



National Qualifications 2025: Provisional Candidate Malpractice Data

The following provisional candidate malpractice data for the 2024–25 academic session was released on 16 October 2025. Final data for the 2024–25 academic session will be released in spring 2026.

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 when the assessment should 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.

Falsification of SQA Certificates — The alteration or falsification of any results document, including certificates.

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 having a prohibited electronic device that emits any kind of sound in the exam room.

Offensive content — Content in scripts or coursework that includes vulgarity and swearing that is outwith 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 work that is not the candidate's own (this could be another person's work or work taken from a generative AI source).

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

Penalty definitions

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

Warning with revision of marks — Marks awarded are revised in cases of collusion and plagiarism in the candidate's work.

Cancellation of award — Cancellation of the award in which the malpractice was identified.

Cancellation of component — Cancellation of all marks gained from the component in which malpractice was identified.

De-bar — Disqualification from future entries for a defined period of time.

Data

Category	NQ 2025 Number of penalties issued to candidates	NQ 2024 Number of penalties issued to candidates
Breach of assessment conditions	16	*
Collusion	29	12
Falsification of SQA certificates**	*	n/a
Frivolous/Offensive content	9	6
Misconduct	10	*
Personation	*	0
Plagiarism (cases involving use of AI)	69 (43)	92 (51)
Prohibited items: mobile telephones	47	40
Prohibited items: notes, etc	23	19
Totals	207	173

Penalty	NQ 2025 Number of penalties issued to candidates	NQ 2024 Number of penalties issued to candidates
Warning	61	30
Warning — revision of marks	29	*
Cancellation of award	19	5
Cancellation of component	95	135
De-bar	*	*
Totals	207	173

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

** Falsification of SQA certificates is reported as a separate category of malpractice for the first time in 2025. Previously any malpractice of this type was reported under the category of misconduct.