

Good practice guide: Testing, assessment, examinations, and invigilation

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Introduction

Measuring learners' and young people's educational progress is an everyday part of life in all sectors of education and training. As such, it is likely the vast majority of practitioners will have some kind of involvement in this area during their careers.

Because the delivery of education and training in Wales is now so diverse, specific responsibilities within controlled settings are varied and numerous, from opening and storing examination papers to assessing and authenticating learner profiles/ programmes of work. However, what is common is the overriding objective for registrants to ensure candidates receive equal and fair treatment, so there can be confidence in the marks and certification awarded.

This guide is intended to support you in carrying out this important role, not least because close scrutiny is inevitable.

This is not regulatory or mandatory guidance. Scenarios have been included to help you think about and explore some of the issues which might arise, and how our advice might apply. We have also included examples of unacceptable practices where professional boundaries have clearly been crossed.

The Code

All Education Workforce Council (EWC) registrants are subject to the Code of Professional Conduct and Practice (the Code), which sets out the key principles of good conduct and practice for registrants. This guide should be read in conjunction with the Code.

The principles and expectations in the Code which refer to mandatory procedures are:

2. Professional Integrity

Registrants:

- 2.1 are accountable for their conduct and professional competence
- 2.2 behave honestly, and with integrity, particularly with regard to:
 - assessment and examination related tasks

The Code is an important point of reference. Think about the five key principles and the expectations they place upon you. The Code will help you make the right decisions when faced with the challenges covered in this guide.

[The Code is available on our website.](#)

Managing your responsibilities

Educators and trainers know only too well how important measuring progress is for learners' and young people's development and future careers. And it is for this reason the processes involved are subject to scrutiny, by the employer, examination awarding body, Welsh Government, and even learners, young people, parents, and colleagues.

The way you conduct yourself during test and assessment-related tasks demands a high level of personal and professional integrity. For this reason, the following key points of advice should help support this responsibility, particularly if this is central to your professional role.

Follow mandatory guidance

With any form of examination, invigilation, assessment, or test, there must exist specific and mandatory guidance setting out how these need to be conducted by an employer, and the registrants responsible, to ensure fairness.

Whilst we have no place to provide advice on such guidance, you must take a personal responsibility for reading, following, and applying the relevant guidance. This includes any amendments to that guidance.

Our advice is:

- read the relevant guidance and procedure carefully
- understand your role, and what you are expected to do
- ask questions if you are not clear about any part of what is required of you
- understand what you should do when problems, or unusual events, arise

If you are not given any guidance, ask for it, including any amendments. Do not let ignorance make you vulnerable.

Sign documents with care

As part of your involvement, and depending on your role/sector, you may need to sign to authenticate work, or sign to confirm mandatory procedures have been followed as required.

Our advice is:

- read documents carefully, take your time
- understand why you are asked/expected to sign a document, if you are not clear, ask
- if you are asked to confirm the following by signing, make sure that this is the case, before doing signing any document:
 - ◇ you have followed the mandatory guidance
 - ◇ a learner's or young person's work is authentic, complete, and/or of the required standard

Preserving the integrity of documents

Reducing any risk to you also includes minimising the risk of interference with controlled papers, examination materials, learners' and young people's work, and assessment records.

Our advice is:

- store such documents securely, in both electronic and hard copy formats, as they are provided
- do not share controlled documents, unless required, or permitted by mandatory guidance
- do not allow access to them, unless required, or permitted by mandatory guidance
- do not discuss or disclose anything which is confidential in public

What if things go wrong?

Seek advice and support at the earliest possible stage from your line manager, trade union, or at the very least, someone you trust if you find yourself in any of the following situations. Where you:

- cannot cope with your examination or assessment-related responsibilities and/or workload
- are considering taking steps which may compromise you as a professional
- feel under pressure to take short cuts when completing any part of an official document, including signatures
- feel you cannot, or should not, sign any kind of declaration involving examinations and assessments
- think there has been a breach of the mandatory guidance you and your colleagues are expected to follow
- think the integrity of examination or assessment-related records may have been compromised

telling someone early that there is a problem, is crucial.

Breaches of the Code

The examples below are illustrative of cases where registrants (from all the registrant categories), have been subject to EWC disciplinary proceedings as a result of not following mandatory procedures, for example, when measuring progress or carrying out external assessments.

In all cases, there has been a clear breach of the Code and the registrants received a range of disciplinary sanctions including, in some cases, being prohibited from practicing in the education workforce in the future.

A registrant:

- allowed learners to redraft answers, and gave them more time to finish standard tests in examination conditions, breaching guidelines
- failed to upload coursework by required deadlines, award grades, and make work available for moderation
- falsified learner signatures on forms rather than attend review meetings

- 'lost' coursework they had taken home
- signed a declaration, knowing the school had breached the examination board guidelines in the National Reading and Numeracy Test
- falsified their line manager's signature to sign off portfolios of work
- forwarded examination results to Welsh Government, knowing they had been amended to improve grades

Further support

We offer presentations which focus on fitness to practise and the Code. If you or your employer would like to arrange one in the workplace, please contact us.

The [Code, and information about the EWC's fitness to practise work](#) are on our website.

If you require any of our publications in an alternative format, please contact us.

We welcome correspondence in Welsh and English.

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