

REPORTING A BREACH OF THE CODE OF PRACTICE FOR OFFICIAL STATISTICS

1. Core Information

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| Title and link to statistical output | Malpractice for GCSE and A level: summer 2017 exam series https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/malpractice-for-gcse-and-a-level-summer-2017-exam-series |
| Name of statistical producer | The Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual) |
| Name and contact details of person dealing with report | Vikas Dhawan Vikas.dhawan@ofqual.gov.uk 02476 716824 |
| Link to published statement about the breach (if relevant) | |
| Date of report | 5 January 2018 |

2. Circumstances of breach

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| Relevant principle/protocol and practice | Statistics published after the required time of 9.30am (Protocol 2, practice 4) |
| Date of occurrence of breach | 5 January 2018 |
| <p>This statistical release (Official Statistics), and documents related to it, could not be published at the scheduled time 9:30am on the GOV.UK statistics page.</p> <p>This happened due to some technical issue with GOV.UK. Ofqual's communications team (Comms) promptly raised this with the GOV.UK User Support team at 9:43am. In order to make the report available to our users at the earliest opportunity while the technical issue was being sorted, Comms managed to upload the report to a different part of GOV.UK, emailed the link to journalists, and also tweeted the link to the report at 10am. Though not intentional, there was a small difference in the time between the email link and the posting of the tweet so that the email to journalists was sent about 9 minutes before the posting of the tweet.</p> <p>After posting the tweet it became obvious that the technical issue with GOV.UK would take more time to be resolved than anticipated. We, therefore, decided to make available links for the rest of the accompanying documents as well, ie background information notes and data spreadsheets. All the documents were made available as a news story on Ofqual's website home page and a tweet informing our users about this was sent out at 10:35am.</p> <p>In summary, access to the main report was delayed by 30 minutes and the rest of the documents by 65 minutes in total.</p> <p>The GOV.UK User Support team informed us at 12:19 that they had republished the page through an internal publishing process which had fixed the immediate problem. And that they were still investigating why it didn't work when the page was published in the morning.</p> <p>All the documents have been available as normal from that point onwards.</p> | |

3. Impact of the breach

Users did not get access to the release at 9:30am.

Access to the main report was delayed by 30 minutes and the rest of the documents by 65 minutes in total.

4. Corrective actions (taken or planned) to prevent re-occurrence

Ofqual uploaded the report to a different part of GOV.UK, emailed the link to journalists, and also tweeted the link to the report about 30 minutes later than the scheduled time.

Ofqual made available links for the rest of the accompanying documents (ie background information notes and data spreadsheets) as well as a news story on Ofqual's website home page and another tweet informing our users about this was sent out at about 65 minutes after the scheduled publication time.

An internal meeting has been set up in the week beginning 15 January 2018 between the statistics and the communications teams at Ofqual (who manage the twitter handle <https://twitter.com/ofqual>) to agree a standard contingency plan, and roles and responsibilities, in case of repetition of any technical issues with GOV.UK. This will help ensure users can get access to the release at the same time and at the earliest possible if similar problems re-occur.

The GOV.UK User Support team further informed Ofqual on 11 January that they have been unable to find any reasons why this publication was not published on time. The GOV.UK team will set up additional monitoring to try and understand the root cause of the delay and instigate alerts to monitor whether other scheduled publications are being affected.