

Review the **January** monthly update [here](#) which includes the message to members: *The Exams Office national survey 2017*

### Message to our members

### **General Data Protection Regulation**

By 25th May 2018, all centres must ensure compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), and therefore, it was of little surprise that at our recent conferences, the most popular workshop related to this very topic.

Without doubt, there is concern in some centres about the requirements of GDPR and how to achieve the necessary compliance by 25th May. Many exams officers have requested some guidance from *The Exams Office*, and after careful consideration of this 'new' regulation, we have devised a *General Data Regulation Protection policy template* which specifically refers to exams administration and management – the first of its' kind.

So, how can exams officers prepare for the GDPR?

Firstly, there must be an understanding of why the GDPR has been introduced. In 2016, it was agreed that data protection regulations should be unified across the European Union in order to give citizens greater control over their personal data. However, in the UK, we have conformed to data protection directives since 1995, and therefore, many aspects of the GDPR will already have been implemented within centres. Yes, changes may have to be made, but as centres have been required to comply with data protection regulations for over two decades, many aspects of the GDPR are not new. Centres should already be ensuring that personal/sensitive student information is only collected for specified, explicit and legitimate purposes, and once obtained, it should be processed lawfully and securely.

Although the Head of Centre or the Senior Leadership Team will be responsible for the overall implementation of the GDPR throughout each centre, *The Exams Office* recommends that exams officers lead on the management of data relating to exams administration and management, and therefore compile a GDPR policy relating specifically to exams-related information in their centre.

The principles which exams officers should employ when considering the handling of any data are:

- ▶ only obtain and retain information which is required
- ▶ if information is required, it should be stored securely (for example, password protected, stored on an encrypted memory stick, lockable filing system etc.) and

kept for as long as legally stipulated, or if there are no legal guidelines, it should be kept for as long as required to fulfil a clear purpose

- ▶ informing candidates of the data stored on them, and the process for accessing this information
- ▶ how any data breaches are handled and how this is communicated to candidates

There are 7 steps that exams officers should undertake prior to 25th May to ensure that their exams office is GDPR-compliant:

1. Undertake an information audit – list the information held on candidates. *The Exams Office* recommends an approach which lists all of the information held, rather than trying to ascertain which information comes under data protection regulations and which falls outside of these. Although some of the information records detailed in our policy template may not be classified as personal/sensitive information, such an approach ensures compliance with the GDPR regulations.

The type of candidate information you may include could relate to:

- ▶ Access arrangements
- ▶ Certificates
- ▶ Conducting exams
- ▶ Exam entries
- ▶ Exam results
- ▶ Post-results enquiries and outcomes
- ▶ Private candidates
- ▶ Special consideration
- ▶ Suspected malpractice

2. Consider any information which is not required. For example, are you retaining certificates for longer than the stipulated requirement (unclaimed/uncollected certificates must be retained securely for a minimum of 12 months from date of issue). If so, why are you retaining this information? There may be a very good reason for retaining such information beyond the JCQ requirement but ensure a clear and consistent approach.

3. Review security/protection measures – Is information retained in a ‘secure area’? Are passwords ‘secure’? Are they changed on a regular basis? Who has access to this information? Do they require access to this information?

4. Review software and hardware – Is anti-virus software updated? Are ‘infected’ hard-drives/hardware disposed of? Are warranties updated? Are browsers regularly updated?

5. Confirm how candidates will be informed of the information held on them and how they can obtain this. You might utilise the centre website, newsletters, parents evenings etc. to increase awareness of the information held/retained and whether requests need to be made in writing/ person etc. Also clarify the role of third parties – such as parents/grandparents – in relation to access to this information.

6. Ensure a process is in place for dealing with any data breaches. You will also need to confirm how such breaches – and how they have been dealt with - will be communicated to candidates.

7. Devise a GDPR policy for exams in your centre – *The Exams Office* policy template will provide a starting point/framework to ensure that with regard to exams your centre is GDPR compliant.

Like many areas associated with exams administration and management, you will need to undertake an annual review of your GDPR policy. It is good practice to continually consider the information you hold on candidates, why it is being obtained and held, how it is stored, how candidates are informed about the information held, and how they can access this if required...that's the GDPR in a nutshell, and it's what centres should have been doing since 1995.

## Key tasks

### Summary of key tasks for February

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

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

February guide now available [here](#)

### Planning

The focus is now on summer 2018 entries, being managed in a shorter month, with for some a half term holiday period.

