** not storing exam material securely
- not keeping candidates under Full Centre Supervision in relation to the Key Time
- not invigilating properly
- helping or prompting candidates with answers
- not keeping candidates' work confidential
- moving the session or date of a timetabled exam without telling us and getting our written permission
- helping candidates with coursework more than the regulations allow. See section 3.2 and individual syllabuses
- allowing candidates unsupervised access to coursework exemplar materials, whether this is the work of former candidates or material we have provided
- not keeping candidate computer files secure
- behaving in a way that undermines the integrity of the exam.

### 5.6.3 Suspected malpractice you discover

The Head of Centre must report any suspected malpractice to us on the same day or no later than 12:00, local time, the following working day. Use the relevant malpractice forms.

- **A** The Head of Centre in an Associate Centre must report any suspected cases of malpractice to their Cambridge Associate straight away using the relevant

malpractice forms. The Cambridge Associate should check the form and then send it to us straight away.

### Administrative forms



Forms available from  
[www.cambridgeinternational.org/forms](http://www.cambridgeinternational.org/forms)

- Notification of Suspected Centre Staff Malpractice: Exam Day – Form 9a
- Suspected Centre Staff Malpractice Report: Exam Day – Form 9b
- Suspected Candidate Malpractice Report: Exam Day – Form 9c

The Head of Centre must:

- (a) Tell us straight away about suspected malpractice they become aware of or that is reported to them. If they do not do this it might be considered malpractice in itself.
- (b) Report suspected malpractice with all relevant information including:
  - statements from relevant centre staff, for example, the Head of Centre, exams officer, invigilators or teachers. Statements should include a detailed account of the circumstances and any investigation the Head of Centre has carried out
  - statements from all candidates involved in the suspected malpractice, giving their account of events in their own words or confirmation that they do not want to give a statement
  - evidence of any unauthorised material the candidate had, e.g. a photograph of the unauthorised material
  - seating plans
  - any other relevant evidence or information.
- (c) All statements must be in English. If the level of English of the person writing the statement is poor we may accept statements in other languages. You must provide a translation or we may not be able to accept the evidence.
- (d) We take all reports of suspected malpractice seriously. We will write to let you know we have received your report. In our response we will do one of the following:
  - confirm that you do not need to do anything further
  - provide you with guidance
  - open a suspected malpractice investigation.

### Important information



We need to be confident that the work we assess is the candidate's own before we can award a grade.

You are responsible for supervising candidates when they are completing coursework. You must also authenticate their work before you submit the marks.

If you discover plagiarism in a candidate's work during the course, you should resolve this internally.

If you discover plagiarism when you come to submit work to us you must not submit it. For help on preventing and identifying plagiarism, see [www.cambridgeinternational.org/teachingandassessment](http://www.cambridgeinternational.org/teachingandassessment)

You should contact us if you are unsure whether to submit work or if you have any other queries.

### 5.6.4 Suspected malpractice investigations

- (a) When we open a suspected malpractice investigation, we will write to you with the details, including actions and instructions. We will try to find all relevant information to help us decide whether malpractice has happened or not.
- (b) You must complete all actions and cooperate with all instructions in the timescales we give.
- (c) We oversee all investigations. We expect the Head of Centre to personally supervise and collect information for us.
- (d) If you do not do what we ask in suspected malpractice investigations this might be considered malpractice in itself.
- (e) We can withhold results during investigations. We will tell you if we do this.
- (f) We can deal directly with the candidate or the candidate's representative. In these cases, we will tell the Head of Centre.
- (g) We may extend an investigation if we have further concerns.
- (h) We may send representatives to your centre to investigate.
- (i) You must treat malpractice cases as confidential between your centre, the individuals involved and us.
- (j) You must treat correspondence about suspected malpractice as confidential between your centre and us.

- (k) The Head of Centre can share concerns and/or requests for information with the candidate(s) involved and their parents/guardians/carers.
- (l) If the Head of Centre is implicated in the suspected malpractice we may ask someone else to collect information, for example, the chair of governors or director of education.
- (m) We may suspend your centre's ability to make entries while an investigation is ongoing.
- (n) Candidates involved in a malpractice investigation cannot withdraw from the relevant syllabus.

### 5.6.5 Rights of individuals suspected of malpractice

If someone is suspected of malpractice the Head of Centre must tell them as soon as possible, preferably in writing.

We may tell the Head of Centre to share relevant evidence with them.

If someone is suspected of malpractice you must:

- tell them what they are accused of
- give them the opportunity to write a statement
- tell them the possible consequences if it is decided that malpractice has occurred
- tell them about our appeals procedure.

### 5.6.6 Making a decision

- (a) We will look at all available information and use a balance of probabilities to decide whether the suspected malpractice has occurred or not.
- (b) We may consider mitigating factors supported by suitable evidence.
- (c) We only base our decisions on the information we have and make no assumptions about the intended actions.

### 5.6.7 Outcomes

- (a) All outcomes will be justifiable and reasonable.
- (b) We may:
  - take no further action
  - give a warning to candidate(s) and/or the centre staff
  - deduct marks or award no marks for a component
  - disqualify candidates from the subject (in serious cases this may extend to all subjects taken in the series)
  - ban a candidate from entering our exams for up to five years

- ban members of staff from any involvement in administering our exams for a specified period of time
- not allow your centre to make entries for specific exams
- remove your centre status and terminate our Agreement with you; see section A13.

- (c) We can apply outcomes not listed above.
- (d) If we decide malpractice has occurred but cannot decide who was responsible, we may not accept the work submitted and/or issue the relevant results.
- (e) We will write to the Head of Centre with the outcome.
- (f) When the Head of Centre has received our outcome they can decide whether to take further action with their candidate(s) and/or staff.
- (g) Some outcomes will mean that components do not qualify for enquiries about results. We will confirm this in our outcome letter.
- (h) We will do our best to make sure candidates are neither advantaged nor disadvantaged by centre staff malpractice. In some cases we may not be able to issue results.
- (i) **NEW** Centres should keep records of malpractice outcomes for future reference. Where appropriate, redacted versions of these should be shared with new members of staff, including centre leadership and management, and exam teams, such as a new Head of Centre or exams officer.

### 5.6.8 Communicating outcomes to members of staff and candidates

The Head of Centre must tell the people concerned about the outcome(s). The Head of Centre is also responsible for telling them that we may share information as described in section 5.6.9.

### 5.6.9 Exchanging information with other awarding bodies and authorities

We will treat malpractice cases as confidential. However, where serious malpractice may affect the integrity of other awarding bodies' assessments we may exchange information with them or other regulators.

In cases of serious centre staff malpractice we can share information with professional organisations.

We can tell the relevant police authorities if there is suspected criminal activity. For example, cases involving theft, impersonation or falsifying documents.

### 5.6.10 Appeals

To appeal against a decision we have made in malpractice cases, please see section 7.3.

### 5.6.11 Allegations

If we receive a report of alleged malpractice we will look at any available information. This may lead to a suspected malpractice investigation.

We will only reveal the identity of the person making the allegation if we have to do this for legal reasons. During an investigation we will try to limit the risk of them being identified.

#### Extra guidance



For more information on making an allegation go to [www.cambridgeinternational.org/whistleblowing](http://www.cambridgeinternational.org/whistleblowing)