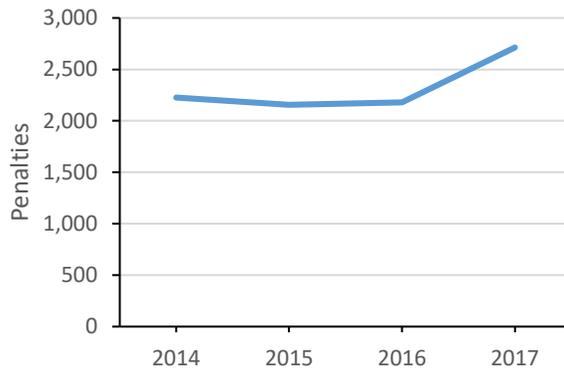


**Annual**                      **Published: 5 January 2018**                      **Coverage: England**                      **Official Statistics**

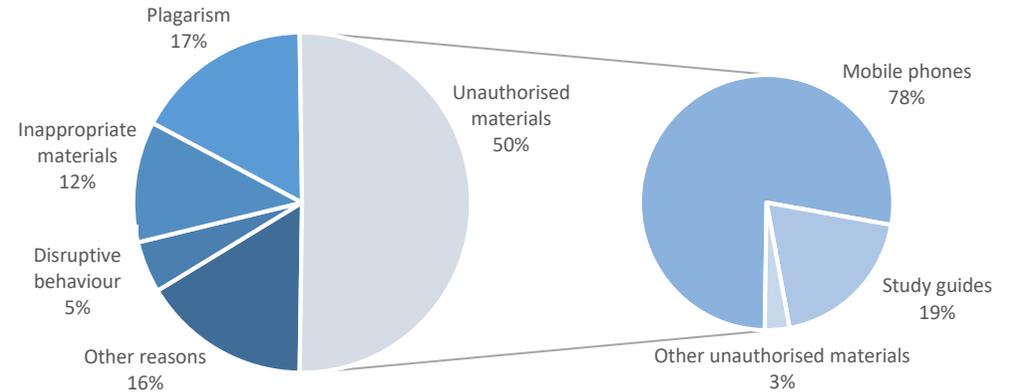
This release presents figures on penalties issued by exam boards for student, school or college staff, and school or college, malpractice for GCSE, AS and A level examinations for the 2017 summer exam series in England.

### Number of penalties issued to students increases

2,715 penalties were issued to students in 2017, up from 2,180 compared to 2016 and representing 0.015% of entries (compared to 0.011% in 2016).

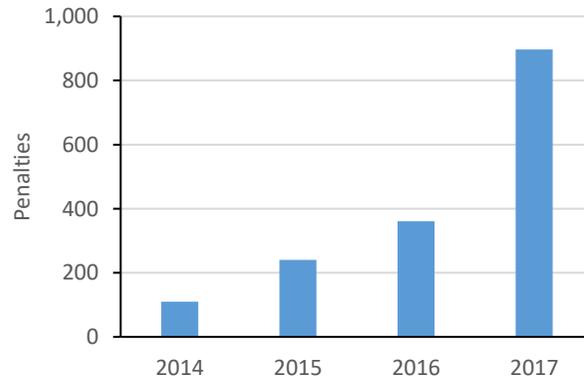


### Access to a mobile phone: main reason for student penalties

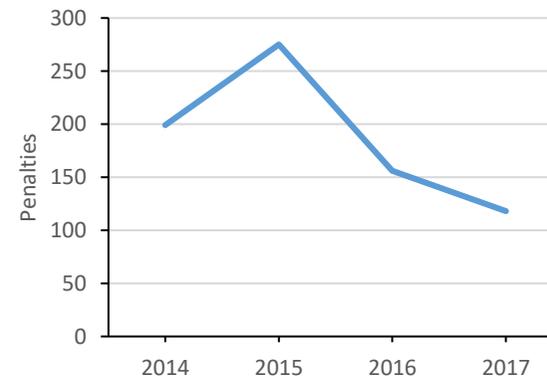


### Number of penalties issued to school or college staff increases

895 penalties were issued to staff, up from 360 in 2016. Exam boards are more likely to issue formal written warnings for similar offences rather than informal advisory notes this year. This still involves a very small proportion of the total number of staff in England ([350K](#)).



