



**Patron**  
Her Majesty The Queen

**The Royal Institute  
of Public Health**

## **7.1 RIPH Malpractice Procedure for Centres**

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## 1. **Introduction**

This guide is for RIPH approved Centres on the process for identifying and reporting and dealing with issues of malpractice and breaches of security during the assessment process.

Regulatory requirements require Awarding Bodies to investigate all instances of alleged or suspected malpractice and to take appropriate action to maintain the integrity of the qualification. Instances of malpractice may arise for a variety of reasons, some intentional and others because of ignorance of the examination requirements; however the approved Centre must report all incidents of suspected malpractice to RIPH Qualifications Operations Manager, in writing, as soon as they are discovered.

Allegations of malpractice may also be reported by examiners, moderators, invigilators, candidates and members of the public generally. RIPH will only act upon an anonymous allegation of malpractice if there is supporting evidence of the nature of the allegation that warrants it.

When dealing with alleged malpractice RIPH will deal ordinarily with only the Head of the approved Centre or his/her nominated representative; however RIPH may at their discretion deal directly with the candidate or the candidate's representative (e.g. when the candidate's account of events is at variance with that of the centre).

It is therefore expected that Heads of approved Centres, examinations officers and others involved in managing the examinations will co-operate fully with an enquiry into allegations of malpractice.

RIPH reserves the right to apply sanctions listed in this guidance and also reserves the right to withhold the issuing of results whilst investigations are on-going and/or permanently depending on the outcome of the investigation.

Heads of approved Centres are expected to inform candidates and staff members of their individual responsibilities as set out in these guidelines.

RIPH will cooperate with any follow-up investigations of malpractice required by the regulatory authorities and will agree with the regulatory authorities on appropriate remedial action if there is evidence that certificates may be invalid.

## 2. **Definition of Malpractice**

“Malpractice” means any act, neglect, default or other practice which is a breach of the RIPH regulations and which threatens the integrity of the examinations and certification.

Any breach of the regulations, by centre staff and/or candidates, contained in the RIPH document on Administration of Examinations, will be considered malpractice and may result in disciplinary action being taken.

The following are examples (not an exhaustive list) of instances of malpractice that are likely to result in disciplinary action:

## 2.1 Centre Staff Malpractice

### 2.1.1 Breaches in Security

This means any malpractice which affects the confidentiality of examination question papers or other assessment materials and their electronic equivalents, or the confidentiality of candidate scripts or their electronic equivalents:

Examples:

- Moving the time or date of a fixed examination without obtaining authorisation from RIPH.
- Failing to supervise adequately candidates who have been affected by a timetable variation.
- Permitting, facilitating or obtaining unauthorised access to examination material prior to the examination.
- Failing to retain and secure examination papers after an exam.
- Tampering with candidate scripts or assignments after collection.

### 2.1.2 Giving Assistance to Candidates

This means any practice which provides a candidate with an advantage which materially improves a candidate's mark for any piece of assessment.

Examples are:

- Assisting candidates in the production of assessments beyond that permitted.
- Allowing candidates unsupervised access to coursework exemplar material, e.g. a former or another student's work, which gives the candidates opportunity to copy the work.
- Assisting or prompting candidates with the production of answers.
- Permitting candidates in the examination to access prohibited materials(e.g. technical dictionaries, calculators, notes etc).

### 2.1.3 Maladministration

This means any other form of malpractice by centre staff.

Examples are:

- Failing to keep secure candidates assessments.
- Failing to keep secure student records of internally assessed assignments.
- Failing to issue candidates with appropriate notices and warnings.
- Not ensuring the examination venue conforms to requirements.
- Failing to despatch candidate scripts to RIPH within one week of the examination.
- Inappropriate retention of certificates.

