

## Preparing for the summer 2016 exam series

This is the time of year when members of SLT need to be clear in their role in supporting the forthcoming summer exams series.

Your exams officer will have been planning for this period of the school year for several months, assessing the requirements for an array of exams, and the varying needs of a range of candidates. However, it is imperative that senior leaders support exams officers over the coming weeks in all aspects of their role.

Although preparation may vary from centre to centre based upon the exams taken, there are some areas which all exams office staff and SLT must be aware of and ensure are in place. Below are some suggestions to help exams officers and SLT ensure that exams run efficiently and correctly over the coming weeks:

### 1. Create an 'exams room checklist'

Each exam room should be set up as per the JCQ guidelines whether you are accommodating one candidate or two hundred. For example, are the correct posters displayed outside the exam room? Can candidates view a clock? Is the centre number, paper details and start/end time displayed?

Has a seating plan been created? Do you have a process for identifying candidates? Is an 'exam room incident log' contained in each exam room for invigilator to record any appropriate details? Is a copy of the JCQ '[Instructions for conducting examinations](#)' booklet available in hard copy or electronic format?

### 2. Create an 'exam box checklist'

Supply each exam room with a box full of 'exam essentials'. This may include a spare clock, batteries, erasers, rulers, pencils, pencil sharpener(s), pens (black), scissors, tissues, tracing paper, treasury tags (if stipulated by the awarding body), board makers and erasers and a mobile phone/two way radio.

### 3. Be prepared for the JCQ inspector

The JCQ inspector will conduct an inspection of how exams are administered and managed in your school/college. This is an inspection of your centre, not of your exams officer. Ensure that someone is present to meet, greet and accompany the Inspector, and that all relevant documentation – including exams related policies and supporting materials/evidence for candidates with access arrangements – is to hand.

### 4. Plan for all eventualities

It is a requirement for JCQ inspection purposes for each school/college to have a 'Contingency Plan' in place.

However, ensure that in practice (as well as in theory) these contingency measures can be carried out effectively and efficiently. Are all staff – including invigilators – aware of what do in the event of a fire/fire alarm? Is there a plan in place for on-screen test if you encounter IT issues? What will you do if you exams officer is not present on any given day during the exams series?

**5. Be aware of JCQ rules and regulations**

Changes are made to the JCQ rules and regulations each year, so do not assume that exams should be conducted in the same way as previous years. For example, to avoid potential breaches of security, it is now a requirement for an additional member of staff to check the time, date and any other paper details before a question paper packet is opened.

SLT should also be aware of the changes relating to teachers invigilating exams. A teacher who teaches the subject being examined or a senior member of teaching staff who has had overall responsibility for preparing candidates for the examination cannot act as an invigilator.

**6. Ensure adequate arrangements are in place for candidates with access arrangements**

Invigilators acting as readers, scribes and prompters must be clear in the role and the support they can/cannot offer. Ensure that candidates with access arrangements are situated in adequate rooms with good lighting, ventilation etc.

Confirm that your exams officer is prepared to deal with instances of ‘emergency access arrangements’ such as candidates with broken arms.

**7. Be clear in your procedure for dealing with candidate (and teacher) malpractice**

Although your students should be clear as to what constitutes malpractice and the subsequent consequences, ensure that all staff and invigilators are aware of the steps which must be taken when malpractice is identified. Section 17 (page 38) of JCQ’s [‘Instructions for conducting examinations’](#) booklet and their [‘Suspected Malpractice in Examinations and Assessments’](#) document provides comprehensive guidance on dealing with malpractice.

**8. Have a clear understanding of special consideration and how/when this is applied**

Be aware of the application process for special consideration’. JCQ’s [‘Guide to the Special Consideration Process’](#) clearly sets out the definition of ‘special consideration’, the circumstances in which it applies, the tariffs relating to ‘Special Consideration’, and how to process such applications.

However, the main issue to consider here (and this something that many schools/colleges fail to adhere to every year) is that all queries relating to ‘Special Consideration’ must be addressed with the relevant awarding organisation and **not** JCQ.

**9. Hold regular meetings with your exams officer during the exams series**

A short weekly meeting throughout the exams series should be held to highlight issues/areas in need of improvement and processes which are working well. Put this meeting in the diary now to ensure that it takes place on a regular basis.

#### **10. Plan for Results Day(s)**

Confirm that students are aware of the arrangements for GCSE/GCE Results Days. Remind them of the day/time when they can collect their results and the procedure for collection of results by family members in their absence.

Ensure that documentation will be in place to support students who wish to make an [\*'Enquiry about Results'\*](#).

The Exams Office has produced a free to access [\*'Exams Day Checklist'\*](#) which is available on our website