



Exams Officers and Invigilators: how to avoid malpractice

Simple mistakes can come at a cost. Here are some examples of malpractice, the consequences, and how not to get caught out.

What happened?

Samerah* is an Exams Officer. She was in a rush preparing for the GCSE science exam, so didn't have time to check all of the question paper packets but trusted that she'd filed them in the correct order.

One pack of papers for the following week's exam was in the pile, opened by mistake, and given out to the students in the exam room.

The students finished the exam and left the room. Samerah didn't realise her mistake until she was organising the papers to be sent back to the exam board.

What was the outcome?

Samerah had breached security by failing to keep exam material secure before an exam.

Because of this Samerah had to work under Special conditions. This meant that her involvement with exams had to be supervised by a person more senior than her to make sure they were compliant with the regulations.

What should they have done?

Samerah should've made sure that the day, date, time, subject, unit/component and tier of entry of all packets were checked by two separate people before they were opened.

This check should've been recorded on the 'second pair of eyes' check form.

Alan* was invigilating the GCSE Physical Education exam. It started at 1.00pm and the exam finished at 2.15pm, and Alan let the students leave.

One student wrote about the exam on social media. This could then have been seen by late students who had not yet entered the exam.

Alan had failed to invigilate the exam in line with JCQ regulations, and this is maladministration.

Alan had to complete training on how to invigilate. He was not allowed to have any further involvement in exams until he'd completed the training.

Alan should've made sure that the students were kept supervised until 2.30pm – the secure time for afternoon exams.

*For the purposes of this case study people's names are made up.

Exam rules and guidelines

Take a look at our website for information on exam rules and guidelines to help you understand what's considered to be malpractice and how to avoid it, as well as what to do if you suspect malpractice in exams and assessments.

[aqa.org.uk/exams-administration/exams/malpractice](https://www.aqa.org.uk/exams-administration/exams/malpractice)