



Media Release

JCQ announces an Independent Commission into Malpractice

Today, JCQ announces the launch of an independent industry-led Commission into examination malpractice chaired by Sir John Dunford.

Although incidents of malpractice remain relatively low, they can have a negative impact on the fairness of the examination system as well as public confidence. Each year, exam boards have to take steps to mitigate as far as possible the effect of malpractice, for example if a school or college has accidentally or purposefully opened a pack of examination papers early.

Exam boards have clear and robust procedures in place to deter, identify and penalise malpractice. This includes a Centre Inspection Service, which undertakes unannounced visits. But it is not just exam boards who can take action, there is a responsibility on the whole sector.

Michael Turner, Director General of JCQ said:

“Malpractice is relatively uncommon, but its impact can be significant. Exam boards have robust procedures in place but there is more they and the whole industry can do to deliver improvements.

“Public confidence in the integrity of the system is extremely important and we need to ensure that we more fully understand what drives malpractice, and how we can support school and college staff and leaders.

“We are delighted Sir John Dunford has agreed to Chair the Commission. His experience across the whole sector makes him the ideal person to lead on this important piece of work.”

Commenting on his role as Chair, Sir John Dunford said:

“I am very pleased to have been asked to lead this important Commission. Our work will be valuable not only to exam boards but also to schools, colleges, parents and students. The integrity of the exam system is of vital importance to everyone involved, but especially to the young people taking exams on whose grades their futures depend. We will seek evidence from a wide range of stakeholders to ensure that all views are represented and I hope that the recommendations of the Commission will play a significant part in reducing malpractice at all levels.”

Starting in September 2018, the Commission will consider both general and vocational assessments. A final report with recommendations for the sector is expected to be published in spring 2019.

Details on the full scope of the Commission, as well as the names of its representatives from across the sector, will be announced in the autumn.

-Ends-

Notes for editors

1. The JCQ^{CIC} comprises AQA, CCEA, City & Guilds, NCFE, OCR, Pearson, SQA and WJEC – the eight largest providers of qualifications in the UK. The JCQ^{CIC} is a membership organisation and enables member awarding bodies to act together in providing, where possible, common administrative arrangements for the schools and colleges and other providers which offer their qualifications; and responding to proposals and initiatives in assessment and the curriculum.
2. Ofqual reported that 2,715 penalties were issued to candidates, 895 to staff members and 120 to schools and colleges in 2017. Penalties for candidates were overwhelmingly for possession of a mobile phone in an examination.
3. JCQ guidance on malpractice can be found at [Exams Office Malpractice](#)
4. Media contacts: JCQ's press office can be contacted on: 020 7227 0671 out of hours 07905683816.

Sir John Dunford

John is chair of [Whole Education](#) and is a trustee of the Learn Academies Trust in south Leicestershire and of the charity [Step Together Volunteering](#). He was chair of the Chartered Institute of Educational Assessors from 2011 to 2014.

John was the government's National Pupil Premium Champion from 2013 to 2015, an independent role in which he worked with schools, trusts, teaching schools and local authorities on the effective use of the pupil premium to raise the educational achievement of disadvantaged pupils. He continues to support schools with their pupil premium work.

During the autumn of 2010, John conducted an independent review of the Office of the Children's Commissioner, reporting to the Secretary of State for Education, who accepted the review's recommendations, which were incorporated into the Children and Families Act 2014. He has co-authored reports for the National College for Teaching and Leadership on academy chains; on closing the attainment gap between disadvantaged children and others; on the leadership of free schools, university technical colleges and studio schools; and on an evaluation of teaching schools.

In November 2016, John's book 'The School Leadership Journey' was published by John Catt. He has written an authoritative history of the schools' inspectorate ("Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Schools since 1944: Standard Bearers or Turbulent Priests", Woburn Press, 1998) and has written extensively on national education policy over the last 20 years.

John was general secretary of the [Association of School and College Leaders](#) from 1998 to 2010. Prior to that, he was a member of the leadership team of three secondary schools in the north-east of England from 1974 to 1998, including 16 years as head of Durham Johnston Comprehensive School, an 11-18 school with 1500 pupils.

In 1994 John was awarded the OBE and in 2014 he received a knighthood for services to education. He has an honorary degree from the University of Nottingham and is an honorary fellow in the School of Education at Durham University.