



THE INSTITUTION OF FIRE ENGINEERS
Founded 1918 • Incorporated 1924

Malpractice – Procedures

Introduction

The IFE has established standards for the implementation and administration of its examinations. These processes are in place to ensure that all candidates taking the IFE's examinations experience the same assessment conditions and therefore all examinations take place in equitable circumstances.

Candidates are made aware of the conditions via the "Rules and Information for Candidates taking Examinations" handbook which is issued to all candidates; this is also available via the IFE's website. In addition, Invigilators read out the rules to be followed during examinations at the start of each examination session. Examination centres are reminded of the conditions via the Examination Centre Handbook and via the Invigilation Announcement document.

Unfortunately, examination circumstances are occasionally different from those specified by the IFE. Any act that is a breach of the examination arrangements specified by the IFE and which confers an unfair advantage on one or more candidates constitutes malpractice.

The IFE will investigate all possible cases of malpractice and, where warranted, apply appropriate sanctions in order to preserve the integrity of the IFE's qualifications and to ensure that all candidates have been treated in an equitable way.

The IFE's procedures have been designed to comply with the requirements of its regulators and to follow common best practice applied by other UK awarding organisations.

What is Malpractice?

Malpractice may be committed by candidates or by examination centres. Generally, any activity that undermines the integrity and fairness of the assessment process will be viewed as malpractice. The following list of examples is not exhaustive but provides an indication of the types of activity which will be investigated by IFE.

Examples of candidate malpractice:

- use of notes, books or other unauthorised materials in examinations
- collusion with other candidates to copy/share answers
- causing disruption during the examination
- falsifying information

Examples of centre malpractice:

- failing to comply with invigilation requirements and/or behaving in a way that undermines the integrity of IFE examinations
- allowing the use of unauthorised materials, such as notes or text books, in examinations
- failing to maintain confidentiality of examination materials and of the work submitted by candidates
- failure to notify IFE of malpractice or to conduct investigations as requested by IFE
- falsification of documents

Process for dealing with Suspected Malpractice

The procedure applied by the IFE is as follows:

- The IFE will consider feedback from examiners, centre officials, candidates and other relevant witnesses. The issues raised will be reviewed and, if appropriate, an investigation will be initiated.
- If an investigation is undertaken, the IFE will inform the candidate and/or examination centre that this is the case. Candidates/Centres will have the opportunity to provide their feedback. Candidates/Centres should present their feedback **in writing** so that this can be submitted to the IFE Investigation Panel.
- Candidates/Centres should be aware that the scope of the IFE's investigation will include all examinations entered by the candidate for the examination session in question.
- Whilst this process is underway, the IFE will hold back the issuing of results for the candidate(s) affected by the investigation.
- The report from the investigation will be presented to the IFE Investigation Panel for consideration and for a decision as to the next stage of the process.
- If the panel determines that malpractice has taken place, the panel will determine the sanctions to be applied.
- The IFE will inform centres and candidates of the panel's decision and the actions to be taken.
- Candidates/Centres will have the right to appeal against sanctions. Candidates/Centres who wish to appeal must register their appeal **within one calendar month** of the date that the decision was posted/emailed to them by the IFE (i.e. the date appearing on the letter/email). Appeals must be made in writing, clearly setting out the reason for the appeal and using the form provided by IFE. Candidates/Centres should request the appeals documentation from IFE.

Sanctions

Where the IFE Investigation Panel determines that malpractice has taken place, or has been attempted, sanctions will be applied in line with the nature of the malpractice. Sanctions used by the IFE reflect those applied in similar circumstances by other UK awarding organisations.

Examples of the types of sanction applied to candidates by the IFE follow:

- **Loss of marks** for a particular section or component of an examination
- **Disqualification from a specific paper or unit** – eg where candidates have used unauthorised materials in completing one paper or there is evidence of candidate collusion, the candidate(s) will be disqualified from that paper. Entry fees will not be refunded.
- **Disqualification from all papers towards the full qualification undertaken in the same year** – eg where candidates have used unauthorised materials in completing more than one paper/unit, IFE reserves the right to disqualify the candidate from all papers/units undertaken during that session ie if a candidate has entered three papers and there is sufficient evidence that the candidate has used unauthorised materials for two of the papers, IFE reserves the right to disqualify the candidate from all three papers. No entry fees will be returned.
- **Bar entry to future examinations for a set period of time** – eg where the behaviour of the candidates is found to be unacceptable and undermines the credibility of the IFE's examinations, candidates will be disqualified from all papers in the current session and will not be allowed to enter future examinations within the period of the bar. No entry fees will be refunded.

The IFE appreciates that sometimes, malpractice can be due to accident and/or error. Where it is clear that the circumstances are due to accident/error, the IFE will endeavour to protect the interests of candidates who are accidentally caught up in malpractice eg through errors made by the examination centre. In these instances, IFE may apply a lesser sanction eg disqualify the candidate for the current examination but provide a deferral option so that candidates can re-take the examination in the following year without the need to pay a further entry fee.

Procedure Review

This procedure is reviewed on an annual basis to ensure that it continues to be fit for purpose and to reflect the best practice applied by UK awarding organisations.

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