PREPARING FOR RESULTS DAY(S)

Once the summer exam series draws to a close, the attention of all exams officers turns to results day(s). Although exams officers who have previously been involved in disseminating results to students will be aware that preparations for a results day may begin before the start of the exam series, those who are new to the role should familiarise themselves with the areas and tasks associated with disseminating examination results to students.

Exams officers and senior leaders with responsibility for examinations within their centre must ensure that they are fully aware of the JCQ regulations as set out in the Notice to Centres: Release of results, June 2024 examinations.

When are summer results days?

The dates for results days this year are:

- Thursday 15 August: GCE AS and A-level, Free Standing Maths Qualification (FSMQ), Extended Project, Level 3 Vocational and Technical qualifications
- Thursday 22 August: GCSE, Entry Level Certificate (ELC), Foundation and Higher Projects, Level 1 and Level 2 Vocational and Technical qualifications

When will results be released to centres?

To prepare the information that will be released to candidates exams officers must access results electronically from the awarding bodies. This may also include resolving any issues such as missing results. To allow for sufficient time to undertake these tasks, awarding bodies provide access to results information to centres on the day before results are released to candidates – this is known as the restricted release of results day.

This year, results will be released to centres on:

- Wednesday 14 August: GCE AS and A-level, Free Standing Maths Qualification (FSMQ), Extended Project, Level 3 Vocational and Technical qualifications
- Wednesday 21 August: GCSE, Entry Level Certificate (ELC), Foundation and Higher Projects, Level 1 and Level 2 Vocational and Technical qualifications

Awarding bodies release electronic result files and supporting documentation to centres via their secure extranet sites or A2C from 00:01 on the days listed above.

Results files and their contents are confidential to the head of centre, examinations office staff and senior members of teaching staff within the centre, the consortium or Multi Academy Trust, and results information must not be divulged or discussed with the following individuals/organisations on restricted release day:

- other teachers (be particularly aware of teachers with children/family who have taken examinations at your centre)
- candidates or parents
- educational institutions and Local Authorities
- the media
- any other persons

Centres must not divulge/discuss results, or information derived from results, on social media.

Failure to comply with the regulations relating to sharing results information on restricted release day may lead to an awarding body not issuing results under embargo in future exam series.

Contingency planning

As part of a centre's examination contingency planning, JCQ regulations require procedures to be in place in the event of the centre being unavailable on results day, owing to an unforeseen emergency. The plan must also consider the potential impact of a cyber-attack.

A contingency measure may include utilising the facilities of another, local, centre, to access results information. However, this agreement should be in place before restricted release day for if/when an unforeseen emergency happens.

When and how can results be given to candidates?

Results must not be released until after 08:00 on the appropriate date for the publication of results, and candidates must not receive results by email, post or otherwise prior to 08:00. Candidates should be reminded that results are issued on a provisional basis as they may be subject to amendment by an awarding body, for example through the published post-results services, prior to the issuing of certificates.

If a candidate needs to provide written evidence of their grades to a third party (e.g. an employer or sixth form/further education college) before their certificate(s) are issued, centres will need to provide a statement of (provisional) results on school letter headed paper and/or stamped with the school name and logo.

When can results be shared with third parties, such as parents, the local authority and the media?

Results must not be shared with third parties before they have been given to the candidates.

Once candidates have received their results, centres are permitted to share results data with third parties such as Local Authorities but this information must not be released until after 9.30am on the appropriate date for the publication of results.

Similarly, press releases or statements must not be released to the media under any circumstances until after 9.30am on the appropriate date for the publication of results.

Any breach of these requirements will be considered as malpractice by an awarding body.

The National Association of Examinations Officers has produced advice on [Sharing examination information/results with third parties (including parents)](#).

What are post-results services and how are these administered?

For detailed information relating to post-results services, visit the [JCQ](#) and awarding body websites (see below).

Candidates must be made aware of the arrangements for post-results services prior to the issue of results.

A summary of the common arrangements for post-results services are set out below.

