

What's new...

Review the **March** monthly update [here](#) which includes the message to members: *The importance of briefing candidates, parents/carers and staff*

Message to our members

Access arrangements and the role of the exams officer

As we approach the summer exam series, many exams officers are faced with ascertaining their role regarding access arrangements. Unfortunately, some organisations have started to link access arrangements more closely to the role of exams officer – which is not only unhelpful during this busy pre-exams period, but also, in the case of the vast majority of exams officers, completely contrary to the expectations of their role.

The Exams Office does not suggest that exams officers have no role to play within the access arrangements process, but it must be emphasised that for the clear majority of exams officers this is limited to a purely administrative role. Any organisation claiming to represent exams officers will be fully aware that any matters relating to access arrangements as defined under the Joint Council for Qualification's (JCQ) *Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments* booklet are the domain of the SENCo, specialist assessor or senior leadership team within a centre – not the exams officer.

As the largest exams officer organisation in the UK – with over 3100 centre memberships – *The Exams Office* is not aware of any concern from exams officers over the contents of any JCQ documentation relating to access arrangements.

Exams officers have numerous issues which need addressing ahead of defining access arrangements terminology, determining codes of practice and prioritising the 'needs of SEND students'. Any discussion on these issues must be led by the appropriate authorities/experts who specialise in access arrangements, or those who represent the SEND community, **not** exams officers, or organisations claiming to represent the exams officer community.

If statistics from surveys are to be used accurately to provide clarity, then the findings from the survey carried out by *The Exams Office* in January 2017 – which included

responses from 1042 exams officers - should be considered in determining the role of exams officers in relation to access arrangements.

Firstly, and most importantly, the survey revealed that 3.9% of exams officers play no part in access arrangements whilst over 8 in 10 exams officers (80.2%) are involved in administrative tasks only relating to access arrangements – these include applying for approval for access arrangements, managing logistics (such as organising rooming and seating arrangements), training invigilators, and dealing with emergency access arrangements.

The above statistics reveal that exams officers' involvement in access arrangements is, in the main, based around the conducting of examinations, and the administration and logistics associated with ensuring access arrangements candidates can sit the correct examinations with the necessary measures in place.

As for what exams officers perceive their role should be in relation to access arrangements, the survey revealed some interesting findings. These included:

- ▶ more than half of exams officers (55.77%) feel that they should either play no part in the access arrangements process or only deal with logistics/training of invigilators and/or emergency access arrangements
- ▶ 94.64% of exams officers either want to play no part in the access arrangements process or be limited to processing approval applications and dealing with logistics/training of invigilators and/or emergency access arrangements
- ▶ 1 in 8 (12.39%) exams officers feel that they should play no part in the access arrangements process

Exams officers are engaged in a year-round role within their centre - this is the management and administration of examinations within their centre. The vast majority of exams officers do not want to be involved in any additional areas relating to access arrangements, and for anyone, or any organisation to state otherwise reveals a lack of understanding of the exams officer role and the current issues facing our community. Exams officers want greater clarity in other aspects of their role – 'clearer' and 'fairer' job descriptions, roles which are substantial and not a handful of hours a week, and the raising of their profile and status within their centre and at a national level.

Any changes relating to access arrangements must be made in consultation with the experts in this field – SENCo, specialist assessors etc. At centre level that means exams officers referring all access arrangements queries (except those which have been agreed fall under the exams officer role) to the SENCo.



Key tasks

Summary of key tasks for April

A very brief summary of main key tasks is provided here. In addition, the [summer term checklist](#) provides a general overview of key tasks and good practice during the period from *April* until *August*.

For more detailed information on all key tasks and identified JCQ key dates, use the [monthly support guides for new exams officers](#) added to the website by the beginning of each month.

[April guide now available here](#)

Planning

Focus will most definitely be on preparation for the **Summer 2018** exam series.

Note the deadline for comments on the **Summer 2019** exam series provisional timetables to JCQ.

Entries

Check entry feedback for any entries for the **June 2018** exam series made to the March entry deadline. Continue to monitor final entries and regularly submit any required changes (amendments/withdrawals). Check entry feedback following the submission of any amendments. Particularly note and meet the April deadlines offered by some awarding bodies for making changes (amendments and withdrawals) to entries (without charge).

Pre-exams

Continue with and finalise preparation for the **Summer 2018** exam series. Check that any requests for alternative site arrangements have been submitted. Confirm with invigilators the exam dates and sessions they have been allocated on the exam timetable. Ensure a roving invigilator(s) is allocated to the relevant 1:1 exam rooms.

Exam time (see also **Key documents** below)

Be prepared and ready for the **Summer 2018** exam series. The common exam timetable starts on 14 May (although qualifications that may sit outside the common timetable may start earlier).

Results and post-results

Complete the administration of any post-results services for the **January 2018** exam series.

Manage results for the **March 2018** exam series and administer any priority post-results service requests (where the awarding body makes a service available).

Reminder....

Refer to awarding body key dates and timetables information to ensure you are aware of tasks you need to be carrying out in line with specific dates and deadlines

Key documents

The Exams Office provides key documents to support centres in the management and administration of the exams process.

Further new or updated documents will be added during **April**, including:

- ▶ [Summer exams weekly report form template](#)
- ▶ [Key tasks review checklist template](#)
- ▶ [Support guide for new exams officers: May](#)

As you enter the 'exams' period, a reminder of the key documents on *The Exams Office* website which you may find useful in the coming weeks and months:

- ▶ **[A guide to managing exam time](#)**
 - ▶ [A guide to dealing with candidate absence](#)
 - ▶ [Exam box checklist template](#)
 - ▶ [Exam day checklist template \(free access to all\)](#)
 - ▶ [Exam room checklist template](#)
 - ▶ [Exam room incident log template](#)
 - ▶ [Summer exams weekly report form template](#)
 - ▶ [Suspected malpractice: candidate notification form template](#)
- ▶ **[Access arrangements](#)**
 - ▶ [Access arrangements: word processor checklist template](#)
 - ▶ [Access arrangements: managing emergency arrangements form template](#)
- ▶ **[Invigilation: Deploying invigilators](#)**
 - ▶ [Roving invigilator checklist template](#)

Reminder....

