

OxfordAQA

Malpractice

March 2026

Definition of malpractice

'Malpractice', means any act, default or practice which is a breach of the Regulations or which:

- gives rise to prejudice to students; **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 OxfordAQA or centre or any officer, employee or agent of OxfordAQA or centre.

Failure by a centre to notify, investigate and report to OxfordAQA all allegations of malpractice or suspected malpractice constitutes malpractice in itself.

Also, failure to take action as required by OxfordAQA or to co-operate with OxfordAQA's investigation, constitutes malpractice.

Malpractice includes maladministration and instances of non-compliance with the regulations.

Malpractice can be committed by centre staff members and by students in connection with any examination or assessment. Malpractice may or may not relate directly to sitting an examination.

Please note: any allegations of bribery will be taken extremely seriously and investigated. This would include centre staff soliciting or accepting a bribe (or any other improper payment or advantage from an-other), or a student offering a bribe (or any other advantage or improper payment) to a member of centre staff.

Examples of different types of malpractice can be found in the JCQ document: Suspected Malpractice Policies and Procedures that can be accessed [here](#).

Further links to Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) and OxfordAQA documents covering exam rules and guidelines so you understand what is considered to be malpractice and how to avoid it, and what to do if you suspect malpractice in exams and assessments can be found on page 3.

Reporting malpractice

The head of centre is required to report alleged, suspected or actual incidents of malpractice immediately to OxfordAQA. Full details of the process are outlined in the JCQ Suspected Malpractice Policies and Procedures document that can be found [here](#). If you believe you have witnessed, or suspect malpractice in exams and assessments, your first port of call should be your head of centre who has a duty to investigate and report all such incidents. If you believe that you may be victimised by raising such issues with your head of centre, or if you feel that your senior management team is involved, then please contact us directly.

OxfordAQA take malpractice seriously and would encourage anyone who has information regarding malpractice to come forward and report the matter. If you wish to remain anonymous, this will be respected unless OxfordAQA is legally obliged to report the identity of the person making the allegation.

You must be aware that information supplied anonymously cannot be used as evidence. However, such information can form the basis of, or give probable cause for, an investigation. In order to support any potential investigation it is better if you supply all the information you have at one time, rather than add information later, if possible.

If you have information concerning malpractice, you can contact our Exams Integrity team by email: Irregularities@aqa.org.uk

To help us investigate effectively, we need as much information as possible about the incident. This includes: what the malpractice was, who committed it, who benefitted from it, when it took place, where and who, if anyone, may have witnessed it taking place, if appropriate.

Additional information about making an allegation can be found on the [Malpractice Page](#) of the JCQ website.

OxfordAQA will not feedback the outcome of cases to persons making allegations.

Links to guidance

We adhere to the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) guidance and policies on Malpractice. The JCQ provides the administrative guidance for UK based awarding organisations.

Find further information and guidance for schools and students:

- [Suspected Malpractice: Policies and Procedures](#)
- [Plagiarism in Assessments](#)
- [Notice to Centres - Malpractice](#)
- [OxfordAQA No unauthorised items poster](#)
- [OxfordAQA Warning to Students](#)
- [OxfordAQA Report of Suspected Student Malpractice – M1 Form](#)
- [OxfordAQA Report of suspected malpractice/maladministration involving centre staff – M2 Form](#)
- [OxfordAQA report into Suspected Staff Malpractice or Maladministration – M3 Form](#)

For information about coursework, controlled assessment and non-exam assessments:

- [OxfordAQA Non-exam assessment.](#)