

Not quite the time for 'putting my feet up'....

I am fortunate in that my SLT and Head of Centre are very aware of what I do and how busy I am – all year round. However, I am aware that not all exams officers are so lucky, and it is around this time of year – as the exams series draws to a close – that comments such as 'I bet you are glad that's over and you can put your feet up for a while' are heard from colleagues who should know better. I also wonder if the staff members making these comments have ever heard of the JCQ's or their documentation. If they had then they would realise the scope and significance of the exams officer role, and the responsibility on SLT/Head of Centre.

My main task in the coming weeks is to prepare for results days and post-results enquiries. I will also be looking ahead to the new academic year and begin to gather information from subject leads, but my main focus will be on ensuring that all candidates receive their results from the summer exams series and that requests for enquiries about results are handled accurately and efficiently.

I have reiterated to SLT that although many aspects of the process relating to exam results are my responsibility, there is also a role to be played by other members of staff. This includes the Data Manager, Senior Leaders and most importantly our Head of Centre who must confirm the members of staff who will have access to exams results prior to their release to candidates. This can't be a random list of people who would like to see the results, but staff for whom there are very good reasons to having access to results information on 'restricted release day' - for anyone new to the role, this is the day prior to results day.

I started the exam results process before the start of the exams series, however, if you are new to the role, there is still time for you to plan for A-level and/or GCSE results days - but you will need to communicate information with both staff and candidates as a matter of urgency. Candidates must be given clear instructions prior to results day as to how and when they can collect their results and the process for making enquiries about results. I also make it clear to Subject Leads and Heads of Year that it is their responsibility to provide academic and pastoral support to candidates following the issuing of results, highlighting that this is a JCQ requirement, not just something I have made up to try and make my job a little easier.

I have confirmed and communicated the venue for the issuing of results, collection times, and the process for the collection of results by third parties, such as parents/grandparents. I have two private candidates who have also been informed of how results day are managed in our centre.

So, what other tasks are there for me to do with regard to the issuing of exam results? Firstly, I still have to prepare post-results services information for candidates, and remind candidates and staff that the process for receiving post-results enquiries/requests starts with a consultation between candidates and teaching staff, reiterating that candidates must be made aware that all post-results service requests can only be made through their teacher/centre, and that candidates must provide written consent for re-marking and access to scripts services offered by the awarding bodies.

I have stressed to SLT that 'restricted release day' exists to allow me to download results, print individual candidate statements of results, collate these with any other pre-prepared candidate information, before placing all of this information in envelopes ready for collection by candidates on

the following day. It is not a day when I can field ad hoc requests for results/data, or have someone constantly looking over my shoulder. In any case, result files and their contents are entirely confidential to me and the head of centre, and those teaching staff who, in the opinion of the head of centre, need to be aware of the information. I do not allow any other members of staff to have access to results on 'restricted release day'.

It is also on this day that I resolve any missing or incomplete results and submit any late 'cash-ins' (this is an entry code which informs the awarding body that the marks for individual components or units should be combined to give an overall grade for the qualification). I will also be preparing result summaries (beyond individual candidate results) and results analysis for all qualifications, collating results information to for relevant teaching staff including subject heads and providing information for SLT to devise a press release (in line with JCQ regulations, this will be made after 9.30am on results day).

Previously, I have found results day to be an enjoyable and generally stress-free experience – all due to the planning and work I have detailed above. On the day itself, my role is to disseminate statements of results and information relating to the process for post-results enquiries to candidates. In previous years, I have had to resolve missing or incomplete results and submit late cash-ins on results days as identified by candidates or teaching staff - even the most comprehensive planning can miss the odd candidate mark, but this can be resolved quickly and easily with the support of the awarding body helpdesks.

Following results day I know that I will be busy dealing with priority and non-priority Enquiries about Results (EARs) and Access to Scripts (ATS) requests. To ensure that I minimise the risk of any errors, I log all requests and record any changes in results and communicate this to SLT.

One of my final tasks relating to the summer series relates to exams certificates. Once issued by awarding bodies (which will be no later than 7 November), I check and forward these to the Head of Year ready for presentation at our annual 'Certificate Evening'. If any certificates are unclaimed/uncollected, I retain these securely for a minimum of 12 months from the date of issue. After this period they are destroyed confidentially as we have insufficient space to retain these in our centre storage. I keep a record of all destroyed certificates for 4 years from the date of certificate destruction.

So, yes, there may be a day when I do 'put my feet up' but it certainly won't be at the end of a summer exam series...