

GUIDANCE

# Malpractice in Vocational and Technical qualifications

Guide to the data submission process

**ofqual**

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## Introduction

In order to fulfil our regulatory and accreditation functions as set out in the [Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009](#), we require awarding organisations to provide exams delivery data for regulated qualifications.

## What data will be collected?

Data on all malpractice cases investigated, including offence type and any sanctions applied during the 2020/21 academic year (1 September 2020 to 31 August 2021) will be collected.

The data should only include sanctions which relate to offences committed during the 2020/21 academic year. Sanctions for offences committed outside of these time periods should not be included. For example, a sanction applied in 2020/21 for an offence committed in 2019/20 should not be included.

Data will be collected for all Key Stage 4 Performance Table Qualifications (PTQs) **excluding GCSE**, 16-18 Performance Table qualifications (PTQs), **excluding AS, A Level, the Level 3 Project and Advanced Extension Award (AEA)**, Functional Skills Qualifications (FSQs) and Other General Qualifications only to learners in centres in England.

## When will data be collected?

Data will be collected according to the vocational and technical qualifications [reporting schedule](#) which is agreed and maintained by Ofqual's data services team.

## General completion guidelines

1. Please see the appendices for further clarification of field values.
2. Numeric values must not have any formatting.
3. All malpractice cases that are investigated should be reported. If there is insufficient evidence to issue a penalty this information should be supplied.
4. If the malpractice case is still open when the data is reported, 'case ongoing outcome TBD' should be recorded in the type of penalty issued field. In these cases, if the type of offence is unknown, please also report 'case ongoing' in the type of offence field.
5. Please enter the value of '-2' in the Centre Identifier, Centre name and postcode fields for candidates who are not registered to a centre.
6. In the event of systemic cases, where the specific subject information is unknown, i.e. Security Breaches or Maladministration, then 'Non-assessment specific' should be entered in the specification title field. The value of '-2' should also be entered into other related fields if unknown, e.g. Qualification Number, specification code, assessment code etc.

7. All fields are compulsory. Some fields permit a value of '-2' to signify where the field is not applicable or not available for the row of data in question.
8. If a candidate has taken an assessment at a different centre from the one where they undertake their learning then the centre details provided must be those of the centre at which the malpractice took place.
9. For malpractice cases involving more than one candidate, please submit one row of data per candidate involved. i.e. if a malpractice incident involved four candidates please submit four rows of data.

## File format

The file must be CSV format and the first row must be headers as displayed in the '**Name**' column of the table below. The subsequent rows must have the values of the data to be reported which must match the format and validation rules below. An example of the CSV file is provided in Annex B below.

**NB.** If a file needs to be submitted again, any previous files submitted will need to be rejected by Ofqual's Data Services team before an updated file can be submitted.

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Name	Description	Position	Validation Regular Expression	Description of Regular Expression
ReportingDate	Date the file was due to be submitted regardless of when it was actually uploaded.	1	^(20)\d\d[-](0[1-9] 1[012])[-](0[1-9] 12)[0-9] 3[01])\$	The date in the following format: year (4 digits), a dash, month (2 digits), a dash, day (2 digits).  Format accepted 120 ODBC canonical <b>yyyy-mm-dd</b> .
AcademicYear	Academic year that the offence was committed	2	^(20)\d\d[-](20)\d\d \$	The academic year in the following format: start year (4 digits), a dash, end year (4 digits)  Format accepted <b>yyyy-yyyy</b>
AssessmentDate	Date the assessment was taken by the candidate. In the case of assessments which take place over multiple days, please provide the date it was submitted for marking/grading. If no date is available, please provide 2999-12-31.	3	^(20)\d\d[-](0[1-9] 1[012])[-](0[1-9] 12)[0-9] 3[01])\$	The date in the following format: year (4 digits), a dash, month (2 digits), a dash, day (2 digits).  Format accepted 120 ODBC canonical <b>yyyy-mm-dd</b> .  2999-12-31 accepted if no date is available, including where the assessment was not taken because it was subject to a calculated result
CertificationDate	Date the certificate was awarded to the candidate for the qualification. If the certification date is not yet known or not applicable, please provide 2999-12-31.	4	^(20)\d\d[-](0[1-9] 1[012])[-](0[1-9] 12)[0-9] 3[01])\$	The date in the following format: year (4 digits), a dash, month (2 digits), a dash, day (2 digits).  Format accepted 120 ODBC canonical <b>yyyy-mm-dd</b> .

