



## Malpractice in exams

Sometimes there might be issues or concerns about the validity of your work. While the boards don't want to see anyone jeopardise their grades or marks, they must investigate any suspected breaches and students could face a penalty if found to have committed malpractice. Make sure you understand the rules and boundaries.

## Social media and online networking groups

We all like to share our experiences when taking exams. However, it is important to consider what you say and to think about what information is being shared.

Sharing ideas with others online could be helpful when you're studying, revising or connecting with teachers and subject experts, but remember that all exam boards monitor social media sites and online forums for malpractice.

There are rules and boundaries on what you can share about your exams online and this is monitored by exam boards. Take care when talking about exams on social media sites including Facebook, Instagram, TikTok and Twitter, as well as group chat apps such as WhatsApp.

Examples of social media activities that could lead to a malpractice investigation include:

- copying or allowing work to be copied that is to be submitted for assessment
- allowing others to help produce your work, or helping others with theirs
- sharing assessment-related information if you've sat your exam earlier than other students
- passing on rumours about exam content
- exchanging, obtaining, receiving or passing on assessment-related information, or even just attempting to
- accepting or seeing assessment-related information without reporting it to your school/college.

Make sure you're not caught out. If you're unsure about anything above, speak to your teachers.

## Coursework

Follow this general guidance to avoid malpractice in your coursework and other non-exam assessment.

- Only submit work that is your own.
- Never lend your work to anyone. You can get in trouble if they copy you, even if you didn't know they had or intended to.
- Make sure you know how to reference other people's work. If you want to quote someone or use someone else's words, make sure you show or reference where the quote has come from, otherwise it could be seen as plagiarism. Check with your teachers which referencing or citation style you should use. The key is to be consistent.
- Type or hand-write your own work for submission. If you need help to do this, make sure you acknowledge that someone else has helped you. Speak with our SENCo for more information about access arrangements.

Speak to your teachers if you're worried about any of these points.

## **In the exam room**

The Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) has very clear instructions on what you can take into an exam room and how you should behave under exam conditions. See their information for candidates.

Remember, bringing mobile phones and other unauthorised items and materials into the exam room is malpractice.

## **What is investigated**

Examples of statements or activities that will lead to a malpractice investigation include:

- copying or allowing work to be copied, for example posting written work on social media sites prior to an exam/assessment
- collusion: working collaboratively with other students beyond what is permitted
- allowing others to help produce your work or helping others with theirs
- being in possession of confidential material in advance of the exam
- exchanging, obtaining, receiving or passing on exam information by any means of communication (even if just attempting to)
- passing on rumours about exam content.

This is not an exhaustive list, as other instances of malpractice may be considered by exam boards at their discretion.

## **Reporting malpractice**

If you suspect any form of malpractice either at school or online, speak to your teacher or exams officer.

Your school or college must report all cases of irregularity or misconduct to the exam board, including what might even be minor misunderstandings.

If you are found guilty of breaching any of the malpractice rules you could find yourself facing a penalty.