## 2.2 Candidate Malpractice

This is malpractice committed by a candidate at any stage in the course of the assessment including examination, coursework, assignment or practical work. The following are some examples, not an exhaustive list, of instances that may be considered malpractice:

- Being in possession of any materials, equipment, notes, books or other papers at any time during the Examination Session, other than those issued or authorised by the Senior Invigilator.
- Contacting, communicating, talking to, copying from any other candidate or allowing work to be copied.
- Helping or receiving help from another candidate.
- Failing to abide by the instructions or advice of an Invigilator.
- Disruptive behaviour in the examination room (including the use of offensive language).
- Leaving the Examination Room without the express permission of an Invigilator and without an escort.
- Consulting any materials or persons outside the examination room during periods of authorised absence while the examination is in progress.
- Attempting to make contact or influence the script marker (examiner) in any way (e.g. by writing or attaching notes to your examination script).
- Impersonation: pretending to be someone else, arranging for another to take one's place in the examination.
- Collusion: working collaboratively with other candidates.
- Plagiarism: failure to acknowledge sources properly and/or submission of another person's work as if it were the candidate's own.
- Theft of another's work.
- Deliberate destruction of another's work.
- Alteration of any results document, including certificates.

## **3. Procedures for Reporting Alleged Malpractice**

### 3.1 Malpractice Suspected by A Centre

- The Head of the approved centre must submit full details of the case in writing using the Notification of Malpractice Form contained at the end of this document to the Qualifications Operations Manager at RIPH as soon as possible.

### 3.2 Malpractice Suspected by RIPH

- RIPH will write to the Head of the Centre outlining the allegation of malpractice and will normally ask the centre to conduct a full investigation into the alleged malpractice and submit a written report. However RIPH reserves the right to conduct the investigation itself.
- RIPH will not normally withhold from the Head of the Centre any evidence pertinent to the case of suspected malpractice, but may do so under exceptional circumstances, e.g. to protect the identity of an informant. However in all such cases RIPH will provide summaries of the evidence and a statement as to why the evidence itself cannot be presented in its original form.

#### **4. Procedure For Dealing With Investigation Into Malpractice**

- At all stages of the investigation it is important that the confidentiality of information is protected and the security of personal information is respected in accordance with the principles and detail of the Data Protection Act.
- The Head of the Centre should ensure that candidates and/or staff accused of malpractice are made fully aware the following:
  - The nature of the alleged malpractice and of the possible consequences should malpractice be proven.
  - Given the opportunity to respond, in writing, to the Head of the Centre.
  - The avenues for appealing should a judgement be made against him/her.
- In cases where it is necessary for RIPH to interview candidates and/or members of staff as part of an investigation, RIPH will undertake to do this only in the presence of the Head of the Centre or other senior member of staff and only then after ensuring that the candidate and/or member of staff has been given the opportunity to be accompanied.
- The Head of the Centre will be required to make available an appropriate venue for such interviews.

#### **5. Reporting on the Outcome of the Investigation**

The Head of Centre, following the investigation, should submit a full written report of the investigation and send this to the Qualifications Operations Manager at RIPH.

The report should include:

- A statement of facts, a detailed account of the circumstances and details of any investigations carried out by the centre
- Written statement(s) from invigilators or other staff involved
- Written statement(s) from candidates involved
- Any mitigating factors (with supporting evidence if appropriate, eg medical reports)
- Any work of candidates and associated material which is relevant to the investigation.

#### **6. The Response of RIPH to Reports**

- RIPH Malpractice Panel consisting of:
  - Chair of Qualifications Board
  - Director of Standards
  - Qualifications Operations Manager
  - Centre Development Managerwill consider reports from investigations. The panel may delegate responsibility for deciding straightforward cases to RIPH staff.
- Members of the Malpractice Panel are required to identify any case of which they have personal knowledge or interest. Any member with a close personal interest will be removed from the panel for the case.
- Work of the Malpractice Panel is entirely confidential
- Work of the Malpractice Panel is monitored by RIPH's Academic Board to ensure fairness and consistency of judgement.

- The Malpractice Panel will establish that correct procedures have been followed in the investigation of cases and that all individuals involved have been given the opportunity to make a written statement.
- The Malpractice Panel will consider:
  - The evidence
  - Whether there has been a breach of the regulations
  - Whether that breach constitutes malpractice
  - Identify the person/s responsible for malpractice
  - What sanction or penalty should be applied
  - Whether it wishes to make any recommendation for the future conduct of this examination or examinations generally.
- Each case of suspected malpractice will be considered and judge on an individual basis in light of all information available.
- RIPH may impose sanctions and penalties on individuals and on centres found guilty of breaking regulations in order to:
  - Minimise the risk to the integrity of the examinations both in the present and in the future
  - Create a remedy so that there is nothing to gain from breaking the regulations
  - Maintain public confidence in the examinations
  - Deter others from doing likewise.