Note the on-line issue of

- ▶ the final timetable for the **November 2018** exam series; this may help deal with any questions regarding the availability of re-sits in this exam series
- ▶ the final timetable for the **January and March 2019** exam series' where these may be made available by an awarding body in February
- ▶ the provisional timetable for the **Summer 2019** exam series.

### Entries

Submit final entries for the **Summer 2018** exam series by the February deadline.

### Pre-exams

Confirm all arrangements are in place to conduct the **March 2018** exam series.

Submit any outstanding applications requiring awarding body approval for the **Summer 2018** exam series through

#### *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

[Access arrangements online](#) (AAO) by the February deadline. Follow the awarding body approval process for qualifications beyond the scope of AAO.

Start to consider **invigilation** requirements for the summer exam series and identify if any additional invigilators may need to be recruited and trained.

### Results and post-results

Meet the final deadlines for Enquiries about Results or other results enquiries (e.g. Missing and Incomplete Results) and the final date for requesting copies of scripts to support teaching and learning – Access to Scripts Service, for the **November 2017** exam series. Prepare to receive certificates.

## 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 **February**, including:

- ▶ [Internal appeals procedures template](#) (updated to reflect changes to the JCQ [Reviews of marking \(centre assessed marks\) suggested template for centres](#), as this no longer states that appeals should be logged as complaints)
- ▶ [GDPR policy \(exams\) template](#)
- ▶ [Support guide for new exams officers: March](#)

### Reminder....

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

- ▶ [Lockdown policy \(exams\) template](#)
- ▶ [NEA security checklist template](#)
- ▶ [Support guide for new exams officers: February](#)

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

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

## The Exams Office Blog



February's blog – **A busy time of year for candidates, staff...and the exams officer...** is written by Gemma Sadler, Examinations Director at Shirelands Collegiate Academy

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



Jugjit writes a guest blog for OCR...

**Training your invigilators – Seven steps to success**

Click [here](#) to read the blog

## Professional development and training

Professional  
Development  
Conference

**January 2018 conferences**

...Over 1400 exams officers attended our five National Conferences which took place during January 2018. The feedback received was excellent and slides from selected presentations are now available on our website.

### **Bookings still being taken....**

- ▶ New invigilator training events (early February)
- ▶ New exams officer training events (late February/early March)
- ▶ Senior leaders training event (mid-March)

Click [here](#) to book places

Click [here](#) for further details

### **Exams Officer Training 2018/19**

We will be announcing our **2018/19** exams officer training programme in April.

Training will be offered to experienced and new exams officers, and SLT/Line Managers with responsibility for examinations.

The cost of these events will be held at £145 per delegate (for members of *The Exams Office* and OCR/Pearson centres) with additional discounts for multiple bookings. Please book early to avoid disappointment.

## Reminders

### Professional development and training

#### Professional Development Conference

Details of the **July 2018** summer conference is available [here](#)

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

#### Exams Training

Click [here](#) for further details of the 2017/18 training events for **experienced exams officers, new exams officers and senior leaders**

#### Spring 2018 events

**New exams officers** (*Spring into Summer - Getting ready for the 2018 exam series*)

**28 February:** Leeds      **2 March:** Birmingham      **5 March:** London

**7 March:** Bristol      **9 March:** Warrington

**Senior leaders** (*Getting ready for the 2018 exam series*)

**16 March:** London

#### Invigilator training

*The Exams Office* offers members a range of support for training their invigilators

Click [here](#) for further details

**New invigilator training** (free for members)

**5 February:** Bristol      **7 February:** London      **9 February:** Leeds      Click [here](#) to book places

**In-house invigilator training**      Click [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 and our [Weekly Education 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/Development Manager](#).

OCR also runs networks for teachers relating to their specifications. For more details on the events, see the [OCR Events calendar](#).

## Best practice exams articles

The Exams Office's exams experts write a series of articles, which are published in educational journals.

These are produced to inform SLT of their responsibilities when managing EOs, and exams administration within their centre.

Click [here](#) to view *The Exams Office* **Articles**.

All of our articles are also published in [Sec Ed](#) an online education bulletin for secondary school teachers and leaders

## Further support and information provided by *The Exams Office*

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

## Contact us



For any exams-related queries, please email [contact@TheExamsOffice.org](mailto:contact@TheExamsOffice.org). Please note, if your query is subject or awarding body specific, we will refer you to your awarding body. Where we receive questions around JCQ guidance, we will point you in the right direction.

Click [here](#) to visit *The Exams Office's* online shop.

