

### What's new...

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

### Message to our members

### *The importance of briefing candidates, parents/carers and staff*

Candidates being unaware of the JCQ regulations, parents/carers making unrealistic demands, and staff failing to follow rules as defined by the exams officer (and supported by the Head of Centre) are common problems faced by many exams officers during an exam series.

As we approach another summer exams series, many exams officers will try to ensure that candidates, parents/carers and staff are aware of the 'dos and don'ts' regarding exam regulations. It isn't an easy task – particularly when some think that they are already fully aware of the regulations, and others who consider the rules to be optional!

So, how do you increase awareness of exam regulations amongst candidates, parents/carers and staff at this time of year?

#### **Candidates**

It is strongly recommended that in the weeks leading up to the summer exam series a 'briefing' or 'exam assembly' is held. There are many areas that you should cover in this briefing, including key information such as:

- ▶ What to do if there is an exam clash
- ▶ Exam start times
- ▶ Late arrival policy
- ▶ How seating information will be provided
- ▶ Relevant rules and regulations

You may also want to consider focusing on some of the following areas, depending on issues which may be relevant to your centre (this is not an exhaustive list):

- ▶ Candidate numbers
- ▶ Exam timetable and exam room information
- ▶ Identification requirements
- ▶ Instructions for personal belongings
- ▶ Mobile phone policy
- ▶ Exam equipment requirements
- ▶ Role of the invigilator
- ▶ Malpractice warnings

- ▶ Absence from exams
- ▶ Illness
- ▶ Information for candidates with access arrangements

Following the briefing, you may decide to reinforce expectations by disseminating a [Candidate Exam Handbook](#) – this could also be addressed to parents/carers with a form to be returned confirming that both the candidate and parent(s)/carer(s) have read the handbook and agree to comply with its' contents.

Although an exam briefing prior to the exams series is very worthwhile, there is the issue of absent students. How do you deal with those who were not present – particularly when they may be more likely to cause issues during exam time?

### **Parents/carers**

With little/no face-to-face contact with parents/carers between now and the start of the exam series, relaying information is problematic. You will need to make parents/carers aware of information relating to (this is not an exhaustive list):

- ▶ Exam start time
- ▶ Late arrival
- ▶ Absence
- ▶ Illness
- ▶ Behaviour
- ▶ Dress code
- ▶ Food and drink
- ▶ Malpractice – including unauthorised materials

However, you could utilise the following:

- ▶ Candidate Exam Handbook – if you provide a hard copy version for candidates at the exam briefing (see above), include a 'cut off' slip which needs to be signed by both the candidate and parent/carers to confirm understanding and compliance
- ▶ Centre newsletter – if there is a centre newsletter to be issued whilst candidates are still attending daily, include information for parents/carers in relation to exams
- ▶ Centre website – add exam information relevant to parents/carers on your centre website

### **Teaching staff**

Teaching staff have two areas to consider/support – being aware of their role (and what they can and cannot do) and reinforcing expectations and regulations to candidates.

Ideally, teaching staff should be utilising some lesson time to cover a range of areas relating to exams – from equipment requirements to behaviour, to correctly completing the front of the answer booklet to the role of the invigilators (and what they can and cannot do). It may be that the exams officer has to produce a list of areas to cover and what is/is not permissible to ensure that teaching staff are providing the correct and most up-to-date information.

Exams officers may also need to update teaching staff on changes to regulations in relation to their involvement at exam time. For example, there may need to be an update on the JCQ's regulations relating to [The people present in the examination room](#), or on teaching staff being used for invigilation.

In some centres, there may be a need to clarify who can and cannot enter the examination room to perform specific tasks as detailed in JCQ's *Instructions for conducting examinations* booklet (page 28, section 10.3)

### **The Exams Office – hints and tips**

The Exams Office has five hints and tips for exams officers to help increase awareness of regulations and expectations amongst candidates, parents/carers and staff:

