



**TAMIL NADU STATE COUNCIL FOR HIGHER EDUCATION
CHENNAI 600 005**

On Controlling Malpractices in University Examinations

July 2005

ON CONTROLLING MALPRACTICES IN UNIVERSITY EXAMINATIONS

The control of malpractice in university examinations has been engaging the attention of this council for sometime now. In the meetings of the Controllers of Examination held on 26.6.2004 and 23.7.2005, this subject was considered in detail. From the information gathered from the various universities and the paper presented by Prof. A. Sivamurthy, Former Controller of Examinations, University of Madras at the meeting held during July 2005, it is seen that the malpractices may occur in all the three phases of the examination related activities* i.e,

Pre Examination phase

Examination Phase

Post Examination phase

The identified problems, the reason or the associated background and the solutions / remedies are briefly stated here and the list of malpractices and the corresponding punishments is given in annexure.

A. PRE-EXAMINATION PHASE

In the Pre Examination phase easy availability of answer books and leakage of question papers are the major sources of malpractice.

I. Easy availability of answer papers.

Problem

Easy availability of answer books and sheets leads to scope for insertion of pre-written answer papers, replacement of original answer papers etc.

* Applicable only to regular examinations. For distance education programme the problems are different. Hence it can be discussed separately.

Reasons

- i. Colleges do not send the final list of candidates admitted by them to the various affiliated courses.
- ii. Proper account of answer books is not maintained.
- iii. Examination stationery items are not kept in safe custody both in colleges and universities.

Solutions / Precautionary measures

- i. Colleges should be required to send the exact number of candidates admitted within a week from the last date of admission to the first year.
- ii. Procedure for proper accounting of the answer books may be devised and implemented. Institutions should be instructed to strictly follow the procedure and submit the accounts to the university as soon as the examinations are over. If considered necessary the answer books may also be serially numbered.

A format can be given to colleges and information can be collected about the usage of main answer books. The format should include the numbers of answer books used.

- iii. Principals alone should be required to act as Chief Superintendents. In exceptional cases on the recommendation of the principal a reliable person may be appointed as Chief Superintendent. Double locker system must be introduced for the safe custody of question papers and main answer books.

II. Leakage of Question Papers

Problem

Leakage of question papers defeats the main purpose of examination, i.e., assessing the depth of knowledge and extent of skill acquired by the students.

Sources

Main sources of leakage are

1. Paper setters.
2. Proof Readers.
3. Staff-in-charge of question paper setting.
4. Staff-in-charge of dispatching the question papers.
5. Printing press.
6. Staff delivering the question papers.
7. Chief Superintendents and staff of colleges.

Solutions / Precautionary measures

1. The Chairman and question paper setters may be chosen from the list of experts recommended by respective Board of Studies based on known reliability of the individuals.
2. The university staff handling confidential papers may be carefully chosen i.e., only reliable / honest / dependable persons may be engaged for doing confidential work.

3. Question paper manuscripts, proof and printed question papers should be in the personal custody of the Controller of Examinations. He must also monitor the format of question papers and covers to ensure that there is no scope for leakage.
4. Principals alone should be required to act as Chief Superintendents. In exceptional cases on the recommendation of the principal a reliable person may be appointed as Chief Superintendent. Double locker system must be introduced for the safe custody of examination related stationery.
5. Only regular staff should be appointed in confidential section of the Controller's wing to prevent malpractice.

B. EXAMINATION PHASE

There is scope for a variety of malpractices during the conduct of university examinations.

Problem

Malpractice may vary from as simple as possessing material with intention to copy to as serious as impersonation by the examinees. The question paper may be leaked out in several ways. The invigilation may be carried out in a careless manner, which may result in encouragement or assistance to mass copying.

Types of Malpractices

1. Possession of incriminating materials for the purpose of copying.
2. Actual copying.

3. Appeal to Examiners.
4. Offering cash.
5. Exchange of answer sheets by examinees.
6. Insertion of previously written answer sheets by examinees.
7. Impersonation by the examinees.
8. Question paper setters may leak the question papers in the disguise of model question papers.
9. The candidates may copy in the examination hall with or without the knowledge of invigilators.
10. Invigilators may dictate or write answers on the blackboard.
11. The examinees may use symbols / marking for identification of answer paper.
12. Answer books may be substituted.
13. Answer books may be dispatched to the valuation centers with forged letters.

Solutions / Precautionary measures

1. Question papers should include analytical questions so that the candidates' understanding of the subject is tested and not the capacity of the candidates for reproducing what is in the book.

2. Distance between seats may be so arranged that it is difficult to exchange answer sheets.
3. Answer books containing any unwanted writing like appeal may not be valued and as per rules the concerned students may be punished for committing malpractices (Instructions to the students sent by the university may include a note on do's and don'ts).
4. Invigilators should be required to thoroughly check the identification of the candidate – comparing ID card, photo, signature, etc with actual. The instructions to the invigilator should indicate these as well as other duties.
5. Chief Examiners may be appointed on the basis of their reputation.
6. The question paper setters may be given guidelines for setting questions which may not provide scope for insertion of previously written answer sheets.
7. All teachers should be given training in the conduct of examinations and also imparted a sense of professionalism. Only such trained teachers should be appointed as invigilators.
8. Invigilation should be made compulsory for all teachers as a part of their duty.
9. As already pointed out colleges should be required to send the exact number of candidates admitted within a week from the last date of admission (for the first years). Safe custody of examination related stationery may be insisted upon.

