

**Happy New Year to all exams officers!**

Review the **December** monthly update [here](#) which includes the message to members: *General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)*

### Message to our members

### *The Exams Office national survey 2017*

As part of the annual national conference booking process, *The Exams Office* invited delegates to participate in a survey to help us acquire information on key areas of the exams officer role. This survey was one of the largest ever conducted amongst the exams officer community. In 2016, over 1,100 participated, whilst this year over 1,200 members have provided responses. Compare this with less than 300 replies to the [EOA survey conducted in 2016](#).

Last year's principle finding centred upon access arrangements. Survey results revealed that almost 88% of examination officers engaged in the administration of access arrangements only – namely making applications with the SENCO present, rooming, timetabling, seating plans, organising and training invigilators and managing emergency access arrangements. This confirmed that those who had stated that a greater number of exams officers play a more 'technical' and leading role within access arrangements process were not reflecting the activity and practice amongst the wider examination officer community.

Our 2017 survey has focussed more upon the role and profile of examination officers, and the support received within centres. The findings reveal that despite over £1m of DfE funding between 2005 and 2011 to tackle these issues, the role and profile of exams officers still varies greatly within centres. Issues continue to exist which undermine the integrity and security of the examination system as in some centres the status of the examination officer role seems to be reduced in value and significance. The reason for this lies at centre-level - despite the best efforts of the awarding organisations and the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ).

Below are some of the key findings of the 2017 survey.

#### **The examination officer role**

51.9% of examination officers (626 of 1206 responses) indicated that they undertook another role in addition to that of examination officer. This suggests that there is a misconception in many centres over the significance of the examination officer role and the work which examination officers have to undertake at non-exam times.

From the 1206 examination officers surveyed, 28.3% (341) manage/administer school data, 7.5% (91) are responsible for organising cover in the event of teacher absence, and 3.8% (46)

have a teaching responsibility - further evidence of an increase - and return to - teaching examination officers.

Only 9 examination officers surveyed were involved in the SEN department or the access arrangements process beyond an administrative role.

### **Line management and annual appraisals**

Encouragingly, the vast majority of examination officers – 98.4% (1187 from 1206 surveyed) – have a line manager.

However, only 82.8% (999) of examination officers had an annual appraisal/performance review during the 2015/16 academic year. This reveals that 1 in 6 (17.2%) examination officers received no appraisal or performance review during the last academic year. Even those who were line managed, 15.8% did not receive an annual appraisal or performance review.

### **Salaries**

One major issue since 2005 has been the failure of organisations representing the examination officer community to agree a national job description and pay structure. The consequences of not detailing and agreeing the main aspects of the role via a national job description can be viewed in the findings of 'The examination officer role' (see above). There is a misconception amongst some SLT and Heads of Centre that the examination role is not full time, and that those undertaking it can also be given additional roles. Without nationwide consistency over what the examination role entails, the financial remuneration afforded to examination officers is varying greatly across the country.

With regard to salaries, examination officers were asked to select from 6 salary bands:

- ▶ £14,999 or less – 82 (7.3%)
- ▶ £15,000 - £19,999 – 252 (22.4%)
- ▶ £20,000 - £24,999 – 400 (35.6%)
- ▶ £25,000 - £29,999 – 235 (20.9%)
- ▶ £30,000 - £34,999 – 92 (8.2%)
- ▶ £35,000+ - 63 (48 have managerial/SLT/teacher role) (5.6%)

These figures require additional scrutiny to ascertain factors such as location and role status (full/part time, term time only or all year round etc.) and levels of experience. However, this information is difficult to obtain as centres have the licence to adapt the examination officer role as they see fit.

However, what can be ascertained is that the majority of examination officers are earning below the national average of £27,271 (see the [Office for National Statistics](#)). Most examination officers receive salaries similar to those awarded to administrative staff at local government level (£21,083) and personal assistants/secretarial staff within the private sector (£19,738).

### **Support**

Encouragingly, almost 3 out of 4 exams officers (73.2%) belong to a local exams network group. These groups – supported by the awarding bodies, in particular OCR – provide invaluable support at no cost, and, upon reflection, should be accessed by more than 73.2% of the examination officer community.

