Mulberry
Academy Hastings

Policy title	Examinations and Malpractice Policy
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Examinations and Malpractice Policy

1. Purpose

This policy aims to ensure the efficient planning and management of examinations, safeguarding the integrity of the examination process and ensuring fairness for all candidates.

This policy is written in accordance with:
• JCQ General Regulations for Approved Centres (Paragraphs 5.3z & 5.11)
• JCQ Suspected Malpractice: Policies and Procedures (2024/25)
• JCQ Guidance: AI Use in Assessments – Protecting the Integrity of Qualifications (2024)"

2. Exam Responsibilities

3.1 Head of Centre (Principal)

- Holds overall accountability for JCQ compliance
- Ensures all exams staff are trained and understand current regulations
- Oversees secure storage, integrity, and malpractice procedures
- Ensures clear dissemination of JCQ and AI guidance to candidates
- Approves internal appeals and NEA assessment decisions
- Submits M1/M2 forms to awarding bodies for all post-authentication suspected malpractice
- Maintains an up-to-date contingency plan

3.2 Exams Officer

- Manages all aspects of internal and external exams
- Oversees entry procedures, clash resolution, script dispatch, and results collection
- Maintains secure storage of materials and manages access
- Administers access arrangements and applies for special consideration
- Trains and supports invigilators
- Supports the Head of Centre in reporting malpractice and administering appeals

3.3 Teachers and Subject Leaders

- Conduct NEAs and coursework in accordance with awarding body specifications
- Educate students on plagiarism, referencing, and AI guidelines
- Monitor and report suspected malpractice
- Ensure only general advice is provided for NEAs and any additional assistance is recorded
- Authenticate and submit accurate marks

3.4 SENDCo

- Identifies and documents eligibility for access arrangements
- Supports teachers in adapting provision for students with additional needs
- Works with the Exams Officer to implement exam adjustments

3.5 Invigilators

- Conduct examinations according to JCQ Instructions for Conducting Examinations (ICE)
- Monitor candidate behaviour and exam conditions
- Report incidents or irregularities immediately

3.6 Candidates

- Follow all JCQ rules and Academy expectations
- Sign authentication declarations
- Avoid malpractice, including unauthorised AI use
- Acknowledge any AI tools used in research or assessment preparation

3.7 Qualifications

The qualifications offered at the academy are decided by the Senior Leadership Team and include GCSE and BTEC Level 1/2 and OCR Cambridge nationals. The subjects offered for these qualifications in any academic year are detailed in the academy's published prospectus.

4. Entries, Timetables, and Fees

- **Subject Entries**: Heads of Department decide candidate entries based on progress and suitability, in agreement with the Head of Centre. They inform the Exams Officer by published internal deadlines.
- **Timetables**: Internal and public exam timetables are distributed to candidates and staff with appropriate notice.
- **Late Entries**: Avoided by following internal deadlines. Late fees are charged to departments or candidates unless waived by the Principal.
- **Re-sits and Withdrawals**: Managed on a case-by-case basis. Candidates may re-sit qualifications if agreed with staff. Withdrawals must be approved and documented.
- **Fees**:
    - Normal exam fees are paid by the Academy.
    - Private entries, re-sits not supported by the school, or missed exams without valid reason may incur charges.
    - Any potential fee waivers are at the discretion of the Principal.

5. Secure Storage, Exam Days, and Contingency

- **Secure Storage**:
    - Exam papers are stored in a JCQ-compliant, secure, locked room with limited access.
    - All movement of papers is recorded and supervised.
- **Exam Day Protocols**:
    - Invigilators are briefed on JCQ rules and safeguarding expectations.
    - Candidates are reminded of the rules regarding behaviour, prohibited items, and identification.
- **Contingency Planning**:
    - The Academy maintains a Contingency and Resilience Plan in line with JCQ and Ofqual expectations.

- Covers scenarios including: severe weather, building closure, cyber-attack, staff absence, or national disruption.
- Evidence gathering is initiated where alternative grading may be required (e.g., terminal illness or emergencies).
- Relevant stakeholders are briefed on contingency procedures annually.

6. Special Consideration

- If a candidate experiences temporary illness, bereavement, trauma, or significant disruption, they may qualify for special consideration.
- **Candidate Responsibilities**:
  - Must inform the Exams Officer or invigilator at the time of or immediately following the incident.
  - Must provide medical or supporting evidence within **5 days** of the affected exam.
- **Exams Officer Responsibilities**:
  - Assesses eligibility and submits requests via awarding body portals in line with JCQ guidance.

