

## **Admissions Testing Service Malpractice Procedure**

The Admissions Testing Service has a responsibility to candidates, test centres and other stakeholders to ensure the integrity of our tests by putting in place robust measures to identify and deal with instances of candidate or test centre malpractice.

The Admissions Testing Service malpractice procedure deals with cases of suspected irregular conduct.

Irregular conduct is any action which gives or aims to give unfair advantage to a candidate or causes disadvantage to other candidates. The Notice to Candidates, which is displayed outside all examination rooms, warns candidates of the consequences of such actions.

We have rigorous procedures in place to detect instances of malpractice.

### **Examples of malpractice include:**

- obtaining unauthorised access to examination material
- using or trying to use unauthorised material, e.g. notes, study guides, mobile phones
- copying/collusion or attempted copying/collusion
- disruptive behaviour or not following the instructions of an invigilator, supervisor or Centre Exams Manager/exams officer, e.g. use of mobile phones or other electronic devices
- impersonation (pretending to be someone else)
- altering any results document or notification
- any other form of cheating or gaining of an unfair advantage.

### **Cases of suspected malpractice may be reported:**

- by the centre, e.g. a report from an invigilator
- by an examiner, e.g. unusual incorrect answers, shared by candidates who were sitting next to each other
- by a candidate to their centre, e.g. a statement to an invigilator or supervisor
- by post-test statistical analysis by Validation (see below).

Cases of potential malpractice must be reported to the Cambridge English Malpractice team using the online form or via email at [Malpractice@CambridgeEnglish.org](mailto:Malpractice@CambridgeEnglish.org).

Once reported, potential malpractice cases follow a process of investigation by our staff and by the Admissions Testing Service Malpractice Panel, which may lead to results being withheld.

### **Post-test statistical analysis**

In line with best practice, we investigate potential malpractice by carrying out a range of statistical analyses on individual candidate results, pairs and groups of candidates in test venues and the overall results of all the candidates from one test administration.

These analyses may include, but are not limited to, comparing:

- the similarity of response patterns, or marks, between two or more candidates
- performance on one test paper compared to performance on the other papers
- performance of repeater candidates on one test date compared to their previous performance
- the likelihood of certain responses and scores given the overall ability of the candidate
- the time it takes to complete the test or test items (in computer-based tests).

In each case the analysis assesses the likelihood of any given pattern of results or scores being found by chance, given the typical pattern observed in the rest of the test population (based on historical candidate data). In other words, we identify instances where the candidate's submitted answers are substantially different from those observed in the overall population.

Any cases which are identified as being unusual may then be further scrutinised by an external Malpractice Panel. All available evidence is checked before a decision is made on whether to withhold results.

If we have reasonable grounds to suspect that a result is not a reliable indicator of a candidate's ability, then we believe it is in the interests of all candidates that we withhold it.

### **Malpractice Panel meeting**

The Admissions Testing Service is a department of Cambridge English Language Assessment which has a dedicated Malpractice Panel to look at cases, taking into account a statement by the candidate and any other additional information. The Panel includes representatives from the universities which use the Admissions Testing Service's tests. After carefully considering the case, the Panel will advise us whether the candidate's result should be released or permanently withheld. The centre is then asked to inform the candidate.

If it is decided that a candidate's results can be released, the original results will be issued, unchanged. If it is decided that the results should be permanently withheld, the candidate will not receive a result.

This procedure is designed to ensure that all decisions are consistent, fair and based on the fullest information available. We aim to complete the investigation of suspected malpractice cases within 10 working days of the test date.

There is an Appeals procedure for candidates who wish to appeal against a decision to withhold their result. Information about the Appeals procedure can be found in the [Useful documents](#) section of the Admissions Testing Service website.