

NCTJ Sanctions policy and procedures

The NCTJ will impose sanctions and/or penalties on individuals or centres found guilty of malpractice, maladministration and/or non-compliance with our requirements, or as a result of findings in a complaint or monitoring visit. This is to minimise the risk to the integrity of NCTJ examinations and assessments and to maintain the confidence of the public in the delivery and awarding of our qualifications.

The NCTJ may make special arrangements to safeguard the interests of candidates who might otherwise be adversely affected and to protect candidates who, through no fault of their own, are involved in an incident of malpractice.

The NCTJ will apply sanctions and/or penalties as appropriate to the offence from a defined range, in order to reflect the particular circumstances of each case and any mitigating factors. We reserve the right to apply sanctions and/or penalties flexibly, outside of the defined ranges, if particular mitigating or exceptional circumstances are found to exist.

In cases of centre or centre staff malpractice/maladministration, the NCTJ will consider whether the integrity of its examinations, assessments or qualifications has been compromised; the number of candidates affected; or if there has been an adverse effect on candidates.

In cases of malpractice/maladministration by a candidate or group of candidates, the NCTJ will consider the severity of the misconduct and the impact this has on the integrity of NCTJ examinations, assessments and qualifications.

Any breach of NCTJ exam procedures or conditions of exams by a centre or individuals may result in sanctions, depending on the severity of the breach. This will be determined by the NCTJ upon investigation.

In serious cases of malpractice/maladministration, the NCTJ are obliged to report the offence to its regulator Ofqual, who may in turn inform all other Awarding Organisations (AOs) which may result in additional consequences for the centre or individual(s) concerned.

Below is a guide to the minimum indicators and resulting sanctions concerning candidates taking NCTJ remote or in centre exams and is not exhaustive:

Level	Example	Possible Sanctions
1 – Minor non-compliance with procedures or regulations with no direct or immediate threat to the integrity of an NCTJ examination.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failure to provide the required ID at an exam • Insufficient room or desk scan • Minor disruption lasting a short time; calling out, causing noise, turning around • Isolated incidents of speaking out loud during the examination 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written warning • Exclusion from the exam due to be sat
2 – A breach of procedures or regulations, or malpractice or maladministration which, if left unchecked, could result in a threat to NCTJ examinations, assessments or the integrity of NCTJ qualifications.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No attempt to carry out room scan • Plagiarism detected including the use of generative AI • Introduction of unauthorised material to the exam room e.g. prepared notes or use of internet/email where this is prohibited in the exam 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disqualification from the exam • Ban from sitting exams remotely • A ban on sitting future exams in that unit for up to 12 months or longer • A centre financial penalty, in instances of repeated candidate

Level	Example	Possible Sanctions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unauthorised use of a mobile phone or possession of any other electronic device during an exam • Beginning the exam before the specified start time • Failing to stop when the exam concludes 	malpractice at one centre
3 – A serious or repeated breach of procedures or regulations, or serious malpractice or maladministration which has jeopardised the integrity of NCTJ examinations, assessments or integrity of NCTJ qualifications.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plagiarism detected including use of generative AI • Forgery/Collusion • Unauthorised use of a mobile phone or possession of any other electronic device during an exam • Removal of an exam script from the examination before submission • Evidence of an exam script being tampered with • Bribery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disqualification from the exam • A ban on sitting future exams in that unit for up to 12 months or longer • Ban from sitting exams remotely • A ban on sitting all NCTJ exams for up to 12 months or longer • Disqualification from the qualification as a whole (suspension/withdrawal of certification) • Disqualification from taking any NCTJ qualification in the future • A centre financial penalty, in instances of repeated candidate malpractice at one centre

Below is a guide to the minimum indicators and resulting sanctions concerning candidates undertaking other forms of assessment and is not exhaustive:

Level	Example	Possible Sanctions
1 – Minor non-compliance with procedures or regulations with no direct or immediate threat to the integrity of an NCTJ assessment or qualification.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Isolated incidents of speaking out loud during an assessment • In coursework, collaborative work is apparent in a few areas, but possibly due to tutor advice; candidate unaware of the regulations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written warning • Exclusion from the assessment due to be sat
2 – A breach of procedures or regulations, or malpractice or maladministration which, if left unchecked, could result in a threat to NCTJ assessments or the integrity of NCTJ qualifications.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plagiarism detected including use of generative AI /poor referencing in place • Introduction of unauthorised material to the assessment e.g. prepared notes or use of internet/email where this is prohibited in the assessment • Possession of a mobile phone or any other electronic device during an assessment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disqualification from the assessment • A ban on sitting future assessment in that unit for up to 12 months or longer • A centre financial penalty, in instances of repeated candidate malpractice at one centre
3 – A serious or repeated breach of procedures or regulations, or serious malpractice or maladministration which has	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plagiarism detected including use of AI • Copying from another candidate's script, controlled assessment, coursework, non-examination 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disqualification from the assessment • A ban on sitting future assessment in that unit

Level	Example	Possible Sanctions
jeopardised the integrity of NCTJ assessments or integrity of NCTJ qualifications.	<p>assessment; borrowing work to copy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Falsification/ forgery: making a false declaration of authenticity • Collusion: candidates' work reflects extensive similarities and identical passages; due to a deliberate attempt to share work • Bribery 	<p>for up to 12 months or longer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A ban on sitting all NCTJ assessments for up to 12 months or longer • Disqualification from the qualification as a whole (suspension/withdrawal of certification) • Disqualification from taking any NCTJ qualification in the future • A centre financial penalty, in instances of repeated candidate malpractice at one centre

Below is a guide to the minimum indicators and resulting sanctions concerning centres and centre staff and is not exhaustive:

Band	Example	Possible Sanction
1 – Minor non-compliance with procedures or regulations, or maladministration with no direct or immediate threat to the integrity of an examination, assessment or qualification.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failure to hold the exam at the notified address • Allowing unauthorised persons to be present in the exam room • Failure to check candidate ID • Failure to provide a clock in the exam room 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional spot check at the expense of the centre • Written warning • Financial penalty • Action plan
2 – A breach of procedures or regulations, or malpractice or maladministration, which if left unchecked, could result in a threat to examinations, assessments or integrity of NCTJ qualifications.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failure to adhere to NCTJ invigilation notes and carry out the required duties as stated • Failure to adhere to NCTJ conditions of exams e.g. not issuing and explaining procedures to candidates, allowing multiple candidates to be absent from the exam room at any one time, failing to complete appropriate exam documentation correctly • Failure to preserve the integrity of NCTJ exam papers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional spot checks at the expense of the centre • Written warning and appropriate sanctions on centre staff • Action plan • Deployment of independent invigilators • Restrictions on examination or assessment material • Suspension of examination and assessment at the centre for a specified period • Financial penalty
3 – A serious or repeated breach of procedures or regulations, or serious malpractice or maladministration, resulting in a loss of confidence in the centre in administering NCTJ examinations, assessments or qualifications.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuous failure to preserve the integrity of NCTJ assessment or examination material • Failure to co-operate with awarding body requests e.g. to investigate suspected malpractice or maladministration • Failure to implement applied sanctions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional spot checks at the expense of the centre • Written warning and appropriate sanctions on centre staff • Action plan • Suspension of candidate enrolments • Suspension/withdrawal of centre approval or accreditation

Band	Example	Possible Sanction
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Forgery• Bribery	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Financial penalty

The NCTJ take all reasonable steps to ensure that individuals and centres are aware of the relevant policies and procedures and the potential consequences of any malpractice/ maladministration.