



Candidate Malpractice Data

On Wednesday 9 November 2022, under its statutory duty as the regulator for National Qualifications in Scotland, the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) published information on malpractice in the 2020–21 academic session.

2020–21

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and the subsequent cancellation of the 2021 exam diet, no instances of candidate malpractice were identified in 2020–21. Consequently, no penalties were applied.

Malpractice terminology

Categories of malpractice

Breach of assessment conditions — Breaching the defined assessment conditions, such as completing work outside of controlled conditions.

Collusion — Colluding with other candidates whenever the assessment is to be completed by individual candidates. Examples of collusion include copying work from another candidate; sharing work with another candidate; and/or working collaboratively with other candidates on tasks that should be completed individually.

Frivolous content — Producing content that is unrelated to the exam paper, or to any question that is in the exam script or coursework.

Misconduct — Behaviour in the exam room that causes disruption to others. This includes talking, shouting, abusive or aggressive behaviour or language, and not having prohibited electronic devices turned off or on silent mode.

Offensive content — Content in scripts or coursework that includes vulgarity and swearing that is out with the context of the assessment, or any material of a discriminatory nature (including racism, sexism and homophobia).

Personation — Assuming the identity of another candidate or a candidate having someone assume their identity during an assessment.

Plagiarism — Failure to acknowledge sources properly and/or the submission of another person's work as if it were the candidate's own.

Prohibited items — Physical possession of prohibited items (including mobile phones, electronic devices, handwritten notes, etc) in the exam room.

Penalty definitions

a. **Warning** — A warning given to a candidate that will be taken into account should there be any future breach of SQA rules.

b. **Warning with Revision of Marks** — Marks awarded are revised in cases of collusion and plagiarism in the candidate's work.

c. **Cancellation** — Cancellation of external award.

Data

	NQ 2021	NQ 2020	NQ 2019
Category	Number of penalties issued to candidates by category	Number of penalties issued to candidates by category	Number of penalties issued to candidates by category
Collusion	0	0	16
Frivolous/Offensive content-	0	0	7
Misconduct	0	0	*
Personation	0	0	*
Plagiarism	0	0	61
Prohibited items: mobile telephones	0	0	32
Prohibited items: notes, etc	0	0	33
Totals	0	0	150

	NQ 2021	NQ 2020	NQ 2019
Penalty	Number of penalties issued to candidates by consequence	Number of penalties issued to candidates by consequence	Number of penalties issued to candidates by consequence
Warning	0	0	32
Warning — Revision of Marks	0	0	25
Cancellation	0	0	93
Totals	0	0	150

*The number of penalties is not reported for categories with fewer than 5 instances, so that individual candidates cannot be identified.