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AwardingOrganisation	Name of the awarding organisation	5	^.{1,100}\$	1 to 100 characters accepted
MalpracticeCaseIdentifier	Unique malpractice case identifier (allocated by individual awarding organisations)  Must be unique across all years of data. If you reuse identifiers each year, please prefix the identifier with the year, e.g. 201819/12345	6	^.{1,25}\$	1 to 25 characters accepted
CentreNCN	Centre's National Centre Number as allocated by the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) <sup>1</sup>	7	^\d{1,5}\$	Valid NCN code. Up to 5-digit integer accepted  -2 also accepted where centre does not have an NCN
CentreURN	Centre's Unique Reference Number as assigned by the Department for Education <sup>1</sup>	8	^\d{1,6}\$	Valid Centre URN. Up to 6-digit integer accepted  -2 also accepted where centre does not have a URN
CentreIdentifierOther	Any other number allocated to the centre or assessment venue by individual awarding organisations. Must be provided if neither CentreNCN nor CentreURN are available <sup>1</sup>	9	^.{1,15}\$	1 to 15 characters accepted  -2 permitted where at least one of NCN or URN have been provided or for candidates who are not registered to a centre
CentreName	Name of the centre	10	^.{1,100}\$	1 to 100 characters accepted  -2 accepted for candidates who are not registered to a centre

<sup>1</sup> To allow us to identify the centre please provide at least one of CentreNCN, CentreURN or CentreIdentifierOther. If more than one is collected, please provide as many as are available.

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CentrePostcode	Postcode of the centre	11	^.{1,10}\$	1 to 10 characters accepted -2 accepted for candidates who are not registered to a centre
TypeOfMalpractice	To indicate type of malpractice (see Annex A for guidance)	12	^(Candidate Centre CentreStaff Examiner)\$	Accepted values: Candidate, Centre, Centre staff, Examiner <sup>2</sup>
UniqueCandidateIdentifier	Unique Candidate Identifier (UCI) assigned to the candidate <sup>3</sup>	13	^.{1,13}\$	A valid UCI. Alpha numeric 13 characters accepted. -2 accepted where the candidate does not have a UCI or in systemic cases -2 required for centre, centre staff and examiner malpractice
UniqueLearnerNumber	Unique Learner Number (ULN) for the candidate provided by the Learning Records Service <sup>3</sup>	14	^.{1,10}\$	1 to 10 characters accepted -2 accepted where the candidate does not have a ULN or in systemic cases -2 required for centre, centre staff and examiner malpractice
CandidateIdentifierOther	Any other unique candidate number allocated by individual awarding organisation. Must be provided where neither UCI or ULN are available <sup>3</sup>	15	^.{1,20}\$	1 to 20 characters accepted -2 permitted where at least one of UCI or ULN have been provided or in systemic cases -2 required for centre, centre staff and examiner malpractice

<sup>2</sup> The value of 'Examiner' includes assessors of any kind who are not centre staff.

<sup>3</sup> To allow us to identify the learner please provide at least one of UniqueCandidateIdentifier, UniqueLearnerNumber or CandidateIdentifierOther. If more than one is collected, please provide as many as are available.

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StaffIdentifier	Please provide an identifier to uniquely identify each individual member of staff involved in the malpractice allegation, whether examiner or centre staff member <sup>4</sup> . This may take any format as long as it falls within the 20 characters permitted, but please do not provide staff names.	16	^.{1,20}\$	1 to 20 characters accepted -2 accepted for candidate or centre malpractice, in systemic cases, or where the investigation is ongoing and the number of staff members involved in the allegation is unknown.
QualificationNumber	Qualification Number, if known, e.g. 123/1234/1	17	^.{1,10}\$	1 to 10 characters accepted -2 also accepted for candidates not yet certificating or for systemic cases
SpecificationCode	Specification code, if relevant  May also be known as subject code or pathway code	18	^.{1,15}\$	1 to 15 characters accepted -2 also accepted where the specification code is not applicable.
SpecificationTitle	Specification title, if relevant  Must be provided if specification code is provided.  Please provide value of 'Non-assessment specific' for systemic cases	19	^.{1,150}\$	1 to 150 characters accepted -2 also accepted where the specification title is not applicable
AssessmentCode	Assessment code. When one unit is assessed by one assessment, please provide the URN (Unit Reference Number).	20	^.{1,50}\$	1 to 50 characters accepted -2 also accepted where an assessment code is not applicable

<sup>4</sup> It is necessary to be able to identify an individual within the year of data requested so we can identify when the same individual has committed malpractice multiple times. It is not necessary to be able to identify individuals between years if systems do not allow for this.

AssessmentType	To indicate type of assessment.	21	^(Internal External -2)\$	<p>Accepted values:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Internal</li> <li>- External</li> </ul> <p><i>[please see the <a href="#">definition of external assessment</a> (page 14) used by the Department for Education]<sup>5</sup></i></p> <p>-2 accepted for systemic cases or for teacher assessed grades issued under the VCRF</p>
AssessmentMethod	The assessment method as it relates to this case.	22	^(Online Exam Paper-based Exam Performance task -2)\$	<p>Accepted values:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Online exam</li> <li>- Paper-based exam</li> <li>- Performance task</li> </ul> <p><i>[Please see the description of performance task]<sup>6</sup>.</i></p> <p>-2 accepted for systemic cases or for teacher assessed grades issued under the VCRF</p>

<sup>5</sup> External assessment is a form of assessment in which question papers, assignments and tasks are specified by the awarding organisation, then taken under specified conditions (including details of supervision and duration) and marking or assessment judgements are made by the awarding organisation. It does not include moderation or verification of centre-based assessment undertaken by an awarding organisation.