### Number of penalties issued to schools or colleges decreases



120 penalties were issued to schools/colleges, down from 155 in 2016. The actual number of penalties is small given the overall number of centres (over 5,000).

**Student malpractice**

Malpractice penalties among students have increased by 25%. Introducing unauthorised materials into the examination room, particularly mobile phones, is the main reason for penalties.

3

**School or college staff malpractice**

Staff malpractice penalties have continued to increase since 2014; however, a very small number of teachers are involved.

5

**School or college malpractice**

Centre malpractice penalties have continued to decrease since 2015 and affects a very small proportion of centres.

6

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 Comments and feedback are welcome.

Published: 5 January 2018  
 Ofqual/17/6312/1

## Malpractice

In this statistical report, Ofqual presents data on malpractice for GCSE, AS level, and A level exams during the summer 2017 exam series in England.

Any breach of the regulations that might undermine the integrity of an exam constitutes malpractice. It includes attempts by students to communicate with each other during an exam, and failure by school or college staff to comply with exam board instructions. It also includes maladministration, which is defined by the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) as the failure by school or college staff to adhere to the regulations of controlled assessments, coursework, examinations and non-examination assessments, or malpractice in the conduct of examinations/assessments and/or the handling of documents such as examination question papers, candidate scripts, mark sheets, etc.

We require exam boards to have procedures in place for dealing with malpractice conducted by students, school or college staff or others involved in providing a qualification. JCQ publishes [policies and guidance](#) on malpractice that give procedures for dealing with suspected malpractice.

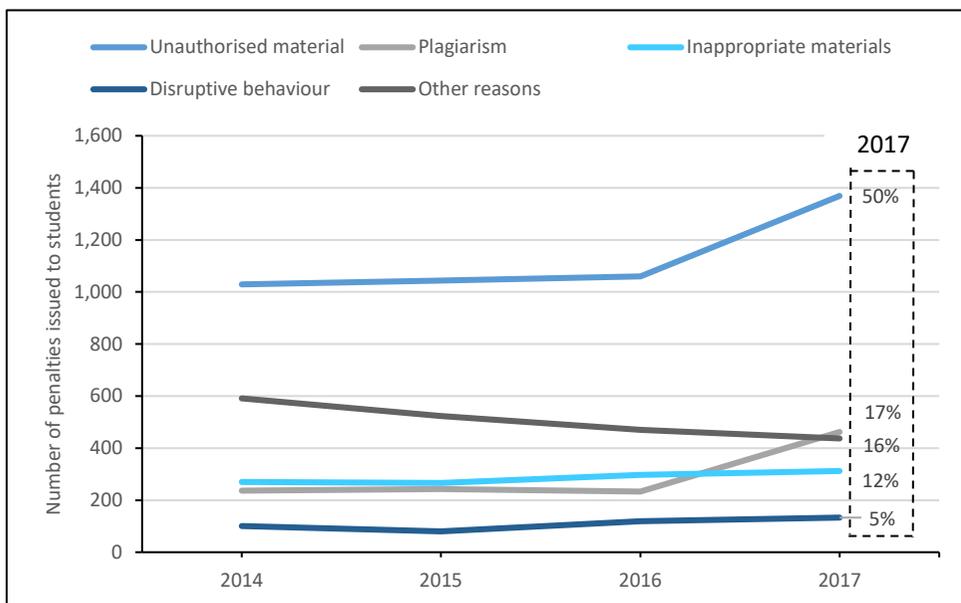
Reports published in previous years included data for learners in Wales and Northern Ireland as well. As such, historical figures in this year's report reflect England only figures and may therefore differ from previously published figures. Following a [transition arrangement](#) with Qualifications Wales (the regulator in Wales) and CCEA (the regulator in Northern Ireland), Ofqual will publish separate data tables for learners in Wales and Northern Ireland without commentary for the academic year 2016/17.

In this release, all figures are rounded to the nearest 5 to ensure confidentiality of data. Further information on this release is available in the [background information](#) as well as [data tables](#) accompanying this report.

