



Cross board messaging on the Practical Endorsement for A level sciences

The 2017 to 2019 Practical Endorsement Monitoring Process

The organisation of the monitoring visits for the Practical Endorsement will change from September 2017. The awarding organisations (AOs) are planning to use information about centre entries for the reformed A levels in biology, chemistry and physics from the summer 2017 series to plan monitoring visits jointly for the September 2017 to May 2019 cycle.

Centres will be monitored for a different science than that which was monitored in the first monitoring cycle. Having identified the science to be visited for each centre, the first contact with a centre will be from the AO with which this science was entered in summer 2017. This is in response to the number of changes of staff observed even within a two year cycle.

The monitoring visits will follow the same procedures as for 2015 to 2017 and large centres will continue to be monitored for biology, chemistry and physics. A large centre is defined as one which has more than 140 entries at A level for any one of the sciences, biology, chemistry or physics.

The key change is that centres do **not** need to register details with JCQ at any point for this monitoring cycle. The first contact will be with the exams officer (or other nominated school contact).

Training

Lead Teachers are not required to be the same person as previously notified to JCQ or the AOs, and there is no need to notify JCQ or the AO of any such staffing change.

It is still a requirement that Lead Teachers for each subject should have undertaken the training provided by their AO. This training is free of charge and may be accessed as follows:

AQA	AQA Lead teacher online training
Pearson (Edexcel)	Through the "Support for the Practical Endorsement at A level" link at the top of each of the A level 2015 homepages at qualifications.pearson.com
Eduqas	http://www.eduqas.co.uk/qualifications/biology/as-a-level/Practical%20endorsement%20training.zip
OCR	http://practicalendorsement.ocr.org.uk/

Lead Teachers are expected to cascade this training throughout each department. Many of the on-line resources detailed above are accessible to all teachers, so may also be used as departmental CPD.

Lead Teachers continuing in post do not have to repeat the training, but will want to ensure that any staff who are new to their centre are fully aware of the requirements of the Practical Endorsement.

Standardisation within centres

It is expected that there is communication and training within centres such that the outcomes for learners are consistent, independent of teaching staff. Whilst the opportunity for standardisation is not the same as with internally marked controlled assessments, there should be dialogue and the possibility for observations of other staff to ensure the comparability of outcomes. The common requirements of the Practical Endorsement allow centres to assure that the criteria for the Common Practical Assessment Criteria (CPAC) are being implemented and recorded in all situations, including those where A levels from different AOs are being delivered by one centre.

Candidate and centre records

There is no requirement for centres to retain candidate records. Candidate records are only required for review at the time of the monitoring visit. There is similarly no requirement for centres to retain centre records after completion of the course.

Recording the use of DfE appendix 5c

One area identified for continued monitoring is the requirement that to achieve a pass in the Practical Endorsement learners must demonstrate competence in the Common Practical Assessment Criteria (CPAC) **including all practical skills and the apparatus and techniques specified**. The skills, apparatus and techniques are detailed in the DfE subject content for biology, chemistry and physics, and are incorporated in the Ofqual [GCE Subject Level Conditions and Requirements for Science](#) .

Ensuring that each student has demonstrated all the required competences requires awareness by the teacher of those skills, apparatus and techniques being assessed in each practical activity.

Tutorial colleges, private entries and home schooling

The provision of the Practical Endorsement and associated practical activities is a regulatory requirement. Any centre which does not provide the opportunities required for learners to demonstrate the competences required in a minimum of twelve practical activities (as required to fulfil the Practical Endorsement), or has not had a monitoring visit to confirm that they are assessing their students correctly against the CPAC, is in breach of the regulations for the reformed GCE Advanced level science qualifications. This breach is subject to a series of sanctions from the Regulator such as those for malpractice or maladministration, which will be instigated by the AO conducting monitoring of the centre, and communicated with all other AOs.

Candidates re-sitting the assessment at tutorial colleges may have demonstrated competence in all the practical requirements at a previous centre. Providing that centre had passed its monitoring visit, the evidence of prior completion allows entry for the re-sit with a carry-forward of the practical endorsement result.

Private candidates can be entered for examinations at a centre even if they are not enrolled as a learner there. Private candidates may be home-schooled, receiving private tuition or self-taught. The Practical Endorsement is an essential part of the course and will allow candidates to develop skills for further study or employment as well as imparting important knowledge that is part of the specification. Private candidates should have the opportunity to complete the Practical Endorsement and should, therefore, ensure that they are registered with a centre that has passed a

monitoring visit and has this provision available. The centre may charge for this facility and it is recommended that any such arrangement is made early in the course.

Resit candidates

Resit candidates who have passed the requirements for the practical endorsement may carry this result forward so that they are not required to repeat the practical activities to achieve a pass grade, but may choose to repeat the activities along with the teaching and learning to increase their knowledge and understanding for the written examinations.

JCQ are organising a national record of candidates who have achieved a pass in the practical endorsement, which may be accessed by an AO to assure that a candidate is eligible for the carry forward of their practical endorsement pass. This will include candidates who achieve an unclassified U grade in the exam and who will not have the outcome of the practical endorsement certificated.

New centres

Any new centre starting to deliver one of the sciences at GCE A-level should notify the AO with whom they intend to make entries so that a monitoring visit can be scheduled during the teaching of the first cohort. Contact details are as follows:

AQA	MonitoringReports2017@aqa.org.uk
Pearson (Edexcel)	TeachingScience@pearson.com
Eduqas	matthew.roberts@eduqas.co.uk
OCR	Science@OCR.org.uk

Switching exam boards

AOs will use information from entry data from summer 2017 to make contact with centres who they believe to be following their specification in the subject to be visited. Should a centre have switched the AO with whom they intend to make entries, they should notify the monitor when they make contact. The monitor will then pass that information to the new AO to allow the AO for the course being delivered to carry out the visit.