

Malpractice Policy and Investigation Procedure For Secure English Language Tests (SELTs)

Policy Statement

Trinity College London ('Trinity') is committed to upholding the integrity of its qualifications. It is also committed to ensuring that all candidates taking Trinity exams at its SELT centres do so under similar conditions at each centre and therefore have an equal opportunity to demonstrate their abilities.

Accordingly, Trinity will not tolerate any act or omission, or any attempted act or omission, that is or results in cheating, unfair practice or a breach of its rules and regulations. Candidates found to have committed any of the above will, at Trinity's discretion, be disqualified from the exam.

Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to all candidates taking Trinity exams as Secure English Language Tests (SELTs).

Purpose of the Policy

The purpose of this policy is to:

- define malpractice;
- set out the rights and responsibilities of Trinity and candidates in relation to such matters; and
- describe the procedures to be followed in cases where there is reason to suspect malpractice.

Definitions of Malpractice

Malpractice means any act or omission, or attempted act or omission, which:

- breaches Trinity's rules and regulations for its exams;
- compromises the process of assessment, the integrity of any qualification or the validity of a result or certificate; and/or
- prejudices or otherwise damages the authority, reputation or credibility of Trinity as an independent exam board.

Malpractice can arise for a variety of reasons. It can be intentional, done with the aim of giving a candidate an unfair advantage in an exam or assessment. It can be unintentional or negligent, arising through ignorance, carelessness or forgetfulness about Trinity's rules and regulations. It can also arise through circumstances beyond the control of those involved, such as where disruption is caused to an exam by an external event or unplanned incident.

Irrespective of the underlying causes of the malpractice, or the people involved, all allegations of malpractice in relation to Trinity SELT exams need to be investigated by Trinity in order to protect the integrity of its qualifications and to be fair to all candidates.

Candidate Malpractice

'Candidate Malpractice' means malpractice committed by or on behalf of a candidate in relation to any Trinity SELT exam, including in the writing of any exam paper and in oral exams. Examples of candidate behaviour which would be the subject of an investigation into malpractice are set out below. This is not an exhaustive list and as such does not limit the scope of the definitions set out in this policy. Trinity reserves the right to define instances of malpractice at its discretion.

- Behaving in such a way that enables the candidate to gain an unfair advantage.
- Altering official documentation such as individual mark sheets, examiners' reports and certificates.
- Impersonating a candidate.
- Providing a false form of identification.
- Cheating or attempting to cheat by copying another's work or allowing another candidate to copy his/her work.
- Colluding or attempting to collude with other candidates.
- Talking to, giving anything to or distracting another candidate during the exam.
- Being in possession of and/or using unauthorised aids such as notes or electronic devices in the exam room.
- Obtaining or attempting to obtain confidential exam material (prior to and/or during the exam).
- Disseminating confidential exam material to others.
- Making an audio or video recording of an exam (e.g. on a mobile phone).
- Attempting to influence the examiner's assessment by offering incentives of any kind or by using threatening behaviour before, during or after the exam session.
- Attempting to influence the registrar, steward, supervisor, invigilator or other centre staff by offering incentives of any kind or by using threatening behaviour before, during or after the exam session.
- In written exams, starting the exam before being told to do so, or failing to stop writing at the end of the exam when told to do so, by the supervisor or invigilator.
- Removing any materials other than the candidate's personal possessions from the exam room.

Reporting Suspected Malpractice

Cases of suspected malpractice may be reported by a number of sources, such as:

- By the centre, e.g. in a report from the supervisor.
- By the candidate, e.g. in a letter to Trinity or its representatives.
- By an examiner, marker or inspector, e.g. in the examiner's report.

Investigation Procedure for Suspected Malpractice

Information Collection

Trinity has various ways of collecting information regarding the conduct of an exam session, for example:

- Centre report forms completed by examiners and/or centres for each centre visited. Examiners are required to report any incidence of suspected malpractice.
- Recordings of speaking and listening, and interview sessions.
- CCTV recordings, exam day photographs and other forms of ID
- Sample signatures
- Voice samples
- Supervisors' reports of written exam sessions including seating plans.
- Inspection visit reports completed by Trinity inspectors.
- Centre reports and candidate statements which are requested at the time of notification of an investigation being conducted.
- Appeals documentation.
- Reports from written paper markers.

Suspected Malpractice by a Candidate

In the case of suspected malpractice by a candidate, the Malpractice Investigations Panel (the 'Panel') will look at the available evidence and decide whether there is a case to answer. If the Panel feels that there is no case to answer, it will recommend that the candidate's result is released. If it feels that there is a case to answer, it will recommend that the candidate's results are withheld.

If the Panel decides to investigate the case further, the candidate will be informed of its decision and that the result of his/her exam will not be released until the investigation is complete. The candidate may be requested to provide a statement concerning the alleged malpractice. If this happens, the candidate will be given 10 working days from the date of the notification in which to respond.

Further evidence may be sought by the Panel from the centre, the examiner, marker or, if applicable, inspector about the session or the candidate's work or behaviour.

The Panel will then reconsider all the evidence, taking into account any additional information, including any statement by the candidate.

If it is decided that the candidate's result can be released, the original result will be issued. If it is decided that the result should be withheld indefinitely for malpractice, the exam (i.e. all components) will be voided and zero marks awarded. **Please note that an exam is voided for malpractice, the candidate will not be allowed to take another Trinity SELT exam.**

The procedure is designed to ensure that all decisions are fair, consistent and based on the fullest information available. We usually aim to complete the investigation of malpractice cases within 5 working days of Trinity having all the information necessary to conduct its investigation.

Review

This policy is subject to the review of Trinity's Executive and/or as required by changes to legislation.

Effective Date

This policy came into effect on 6 April 2015.