<sup>6</sup> Performance task is any task that is not a written exam (whether online or paper-based). In addition to performances such as musical or drama, this category also includes other tasks such as presentations, professional discussions, a portfolio of evidence, and speaking exams.

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AssessmentSchedule	To indicate the schedule for external assessments.	23	^(Timetabled   On-demand (non-sessional)   On-demand (sessional)   -2)\$	<p>Accepted values:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Timetabled</li> <li>- On-demand (non-sessional)</li> <li>- On-demand (sessional)</li> <li>- -2</li> </ul> <p>Timetabled: the assessment can only be taken on a specified dates set by the AO</p> <p>On-demand, non-sessional: the exam can be taken at any time during the year</p> <p>On-demand, sessional: the exam can be taken at any time within exam windows specified by AOs</p> <p>-2 accepted for systemic cases, for internal assessment, or for teacher assessed grades issued under the VCRF</p>
TypeOfOffence	Description of offence	24	Accepted values as per pre-agreed list of offences.	Accepted values as per agreed list
TypeOfPenaltyIssued	Description of penalty	25	Accepted values as per pre-agreed list of penalties.	Accepted values as per agreed list

## Annex A: Malpractice types

Some guidance that may be helpful to understand the malpractice types is given below:

### **Malpractice**

A breach of the regulations that might undermine the integrity of an exam may constitute malpractice. It includes maladministration and non-compliance with the regulations. It includes attempts by students to communicate with each other during an exam, and failures by examiners or school/college staff to comply with instructions from awarding organisations.

### **Candidate malpractice**

Candidate malpractice means malpractice by a candidate in connection with any assessment or examination, including the preparation and authentication of centre-based assessment (internal assessment), the compilation of portfolios of evidence, presentation of practical work, the writing of an examination paper.

### **Centre staff malpractice**

Centre staff include teachers, trainers, other staff or volunteers involved in delivering a course of study. It also includes those staff appointed in another capacity such as an invigilator, a prompter, reader or scribe.

### **Examiner**

The value of 'Examiner' includes assessors of any kind who are not centre staff.

### **Centre malpractice**

Instances of malpractice by centres can range from actions intended to give an unfair advantage to students in an exam or assessment to ignorance of, or inappropriate application of, the assessment regulations.

## Annex B: Example CSV File

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P
1	ReportingDate	AcademicYear	AssessmentDate	CertificationDate	AwardingOrganisation	MalpracticeCaseIdentifier	CentreNCN	CentreURN	CentreIdentifierOther	CentreName	CentrePostcode	TypeOfMalpractice	UniqueCandidateIdentifier	UniqueLearnerNumber	CandidateIdentifierOther	StaffIdentifier
2	2021-11-17	2020-2021	2020-10-13	2021-08-16	AO name	case1	12345	123456	111122223333	example name 1	ABC123	Candidate	112233445566K	1122334455	12345671234567	-2
3	2021-11-17	2020-2021	2020-10-13	2021-08-16	AO name	case1	12345	123456	111122223333	example name 1	ABC123	Candidate	223344556677L	2233445566	23456782345678	-2
4	2021-11-17	2020-2021	2021-03-21	2999-12-31	AO name	case2	23456	234567	-2	example name 2	DEF456	Centre	-2	-2	-2	-2
5	2021-11-17	2020-2021	2999-12-31	2999-12-31	AO name	case3	34567	345678	-2	example name 3	GHI789	Centre	-2	-2	-2	-2
6	2021-11-17	2020-2021	2021-06-04	2999-12-31	AO name	case4	45678	456789	-2	example name 4	JKL123	Examiner	-2	-2	-2	111122223333
7	2021-11-17	2020-2021	2021-05-19	2999-12-31	AO name	case5	56789	-2	-2	example name 5	MNO456	Centre Staff	-2	-2	-2	444455556666

Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y
Qualification Number	Specification Code	SpecificationTitle	Assessment Code	Assessment Type	AssessmentMethod	AssessmentSchedule	TypeOfOffence	TypeOfPenaltyIssued
601/1234/0	12345	Specification 1	code1	External	Online Exam	Timetabled	Insufficient information	Loss of marks for a section
601/1234/0	12345	Specification 1	code1	External	Online Exam	Timetabled	Insufficient information	Loss of marks for a section
603/0201/3	23456	Specification 2	code2	External	Paper-based Exam	On-demand (non-sessional)	Deception	Written warning
-2	-2	Non-assessment specific	-2	-2	-2	-2	Breach of security	Review and report
602/8516/1	34567	Specification 3	code3	External	Paper-based Exam	On-demand (sessional)	Examiner competency	Training
601/5678/0	45678	Specification 4	code4	Internal	Performance task	-2	Improper assistance to candidates	Written warning

## Contacts

For all queries relating to the data collection process, amendments to data previously provided, or for general guidance, please contact:

Ofqual  
Earlsdon Park  
53-55 Butts Road  
Coventry  
CV1 3BH

Email [Data.Services@ofqual.gov.uk](mailto:Data.Services@ofqual.gov.uk)



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