The following new or updated documents were added during **March**

- ▶ [Summer term checklist](#)
- ▶ [Exams key terms glossary \(updated\)](#)
- ▶ [PDP: Spring term](#)
- ▶ [PDP: Key support information framework \(updated\)](#)
- ▶ [Support guide for new exams officers: April](#)

For all key documents, click [here](#)

We also encourage members to email requests for documents they would like to see produced.

The Exams Office Blog



March's blog – **April 2018 – Briefing candidates prior to the summer exam series** is written by Lisa Longstaff, Exams Officer at Dunottar School, Reigate.

To read the blog, click [here](#)

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Click [here](#) to visit **TEO Education**  - The Exams Office's online ordering store

2018/19 training programme announced...

Autumn 2018 events

Experienced exams officers

25 September: Birmingham **26 September:** Bristol **28 September:** London
2 October: Leeds **3 October:** Manchester

New exams officers

9 October: Manchester **10 October:** Leeds **12 October:** London
17 October: Birmingham **18 October:** Bristol

Senior leaders/line managers 23 October: London

Spring 2019 events

New exams officers

26 February: Birmingham **27 February:** Bristol **1 March:** London
5 March: Leeds **6 March:** Manchester

Senior leaders/line managers 12 March: London

For event and booking details, click [here](#)

Reminders...

Exams Officer Handbook and Exams Calendar

Late September... marks the dispatch of our **2018/19** editions to all members*

**Members with a fully paid membership to The Exams Office as of the time of dispatch*

Professional development and training

Professional Development Conference

Early May... marks the opening of the booking window for our **Summer 2018 Conference** (to be held in London on 2nd July)

Click [here](#) for details of the July 2018 conference

Members of *The Exams Office* can attend a January conference and the Summer conference free of charge* as part of their membership (one free place per centre membership)

**One free place is available to those with a paid membership to The Exams Office as of the time of the event on a 'first come first served' basis*

Professional Development Programme

The conferences form part of *The Exams Office's* **professional development programme**

Click [here](#) for further details of the programme

New for 2018/19... Joint initiatives with **Unison** launching in the 2018/19 academic year– available free of charge as part of your membership to *The Exams Office* (see details at end of this update)

Exams Training

April... marks the launch of our new training website and the **2018/19** exams training programme for **experienced exams officers, new exams officers** and **senior leaders/line managers** (with responsibility for examinations)

Click [here](#) for details

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Click [here](#) to visit **TEO Education**



- *The Exams Office's* online ordering store

Invigilator training

The Exams Office offers members a range of resources to support the recruitment, training and deployment of invigilators

Click [here](#) for further details

New invigilator training events (free for members) are offered in the autumn and spring terms and **Invigilator training (in house)** events are also available to book directly with a trainer

Click [here](#) for further details and [here](#) for the invigilator trainer map and list of trainers 

Online tools

The Exams Office provides online tools collating [key dates](#) and [exam dates](#) information provided by the contributing awarding bodies.



Networks

The Exams Office provides support for EO network meetings by producing this monthly update that can be used to inform meeting agendas.

The Exams Office has given permission to OCR's Customer Support Team to utilise this update, as well as our other support materials, at network meetings to discuss and share with EOs.

In conjunction with OCR, we have provided a [Network Map](#) so you can identify your local network group and the contact details for forthcoming meetings/network leads.



OCR's Customer Support Team attends locally run EO networks and organise some OCR-led events across England, Wales and Northern Ireland. If you are interested in finding a local meeting, or would like their support to run a new meeting in your area, then please contact your local [Customer Support Manager](#).

OCR also runs networks for teachers relating to their specifications. For more details see [Teacher networks](#).

Further support and information provided by The Exams Office

Click [here](#) and browse the **main menu** (left hand side of screen)

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Click [here](#) to visit **TEO Education**  - The Exams Office's online ordering store

Joint initiatives with Unison

Professional development

We will be launching online certificated assessment modules for:

- ▶ Invigilators – a programme to ascertain their understanding of JCQ requirements and regulations. Users will be able to access the programme as many times as they require, with a certificate issued detailing the level of understanding through the answering of a series of exams-related questions. This will save exams officers at least £10 per invigilator based upon other assessment programmes currently available
- ▶ New exams officers – an online induction programme and assessment tool which can be used with your line manager to confirm the completion of your induction as an exams officer
- ▶ Experienced exams officers – a review tool which focuses upon your understanding of examination regulations, and the role you have played in successfully delivering examinations and assessments in your centre – this can be used as part of your annual appraisal.

Union membership

We are currently discussing discounted Unison membership rates for members of *The Exams Office*.

Representation

We are working with Unison to ascertain and represent the key issues facing exams officers to central Government and the DfE.

Supporting exams officers

We will be launching a suggested national exams officer job description and undertaking a detailed piece of work which focuses upon the status and remuneration for exams officers.

Using the results of our 'exams officer survey' (which was completed by over 1200 exams officers), Unison and *The Exams Office* will begin to focus the attention of key stakeholders upon the issues facing exams officers.

We are looking to forge closer links with Unison in the coming years to ensure that the exams officer community is represented at national and local level. More details to follow in the coming months in the build up to the new academic year.