

## Guideline

**Subject: Security of the Production and Handling of Examination Materials**  
**Approval Date:** August 2015, May 2016, September 2019  
**Review Date:** September 2022  
**Review By:** Board of Education and Assessment  
**Number:** 4/2015

---

This guideline is to be used for the production and movement of examination material for all College assessments. The principles which underpin this guideline are contained within Policy3/2005: Ownership, Confidentiality and Security of Examination Materials.

### In relation to examination materials sent out by the College

- Exam files will be sent only to RCPA appointed examiners
- Exam files will usually be sent using RCPA's secure file sharing software
- Exam files that are emailed will be sent as password-protected attachments to the confirmed email address of the examiner. A subsequent email is sent that contains the password.
- No information relating to questions or marking are included in the body of an email.

### Examination materials held externally to the College

- Examiners must maintain password protection at all stages of handling examination materials, including editing, reviewing, storage, transmission.
- Emailed passwords received from the College should be immediately recorded and stored securely somewhere other than the computer. The email containing the password should be permanently deleted
- No examination materials may be stored on a shared drive
- Removable media containing exam materials must be stored securely
- Examination materials may not be left visible on computer screens – essential if in a shared work space
- Examination materials should not be printed however, if unavoidable, the following precautions should be taken:
  - Print on a private printer. If using a shared printer is unavoidable, the examiner must stand at the printer to remove the copies immediately they are printed. This is critically important if printing at work.
  - Print copies must be stored securely and destroyed when finished (shredded, confidential waste).
- Files with examination materials that have completed the writing/reviewing cycle and emails to which they are attached must be **permanently** deleted.
- Examiners must avoid sharing/discussing examination documents with people who are not on the list of examiners designated to prepare the particular examination. The College holds this list.

### In relation to examination materials returned by examiners to the College

- It is preferred that exam files are uploaded to RCPA's secure file sharing software
- Exam files that are emailed should be sent as password-protected attachments to the designated examinations officer. A subsequent email should be sent that contains the password.
- No information relating to questions or marking should be included in the body of an email.

### **In relation to examination materials held at the College**

All the above requirements apply, with the exception of the point about storing on a shared drive. Examination materials held on the RCPA shared drive are held in folders that can be accessed only by authorised College staff.

### **In relation to documents distributed to examination centres**

All the above requirements apply, plus

- The Examination Officer confirms annually the contact at each examination venue (normally the relevant State Councillor) who is responsible for receipt of and secure storage of examination materials.
- All examination materials are sent by courier and have to be signed for. Email confirmation of receipt of materials is required.
- In addition to the College Guideline 4/2002 – Invigilation – Examination Procedures the designated invigilators are sent additional instructions. This includes the requirement that all examination materials must be collected from candidates at the end of the examination and be shredded.
- Following the completion of examinations all examination scripts are photocopied before the originals are returned to the College by courier. Their receipt at the College is acknowledged and the invigilators are instructed to shred the copies once the scripts have been scanned.

### **In relation to digitised examination images**

- Slides to be digitised are hand-delivered to the College by examiners or sent by registered post.
- The College hand-delivers slides to QAP to be digitised and picks up slides and removable media containing images in person.
- The images are stored on a secure drive at the College. Once the images are copied onto the College's secure drive QAP are instructed to permanently delete all images.
- Removable media with examination images are hand-delivered to examination venues
- The College will hold these examinations in fit for purpose venues with the corresponding security procedures in place. The examination will be delivered through sterile computers which do not have any external access.
- The material will be delivered to the venue in person and deleted from the venues' systems on conclusion of the examination.

### **Security undertakings**

- College fellows and staff involved with examinations will comply with the relevant policies, guidelines and instructions. State Councillors will be responsible for briefing non College staff on the requirements.
- The appointed scanning company will collect from the College the scripts to be scanned and return them within three working days. Once the College confirms their acceptance of the digitised images the scanning company will delete any records from their system.
- Scanned examination scripts are held on a secure College server and a CD with this material is also secured in the College safe.
- Examination scripts which have been scanned are securely destroyed following the conclusion of the relevant examination cycle.

### **Related Documentation**

Policy 3/2005 Ownership, Confidentiality and Security of Examination Materials

Guideline 4/2002 Invigilators – Examination Procedure

Guideline 3/2015 Quality Framework for RCPA Examinations – Written, Practical and Oral