1. Hold candidate briefings at the start of the qualification (Year 10, Year 12 etc.), before each mock/PPE exam session(s), and prior to the summer exam series (and, where applicable, any other external exam series where candidates may be taking exams/assessments) – not only will this increase familiarity of expectations, but it will also ensure that absence from one session is not used as an excuse of being unaware of the regulations.
2. Employ JCQ rules and regulations for mock/PPE examinations.
3. Request that teaching staff highlight exam rules and regulations during lessons, including the administrative tasks which will need to be undertaken – such as completing the front of the answer booklet correctly, numbering answers, and clearly crossing out work which the examiner should ignore.
4. Utilise parents' evenings and centre newsletters to inform parents/carers of exam rules and regulations. At parents evening, a member of SLT or the head of centre may include 'exam regulations and expectations' in a speech to all parents/carers, or if no speeches are planned you may need to disseminate hard copy information.  
You should also issue reminders via centre newsletters and add an 'exams' section to your website which, amongst other information, includes the role of parents/carers in relation to their child's exams.
5. Ask SLT if an INSET day could include exam regulations relevant to teaching staff. You (and/or your line manager) could produce a list of 'dos and don'ts' and conclude with a 'Yes/No, True/False quiz' which may include a prize. The outcome of this 'quiz' may also reinforce gaps in knowledge and the need to be aware of the changes in regulations.

## **Key tasks**

### **Summary of key tasks for March**

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.

[March guide now available here](#)

### **Planning**

March is likely to be another extremely busy month, where a wide variety of tasks need to be undertaken across multiple exam series'.

Main summer entries have been made and the focus turns to exams preparation (pre-exams).

Note

- ▶ the deadline for comments on the **January 2019** exam series provisional timetables (where these are made available by an awarding body)
- ▶ the on-line issue of final timetables for the **January 2019** exam series (where these are made available by an awarding body in March)

### Entries

Submit any entries where the awarding body provides an entry deadline in March to enter those candidates taking re-sits in summer 2018 following the publication of **January 2018** exam series results.

Where the awarding body offers a March entry deadline for certain qualifications, submit entries for the **June 2018** exam series that were not submitted at the same time as the main general qualifications summer 2018 entries in February.

### Pre-exams (see also **Key documents** below)

Start preparation for the **Summer 2018** exam series. Submit any requests for transferred candidate arrangements.

If not already undertaken train/update your **invigilation** team.

### Exam time

Where applicable, conduct exams in the **March 2018** exam series.

### Results and post-results

Manage the issue of results and any post-results services requests for the **January 2018** exam series.

#### *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 **March**, including:

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

As you enter the 'pre-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 preparation**
  - ▶ [A guide to administering internal assessment](#)
  - ▶ [A guide to managing security in the exams cycle](#)
  - ▶ [A guide to understanding the JCO inspection](#)
  - ▶ [Candidate exam handbook template](#)
  - ▶ [Confidential materials delivery log template](#)

#### *Reminder....*

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

- ▶ [Internal appeals procedures template](#) (updated to reflect changes to the JCO [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](#)

- ▶ [Confidential materials tracking log template](#)
- ▶ [Resolving exam clashes form template](#)
- ▶ [Managing overnight supervision form template](#)
- ▶ [Seating plan template](#)
- ▶ [Secure storage checklist \(free access to all\)](#)
- ▶ [NEA security checklist template](#)
- ▶ **Access arrangements**
  - ▶ [A guide to managing access arrangements](#)
  - ▶ [Access arrangements: candidate tracking spreadsheet template](#)
  - ▶ [Access arrangements: candidate notification form template](#)
  - ▶ [Access arrangements: training presentation template for facilitators and invigilators supporting and supervising candidates](#)
  - ▶ [Extra time guide](#)
  - ▶ [Extra time calculator tool](#)
- ▶ **Invigilation: [Training invigilators](#)**
- ▶ **Private candidates**
  - ▶ [Private candidate: checklist template](#)
  - ▶ [Private candidate: final exam information template](#)

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

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



March's blog – **March 2018 – The pre-exams period – when you begin to plan for a successful summer exams series...** is written by Jugjit Chima of *The Exams Office*

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

## Note the dates...

**Exams**  
Training

**1<sup>st</sup> 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)

**Professional**  
**Development**  
**Conference**

**1<sup>st</sup> May...** marks the opening of the booking window for our **Summer 2018 Conference** (to be held in London on 2<sup>nd</sup> July)

**1<sup>st</sup> June...** marks the launch of our new website

**24<sup>th</sup> September onwards...** marks the dispatch of our *Exams Officer Handbook 2018/19* and *Exams Calendar 2018/19* to all members\*

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

## 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

#### Union partnership

At the recent January conferences we announced the launch of our partnership with Unison – the union with the largest school support staff membership – and for those of you who were not able to attend, a summary is provided below of the joint initiatives we will be launching for the 2018/19 academic year– available free of charge as part of your membership to *The Exams Office*



Click [here](#) for 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 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 

## 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.

## 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/Development Manager](#).

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

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

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



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