

October 2017 - Getting organised for the new academic year

A new start, fresh outlook, September is always more like New Year than January 1st. After a wonderful summer travelling around Italy and spending time with my family in Wales to the seamless results day it's now time to sharpen my pencil, open my diary and organised myself for the next academic year.

Now the post results deadline for 'review of marking' has passed, a date that could not come quickly enough, I am now preparing and laying down the foundations for the new academic year.

I have been busy gathering information from departments regarding qualifications being delivered this academic year and assessment information. I have paid particular attention to the new GCSE 9-1 specifications for first assessment in 2018. The Exams Office's [Information gathering form template](#) and [Annual qualifications plan template](#) prove so helpful in completing these tasks - whilst also saving me considerable time.

I have created my [Key Dates Calendar](#) for 2017-18, this is both my interactive and paper based calendar, and something I refer to every day. Downloaded from The Exams Office website I have customised it to my centre, adding school holiday dates, internal assessment dates, mock examinations and end of year exams. Most importantly I have included my own internal deadlines, which are the dates I publish to staff! I also check The Exams Office [Termly exam checklists](#) and add in dates such as the JCQ NCN update, exams policy and exam contingency planning. My Key Dates calendar gives an overall view of weekly, monthly and termly tasks that helps me prioritise my workload.

I have utilised the information in my 'annual qualifications plan' to create the summer 2018 exam timetable using the [Exams Timetable Tool](#). From this, and based upon my estimated entries, I have been able to calculate my invigilation requirements and costs for the year ahead. This data has given me an early indication that I will have to recruit additional invigilators this year.

I have meetings planned with the SENCO to discuss students requiring access arrangements and the impact it will have on rooming and invigilation. I am also looking forward to meeting with my invigilation team this month, they are a superb team who were all new to the school last year. They were well trained and prepared for all eventualities, thanks to The Exams Office's excellent [Invigilation support resources](#). Their professionalism ensured an excellent examination environment for all candidates. We will be discussing what went well and what we can do to improve, familiarising ourselves with the new JCQ 2017/2018 ICE booklet and the changes which impact upon invigilation. I find it very difficult to let go of the reins, something I believe many exams officers have issues with. This year I am going to make a conscious effort to utilise their skills to support me beyond the examination room, such as packing the scripts ready for parcel force and the collation of seating plans, attendance registers, exam room checklists. I will be asking all invigilators to sign a new confidentiality and security agreement [Invigilator confidentiality and security agreement template](#) and collating their availability for 2017-18 [Invigilator availability and information form template](#).

October is always the month I allocate time to updating my exam policies. *The Exams Office* provides word templates for [exam-related policies](#), procedures and plans that may be customised for use in centres. Templates are annually reviewed to ensure compliance with current regulations, instructions and guidance. As October half term draws near and post results enquires and appeals completed, I am looking forward for archiving and shredding paperwork that is no longer required to be kept and making way for another wave of endless paperwork. To formalise this process I have created

an [Exams Archiving Policy](#) which identifies information/records held in the exams office, retention period and method of disposal. _

And finally, as October comes to an end I'm looking forward to receiving examination certificates for awards evening in November, something that I always enjoy, it's a time that I can relax and celebrate with the students.

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