10. Principals alone should be required to act as Chief Superintendents. In exceptional cases on the recommendation of the principal a reliable person may be appointed as Chief Superintendent. Double locker system must be introduced for the safe custody of examination related stationery.
11. Only honest / reliable / dependable persons should be appointed in confidential section.

C. POST EXAMINATION PHASE

In the post examination phase, paper chasing is considered to be a major source of malpractice. Some other malpractices are the result of the teachers giving incorrect information about their teaching experience and as a result they may be required to value answer books in subjects that they are not currently teaching. Yet other malpractice may be some non-teaching staff who may indulge in tampering with the records.

Types of Malpractices

1. Paper chasing: Some students may try to influence the examiners at the valuation centers to give more marks to them and a few examiners may oblige them.
2. Staff in the examination wing and / or computer wing may attempt to tamper with the marks in order to favour some students or they may commit mistakes due to their inexperience.

3. Some teachers may accept to value answer paper in subjects which they do not teach and thereby commit mistakes in valuation.

Solutions / Precautionary measures

1. Careful appointment of administrative staff and the camp officer for central valuation. Controller of Examinations should not allow any change of names of staff and change of camps on any account.
2. As far as possible, office bearers of Staff Associations should not be posted to the examination section. (As they by virtue of their role as office bearers of the association try to protect the erring staff at every stage).
3. Introduction of Optical Mark Reader and Bar Code is also suggested as an alternative method to speed up processing results, maintain confidentiality and control malpractice.
4. Manual writing should not be permitted in the preparation of final Tabulated Mark Register (TMR) and Permanent Pass Register (PPR).
5. Staff well trained in computer programming alone should be posted in the examination computer wing.
6. Heads of the Departments / Principals should be required to verify the details of staff from service books and forward the staff returns.
7. As far as possible format of certificates should not be changed.

8. There should be a separate Grievance Cell / Complaint Cell headed by an officer of proven honesty. The postings and transfers recommended by the Controller of Examinations should be given due consideration. The examination wing should be accommodated in a separate building / wing. Visitors may be permitted to meet only the officers and not the staff. The chamber of the Controller of Examinations should be at the entrance of the building / wing. Wearing of identity cards by the staff should be insisted.

ANNEXURE

List of Malpractices and Corresponding Punishments

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| 1. | Appeal for consideration with / without any promise of consideration. | Warning. If repeated cancel the examination taken. |
| 2. | Indicating identity
Using colour thread / marking in colour pencil / Candidates name / Reg. No. in other pages / College Name / any other special marking. | Warning / Cancellation of examination of that particular paper. |
| 3. | Attempt to bribe the examiner by post or otherwise.
Letter of appeal with promise for consideration of any form / Offering cash or kind / Remittance of cash to university for a favour. | Cancel the examination in that particular subject / Cancel the whole examination taken in that semester and debar from the next two subsequent semester examinations. |
| 4. | Threatening the Hall Superintendent / Evaluator / Other Examination Personnel / Insubordinate behaviour / Misbehaviour in the Examination Hall reported by the Chief / Hall Superintendent. | Cancel the whole examination and debar for the next two / three years. |
| 5. | Possession of materials relating to the examination / Writing on the desk / Any part of the body / Writings on scale, calculator, handkerchief, Hall ticket, organiser etc. | Cancel all the written examinations of that session. |
| | Copying from the above. | Cancel all the written examination and debar for one / two more session. |

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| 6. | (a) | Helping others for copying or getting help from others in the examination Hall in any form and accept the malpractice. | Cancel all the written examination of that session and debar for one more session. |
| | (b) | Helping others for copying or getting help from others in the examination Hall in any form but do not accept malpractice. | Cancel all written examination of that session and debar for two more sessions. |
| 7. | | Wilfully changing register number | Cancel the whole examination taken in that semester. |
| 8. | | Insertion of answer sheets brought from outside. | Cancel the whole examination taken and debar for the next two/three years. |
| 9. | | Violent behaviour in the Examination Hall. | |
| | (a) | Taking away the answer script. | (a) Cancel the whole examination taken for that semester. |
| | (b) | Manhandling / injuring personnel connected with the examinations. | (b) Cancel the examinations taken and debar for the next three years. |
| 10. | (a) | Impersonation – present students. | (a) Cancel the whole examination taken and debar for three years and not to undergo any course in any college during the rustication period (both impersonator and beneficiary). |

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| (b) Impersonation in case of past students or outsiders. | (b) Case to be reported to police, employer to be informed and degree if any to be withdrawn for a period of three years. |
| (c) Tampering with Hall Tickets / Certificates etc. | (c) Candidates be not permitted to appear for any examination of this university for a period of two years from the date of production of documents and not to undergo any course in any college under this university. |

11. Other Forms of Malpractice by Students

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| (a) Writing filthy words in answer script / Wrong entry of Reg. No. / Possession of material not related with that particular examination. | (a) Cancel the examination taken in the particular subject only. |
| (b) Not returning the answer books / Malpractice in practical examination / Dissertation. | (b) Cancel all the written examinations of that session and debar for two subsequent sessions of examinations. |
| (c) Committing the malpractice for a second time / Forged official communication with regard to correction / retotalling of marks. | (c) Cancel the whole examination and debar for next two years. |

12. Malpractice by Examiners

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| (a) Malpractice in examination work. | (a) Debar from examinership for two to five years; inform management and Director of Collegiate Education about the action taken by the university. |
| (b) Committing error in entry of Reg. No., Marks etc. | (b) Debar for one session. |

13. Mass copying

Derecognise the center for two sessions of examinations if mass copying is proved and debar the concerned examination personnel for next six examinations from examination related work.