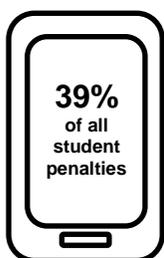
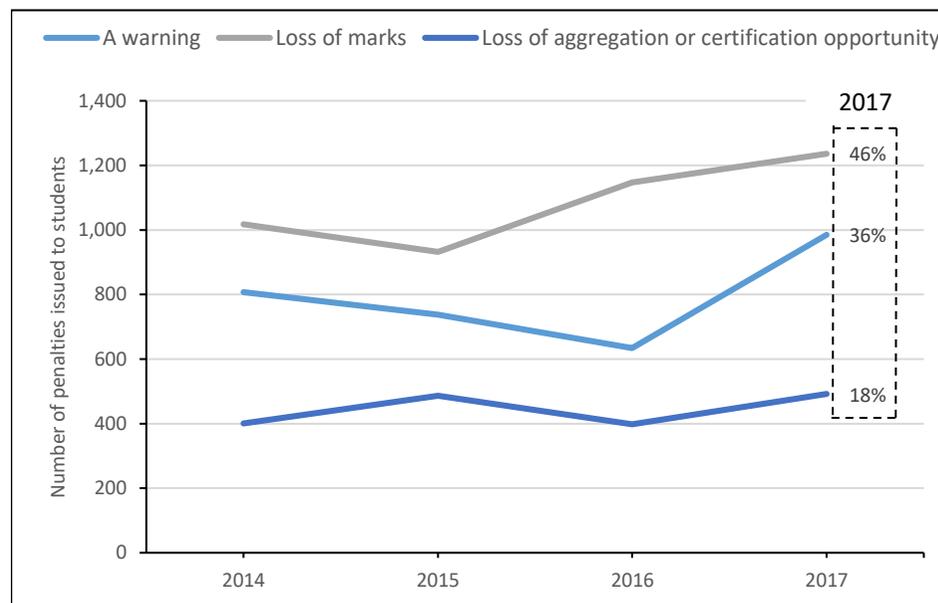
# Student malpractice

Exam boards normally impose sanctions and penalties on students found to have committed malpractice. The penalties for student malpractice vary depending on the type of offence. An individual student can be penalised more than once and by more than one exam board if they commit malpractice offences when sitting more than one assessment.

## Categories of student malpractice



## Types of penalties issued to students



The most common category of malpractice in 2017 was the introduction of unauthorised materials into the exam room. In most cases, this was a mobile phone or other electronic communications device.

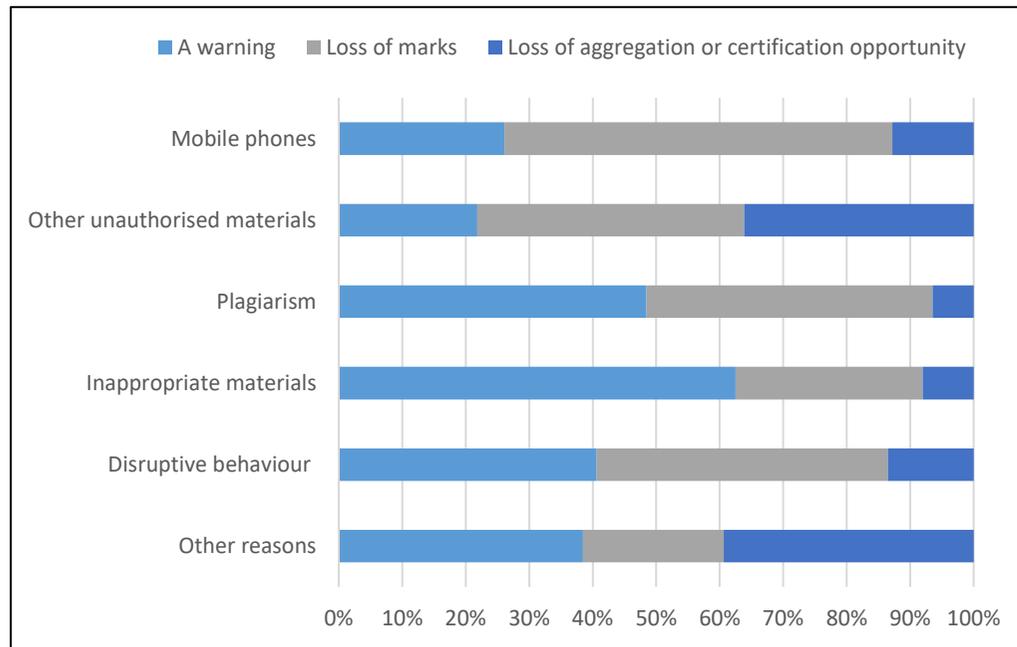
Plagiarism, the second largest category of student malpractice, accounted for 17% of penalties. The vast majority of these (86%) were in computing. Mathematics and computing combined account for over a third of all student malpractice penalties in 2017 (subject level data was not collected prior to 2017).