## 7. **Sanctions**

- RIPH will protect candidates who through no fault of their own are caught up in a malpractice incident. In such cases assessments may be sent for special consideration.
- RIPH will chose from a defined range of penalties to reflect the particular circumstances of each case and any mitigating factors.
- RIPH reserves the right in exceptional circumstances to apply sanctions and penalties flexibly outside the defined ranges, if a particular mitigating or aggravating circumstances are found to exist.
- All sanctions and penalties must be justifiable in terms of the evidence presented, reasonable in their scale and consistent in their application, as established by these guidelines and by precedent.
- A permanent record will be kept of the effect of any penalties on an individual's results. All other information relating to specific instances of malpractice or irregularities will be destroyed after five years.
- Regulatory Authorities will be informed of all decisions and sanctions.
  
- **Sanctions Imposed on Centre Staff:**
  - Written warning
  - Impose special conditions on future involvement in its examinations
  - Require the member of staff to undertake specific training or mentoring.
  - Bar the member of staff from all involvement for a set period of time.

- If a member of staff moves to another centre while being subject to one of the above sanctions or penalties the Head of Centre should notify the Awarding Body. The Awarding Body will then notify the regulatory authorities and may also notify the Head of the Centre to which the staff is moving.
- **Sanctions Imposed on Centres**
  - Written Warning to the Head of Centre, including any further action that will be taken should there be a recurrence of this malpractice
  - Require Head of Centre to review procedures and report back to RIPH.
  - Increase levels of inspection for the Centre which failed to follow procedures.
  - Appointment (at the centres expense) independent observers to ensure the conduction of examinations and assessments is in accordance with regulations
  - Refuse to accept further examination entries for a period of time or until a specific matter has been rectified.
  - De-registration of a centre in order that they will not be able to offer any further assessments for any RIPH qualifications.
- Any expense incurred in ensuring compliance with the sanctions, penalties and/or special conditions must be borne by the centre.
- **Sanctions Against Candidates**
  - Written Warning.
  - Loss of marks for a particular piece or pieces of assessment.  
Note: marks will not be deducted as no judgement will be made on performance but components of assessment may be deemed “null and void”.
  - Disqualified from the whole qualification.
  - Barred from entering any further examinations for a set period of time.

## 8. **Communicating Decisions**

- Heads of Centres will be informed of decisions in writing as soon as possible after the decisions are made.
- It is the responsibility of the Head of Centre to communicate the decision to individuals concerned and to pass on warnings in cases where indicated.

## 9. **Appeals**

- Appeals can be made under the RIPH Appeals Process – see document 9.1 RIPH Appeals Policy.

## **10.Co-operation with Regulatory Authorities**

RIPH is required to report all cases of malpractice to the regulatory authorities and where appropriate RIPH will agree with the regulatory authorities on appropriate remedial action.

RIPH will cooperate with any follow-up investigations of malpractice required by the regulatory authorities and will agree with the regulatory authorities on appropriate remedial action if there is evidence that certificates may be invalid.



## NOTIFICATION OF POTENTIAL MALPRACTICE

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**Confidential**

**This form is to be used to report potential malpractice.**

**Name**

**Position**

**Centre Name**

**Centre Number**

**Session Number**

**Examination Date**

**Candidate Numbers**

**Candidate Names**

|  |  |
|--|--|
|  |  |
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|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |

**Qualification Name:**

**Date Of Offence**

**Time of Offence**

**Nature of Potential Malpractice**

**Details as to how the potential Malpractice was discovered, including details as to date and by whom**

**Names of Witnesses**

**Other Information**

If there are any other details you feel are relevant to this case including, mitigation, please give further information below. ALL relevant information and materials should be submitted at this time. Evidence submitted subsequently may not be considered.

**Signed:**..... **Date:**.....

**Title:**.....

**Address:**

**Tel No.**..... **Fax No.**.....

**Email Address:**.....