The Equality Act 2010, Special Needs, and Access Arrangements

- Equality Act:
  - All academy staff must ensure that the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 are met.
- Special Needs:
  - A candidate's special needs requirements are determined by the SENDCo.
- Access Arrangements:
  - Making access arrangements for candidates to take exams is the responsibility of the SENCo and exams officer.

7. Malpractice and Reporting Procedures

Definition of Malpractice:

Malpractice refers to any act, omission, or practice that:

- Compromises the integrity of an examination or assessment
- Gives an unfair advantage or disadvantage to a candidate
- Undermines public confidence in the assessment system
- Contravenes JCQ or awarding body regulations

Types of malpractice include:

Candidate Malpractice

- Plagiarism: Submitting work that is not the candidate's own without appropriate referencing
- Collusion: Unauthorised collaboration between candidates on assessments
- Impersonation**:** Arranging for another person to sit an exam or doing so on their behalf
- Possession of unauthorised items**:** Including mobile phones, notes, or smart devices in exam conditions

- AI Misuse**:** Using generative AI tools to produce work without acknowledgement or where prohibited
- Fabrication of results or data
- Disruptive or inappropriate behaviour during examinations

Staff or Centre Malpractice

- Over-assistance**:** Providing help beyond what is permitted in NEAs or coursework
- Falsifying work or grades
- Security breaches**:** Allowing early or unauthorised access to exam materials
- Failure to comply with JCQ regulations
- Improper conduct in marking or assessment decisions

Mandatory Reporting Responsibilities

All suspected cases of candidate or staff malpractice must be reported to the Head of Centre immediately**.**

The **Head of Centre** holds legal and regulatory responsibility for:

- Deciding whether the incident needs to be escalated
- Initiating formal reporting using the JCQ's designated process
- Ensuring that the centre complies fully with awarding body instructions

No other member of staff may investigate or determine the seriousness of a malpractice allegation unless instructed to do so by the awarding body. All reporting of suspected malpractice follows the JCQ 'Suspected Malpractice: Policies and Procedures' guidance. The Head of Centre is responsible for reporting to the awarding body using JCQ M1/M2 forms in accordance with Paragraph 5.11 of the JCQ General Regulations.

Preventing Malpractice

- For Staff:
    - Receive annual training on JCQ guidelines and malpractice risks.
    - Promote a culture of integrity and explain the consequences of malpractice to students.
    - Ensure coursework and assessments are properly supervised.
- For Candidates:
    - Sign declarations confirming their work is their own.
    - Receive clear guidance on plagiarism, collusion, and use of technology in assessments.
    - Follow examination instructions and avoid bringing unauthorized items into exam rooms.

Candidate Malpractice Procedures

Before Authentication

- If malpractice is identified **before** a candidate has signed the authentication statement:
    - The incident is managed **internally** unless there has been a **breach of security**, in which case it must be reported.
    - All records must be logged and retained securely.

After Authentication

- If malpractice is suspected **after** a candidate signs the authentication form, the Head of Centre must report the matter using the **JCQ M1 Form**.
- The centre must not make a judgement; evidence should be compiled and submitted to the awarding body, including:
    - The candidate's statement (if obtained)
    - Any relevant scripts, NEA work, digital tools or AI outputs
    - Staff statements and incident records

Staff or Centre Malpractice Procedures

- All suspected malpractice by staff or the centre must be reported to the Head of Centre and then to the awarding body using the JCQ M2 Form.
- The Head of Centre must not initiate an internal investigation unless explicitly authorised by the awarding body.
- All evidence must be preserved and shared as instructed.

Investigation and Outcomes

Once reported:

- The awarding body will decide whether an investigation is required and how it should proceed.
- The individual accused (staff or student) will:
    - Be notified of the allegation in writing
    - Be given the opportunity to respond
    - Be informed of the possible outcomes

Sanctions may include:

- Loss of marks
- Disqualification from one or more components or qualifications
- Prohibition from future examinations
- Referral to professional regulators (e.g. TRA, EWC)
- Staff disciplinary action, including dismissal

All records of malpractice and outcomes are retained securely by the Head of Centre.

8. Artificial Intelligence (AI) Use and Misuse

Definition of AI

AI includes tools like ChatGPT, Google Bard, Grammarly, or any system that generates text, media, or analysis based on prompts or user queries.

Acceptable Use of AI

AI may be used:

- To assist with general research, exploration of concepts, or drafting outlines.
- When directed by a teacher as part of a learning activity, provided that any AI-generated content is properly acknowledged.
- Expectations around the use of AI are based on the JCQ document 'AI Use in Assessments: Protecting the Integrity of Qualifications' (April 2024)

Unacceptable Use of AI

Misuse includes:

- Submitting AI-generated text as original work without acknowledgment.
- Using AI during examinations, NEAs or controlled assessments.
- Failing to retain a copy of prompts and AI outputs when requested.
- Falsely claiming authorship of work not created independently.