The most common type of penalty issued in 2017 was a loss of marks. This has increased by 8% compared with 2016.

Penalty type	2016	2017	Change
Loss of marks	1,145	1,235	▲ 8%
A warning	635	985	▲ 55%
Loss of aggregation or certification opportunity	400	490	▲ 24%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,180</b>	<b>2,715</b>	<b>▲ 25%</b>

## Types of penalties issued to students, by malpractice category

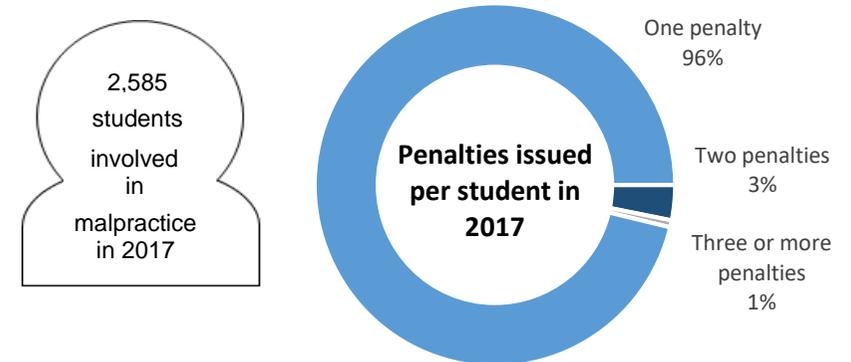
Penalties for student malpractice vary depending on the type of offence.



A warning was the most common type of penalty where a student was found to have included inappropriate, offensive, or obscene material in scripts, coursework, or portfolios. Students found with mobile phones were more likely to lose marks.

## Student penalties

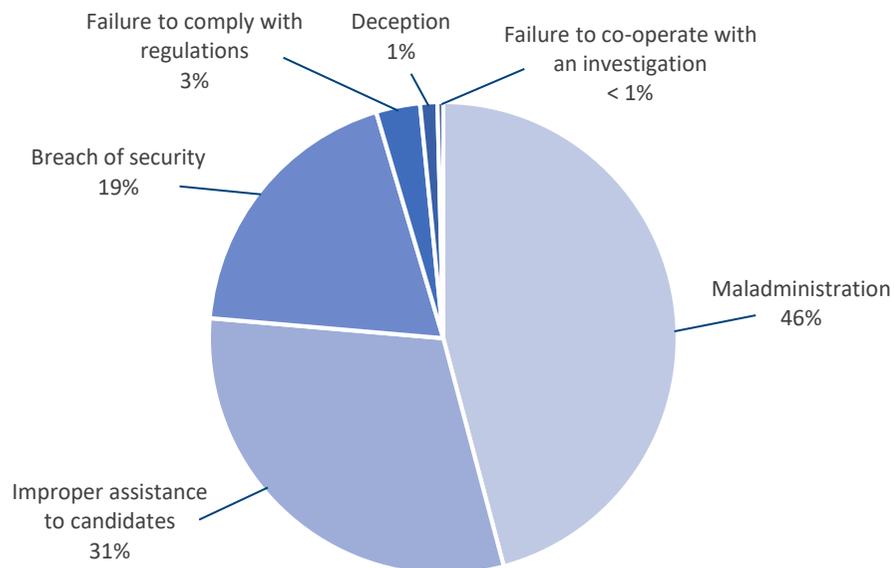
In 2017, a total of 2,585 individual students were issued with penalties for malpractice. Individual students can receive multiple penalties for multiple offences. In 2017, the majority of penalised students (96%) received one penalty (ie they committed one offence). There was a small number of students who committed more than more offence and received a penalty for each of these offences.