Only 9% (109 from 1206) of examination officers indicated that they belonged to another organisation or association. This statistic reveals that pressure on centre budgets is dictating

that only membership of organisations providing the most relevant and cost effective support is being acquired, and that the membership of the Exams Officers' Association – which stood at [over 2500 in 2012/13](#) - may have dwindled to 350-450 members.

### Management Information Systems

Capita products are the most popular within centres. Programmes such as SIMS and UNIT-e are used in 75% (869 from 1159 responses) of centres. Other systems which are used include iSAMS (5.8%, 67 centres), Progresso (3.2%, 37 centres), CMIS/Facility (2.8%, 32 centres) and Bromcom (2.5%, 29 centres)

### Next steps

The Exams Office does not conduct these surveys without acting upon their findings. We will be sharing the 2017 Exams Officer survey with key stakeholders including Ofqual, and using the evidence in these statistics to launch a series of programmes throughout 2018/19 which will support examination officers on a day-to-day basis, and raise the profile of their role.

## Key tasks

### Summary of key tasks for January

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 JCQ key dates, use the [monthly support guides for new exams officers](#) added to the website by the beginning of each month.

January guide now available [here](#)

### Planning

As the spring term begins the exams process continues to build. For many EOs this will be a time for running further internal exams, potentially alongside

- ▶ planning for future exam series' (November 2018 series, other exam series 2018/19); note the deadlines for comments on provisional exam timetables
- ▶ making entries (March and/or summer 2018 series)
- ▶ preparing for exams (March and/or summer 2018 series)
- ▶ running external exams (January 2018 series)
- ▶ processing results and post-results (November 2017 series)

### Entries

Where applicable to your centre, make final entries for the **March 2018** exam series (where an awarding body March entry deadline falls in January).

If not already submitted, collate and finalise entries for the **Summer 2018** exam series prior to the February deadline.

### Pre-exams

Confirm all arrangements are in place to conduct the **January 2018** exam series and where relevant confirm marks and samples of candidates' work have been submitted to the awarding body deadline.

Submit any modified paper orders for the **Summer 2018** exam series and where/if relevant to any joint teaching arrangements, submit Form *JCQ/CCA - centre consortium arrangements for centre assessed work*.

## Exam time

Confirm all exam materials have arrived and final arrangements are in place to successfully conduct the **January 2018** exam series.

Ensure all scripts are dispatched according to instructions and ensure any follow-up reports that may be required are sent to awarding bodies to the timeline required.

## Results and post-results

Access the **November 2017** exam series results under restricted release arrangements and issue statements to candidates on results day.

Submit to the deadline any requests for *copies of scripts to support reviews of marking* - *Access to Scripts Service* where this service is made available by an awarding body.

### *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 **January**, including:

- ▶ [NEA storage checklist](#)
- ▶ [Lockdown policy \(exams\) 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](#)

### *Reminder....*

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

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

## The Exams Office Blog



January's blog—**Recognising exam stress in your learners...** is written by Geraldine Jozefiak, Exams Officer at HMP Norwich

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

### Professional Development Conference

#### January 2018 conferences – subject to capacity...

Bookings can still be made – by members and non-members – for our Birmingham NEC conference taking place on 19 January.

To book, please email [teoconference@outlook.com](mailto:teoconference@outlook.com) quoting your centre number and the following in the subject line 'Centre number: Member booking request OR Non-member booking request'.

**Note** Non-member or additional place(s) member bookings - payment must be made in full before your place is confirmed.

#### 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

## Reminders

### Professional development and training

#### Professional Development Conference

Details of the **January 2018** winter conferences and the **July 2018** summer conference are 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 offered to those with a paid membership to *The Exams Office* as of the time of the event

#### 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

## Weekly education update

*The Exams Office* produces a weekly round-up of the main education and exams-related news stories. Ensure that you read this to keep yourself updated regarding news from the wider world of education that may impact on your role. Raise your profile with staff in your centre by:

- ▶ printing off the update and displaying it on staff room notice boards
- ▶ emailing [this link](#) from our website to your heads of departments (HoDs) and SLT as an update
- ▶ taking a copy to the next HoD meeting to disseminate current information

## 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.