Acknowledging AI

Candidates must:

- Clearly state when and how AI was used (e.g. "Initial research supported by ChatGPT – response generated on [date]").
- Submit AI-generated outputs alongside their own final submission, if applicable.

Staff and Student Awareness

- **Teachers** are trained annually on AI tools, their risks, and methods to detect AI use.
- **Students** receive guidance through PSHE, assemblies, and written materials on appropriate academic conduct.

Consequences of AI Misuse

- Treated as **malpractice** under JCQ regulations.
- May result in **zero marks, disqualification,** or further action by awarding bodies.

9. Internal Appeals Procedure

9.1 Purpose of the Procedure

This section sets out the process by which candidates (or their parent/carer) may appeal:

- Internally assessed marks (e.g. NEAs or coursework)
- Decisions to reject a candidate's work on the grounds of malpractice
- The centre's decisions relating to access arrangements or special consideration

- The centre's decision not to support an application for a review of marking or moderation

The procedure is designed to ensure fairness, transparency, and compliance with the JCQ's **General Regulations** and **Instructions for Conducting Non-Examination Assessments**.

9.2 Access and Communication

- This policy is published on the school website and is available on request from the Exams Officer.
- Students and parents/carers are informed of their right to appeal via:
    - The candidate handbook
    - Assessment guidelines shared with NEA students
    - Assemblies or exam briefings
- The Head of Centre ensures the process is explained clearly to staff and communicated to candidates in advance of assessments.

9.3 Appeals Against the Rejection of a Candidate's Work

If a candidate's work is rejected due to suspected malpractice (e.g. unauthenticated work, AI misuse, plagiarism):

- The **candidate has the right to appeal the decision** internally.
- The appeal must be submitted **in writing** to the **Head of Centre** within **5 working days** of being informed of the decision.
- The appeal must clearly outline the grounds for challenging the decision and include any supporting evidence.

The Head of Centre will:

- Convene an impartial panel (including a senior leader not involved in the original decision)
- Review all relevant materials (including the candidate's work, teacher feedback, and any digital evidence)
- Allow the candidate (and parent/carer, if applicable) the opportunity to present their case
- Make a decision within **10 working days**, which will be communicated in writing

Where appropriate, the work may be reinstated and submitted with a declaration of authentication, subject to JCQ regulations.

9.4 Appeals Against Internally Assessed Marks

- Internally assessed marks are shared with students before submission to awarding bodies.
- If a candidate believes their work has been unfairly marked, they may request a review **within 5 working days** of receiving their mark.
- A review will be carried out by a member of staff **not involved in the original marking**.
- The reviewer will consider whether the mark was awarded in line with the awarding body's published criteria.
- The outcome of the review will be shared in writing, and the candidate will be informed that the reviewed mark may go **up, down, or stay the same**.

9.5 Appeals Regarding Access Arrangements or Special Consideration

- Appeals may be submitted if a candidate disagrees with the decision not to apply for access arrangements or special consideration.
- The appeal must be submitted in writing to the **SENDCo or Exams Officer**, and will be reviewed by the **Head of Centre**.

9.6 Appeals Against Centre Decisions Not to Support Review of Marking/Moderation

- Candidates may request that the school submits an Enquiry About Results (EAR) or Review of Moderation (RoM).
- If the school does not support the request, the candidate may appeal this decision in writing to the **Head of Centre**.
- The Head of Centre will review the rationale, discuss it with relevant staff, and inform the candidate of the outcome.

9.7 Record Keeping and Confidentiality

- All appeal documents, meeting notes, and outcomes are stored securely by the Exams Officer.
- Appeals are treated confidentially and sensitively, with due regard for data protection and candidate welfare.

10. Policy Monitoring and Review

- This policy is reviewed **annually** by the Head of Centre and the Exams Officer.
- Revisions are made in response to:
    - JCQ regulatory updates
    - Feedback from inspections, awarding bodies, or internal audits
    - Emerging trends such as new risks involving technology (e.g., AI)
- Updated versions are shared with staff and made available to students and families.

11. Links with Other Policies

This policy should be read alongside the following Academy policies:

- Business Continuity Plan (Confidential Policy)
- Mulberry Academy Trust AI Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Behaviour to Achieve and Exclusions Policy
- Data Protection and Privacy Policy
- Complaints Policy