# Staff malpractice

Exam boards impose penalties for malpractice committed by an individual member of staff at a school or college, for example a teacher or an invigilator. More than one penalty can be imposed for a single offence.

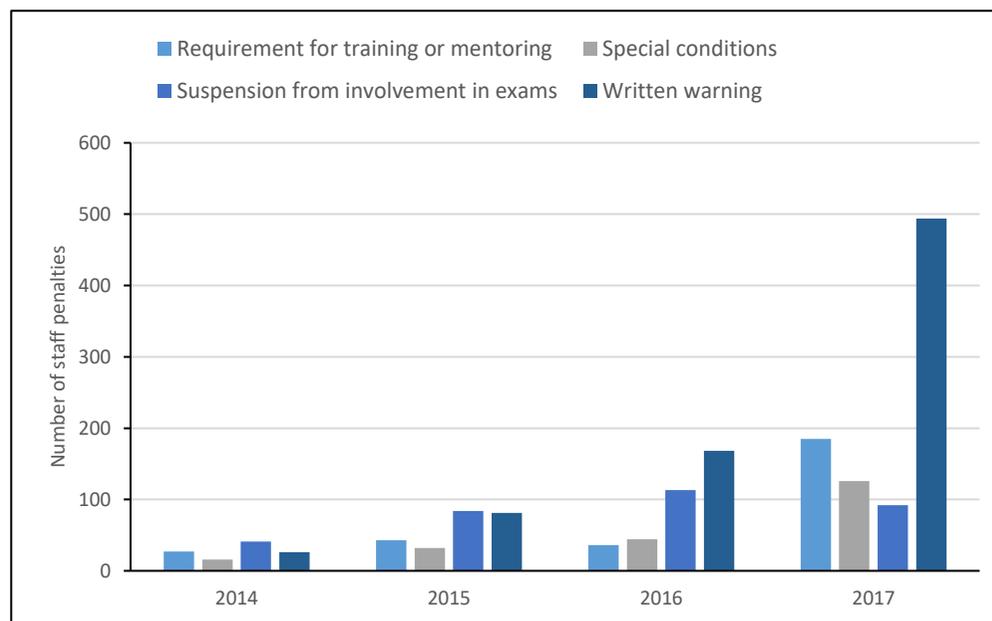
## Categories of staff malpractice



895 penalties were issued to 685 members of centre staff in 2017. Increases in penalties were seen across all categories. The largest proportion of penalties were for maladministration. The subject with the largest number of penalties was computing.



## Types of penalties issued to staff



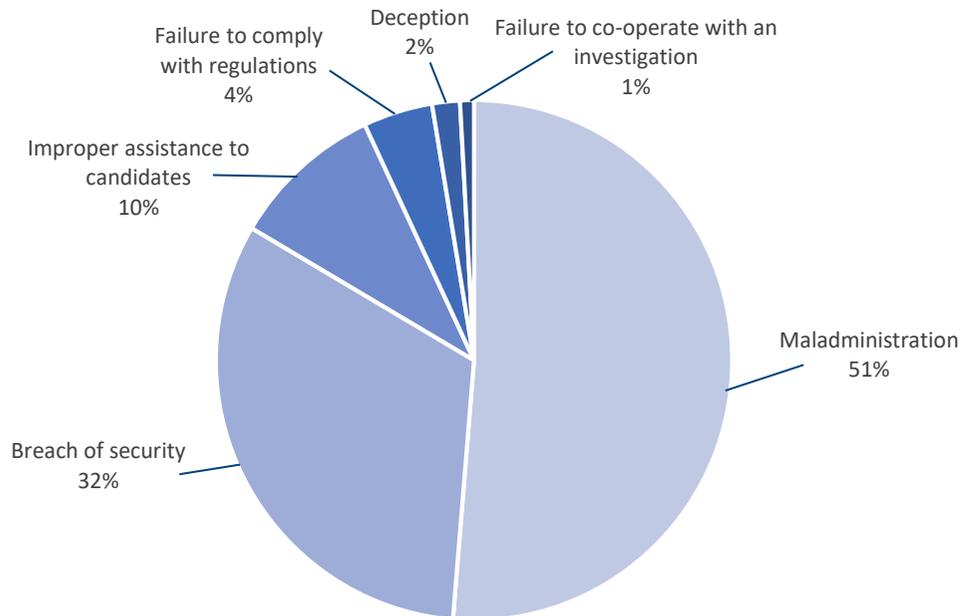
This year sees a large rise in written warnings. Exam boards have indicated that they are more likely to issue written warnings (a formal penalty) whereas previously they may have issued an advisory note (not a formal penalty and so not included in the data).

Penalty type	2016	2017	Change
Requirement for training or mentoring	35	185	▲ 414%
Special conditions	45	125	▲ 186%
Suspension from involvement in exams	115	90	▼ 19%
Written warning	170	495	▲ 194%
<b>Total</b>	<b>360</b>	<b>895</b>	<b>▲ 148%</b>

# School or college malpractice

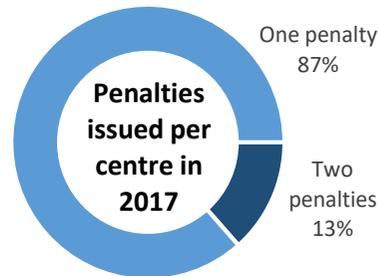
Where there is evidence that malpractice is the result of a serious management failure, an exam board may apply sanctions against a whole department or a school or college.

## Categories of school or college malpractice

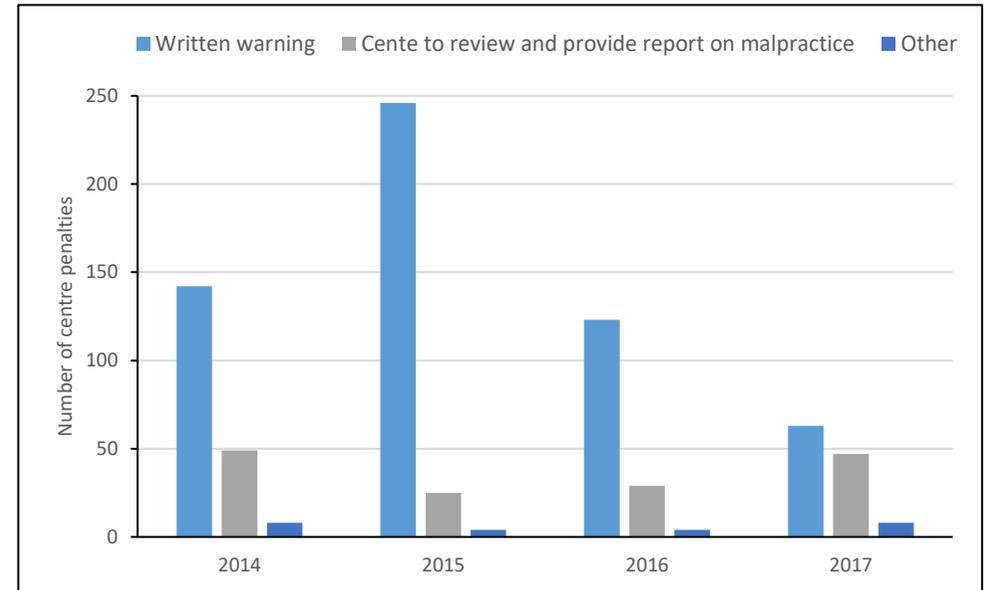


120 penalties were issued across 105 centres in 2017. Decreases in malpractice offences were seen across all categories. The largest proportion of offences in 2017 were for maladministration. The number of penalties received by any one school or college was never greater than two.

105 schools involved in malpractice in 2017



## Types of penalties issued to schools or colleges



Penalty type	2016	2017	Change
Written warning	125	65	▼ 49%
Centre to review and provide report	30	45	▲ 62%
Other	0~	10	▲ 100%
<b>Total</b>	<b>155</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>▼ 24%</b>

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