Reviews of Results (RoRs)

Review of Results services offer the following:

- Service 1: Clerical re-check
- Service 2: Review of marking
- Priority Service 2: Review of marking (This service is available for externally assessed components of both unitised and linear GCE A-level specifications. It is also available for Level 3 Vocational and Technical qualifications)

For all the services listed above:

- Requests must be submitted online via the awarding body extranet site
- Written candidate consent is required and must be held on file by the centre (This consent must only be obtained after the candidates have received their results for the respective examination series)
- Candidates must be made aware that the final subject grade and/or mark awarded following a clerical re-check or a review of marking, and any subsequent appeal, may be lower than, higher than, or the same as the result which was originally awarded
- Signed candidate consent forms or emails should be retained for at least six months following the outcome of the clerical re-check, review of marking or any subsequent appeal
- Deadlines apply by which requests are made:
    o Service 1 requests must be received by the awarding body by 26 September 2024 (awarding bodies will complete this service within 10 days of receiving the request)
    o Service 2 requests must be submitted to the awarding body by 26 September 2024 (awarding bodies will complete this service within 20 days of receiving the request)
    o Priority service 2 requests must be received by the awarding body by 22 August 2024 (awarding bodies will complete this service within 15 days of receiving the request)

For a review of the original moderation of coursework or a non-examination assessment to ensure that the assessment criteria has been fairly, reliably and consistently applied, centres can request:

- Service 3: Review of moderation

To access this service, centres must note:

- Requests must be submitted online via the awarding body extranet site
- This service is not available to individual candidates
- Written candidate consent is not required (although candidates' marks may be lowered, their published subject grades will not be lowered in the series concerned)
- Requests must be submitted to the awarding body by 26 September 2024
- The deadline for completion is up to 35 calendar days after the reviewer has received the original sample of work from the centre This service is not available if a centre's internally assessed marks (coursework or non-examination assessment) have been accepted without change by an awarding body

Access to Scripts (ATS)

This service offers access to copies of marked examination scripts to support:

- reviews of marking; and/or
- teaching and learning

Requests* must adhere to the following:

- Prior written permission must be obtained from any candidate where the centre intends to request their script(s) (This permission must only be sought after the candidates have received their results for the respective examination series and candidates who grant their permission have the right to anonymity of their scripts before use)
- Written permission/consent forms or emails should be retained on the centre's files for at least six months
- Requests must be submitted online via the awarding body extranet site
- The deadline for requesting copies of scripts to support teaching and learning is 26 September 2024 (this is also the deadline for RoRs Service 1 and Service 2 requests)
- Centre staff must be fully aware of the guidelines controlling these arrangements (see Post-Results Services: Information and guidance to centres June 2024 and November 2024 series, section 6) which include:
  - Scripts must only be seen by teachers who are members of staff at that centre or within a consortium of centres, or returned directly to candidates
  - Where teachers have used copies of candidates' scripts for teaching and learning purposes but no longer wish to retain them, they must ensure that the scripts are disposed of in a confidential manner

Where reference is made to 'requests', some awarding bodies provide centres with direct access to view/download copies of exam scripts without having to submit requests

The Exams Office has produced templates to support exams officers/centres in administering post-results services (see below – Support materials).

Exams officers are strongly advised to ensure that an audit trail is available for all requests for access to post-results services in the event of disagreement/dispute.

When will candidates' certificates be received and how should these be disseminated?

Please see awarding body websites for information relating to examination certificates.

Exams officers/centres should ensure that there is a process to receive and distribute certificates and note that JCQ regulations state:

- Centres may destroy any unclaimed certificates by a secure method (for example by shredding or incineration) after holding them for a period of 12 months from the date of issue. A record of all certificates destroyed by a centre should be kept for a further period of four years from the date of their destruction.

   Any queries concerning the destruction or secure disposal of unclaimed certificates should be directed to the awarding body that issued the certificates.

Support materials

The Exams Office produces resources to support exams officers/senior leaders in preparing for results and post-results (these support materials can be found in the Hub) including the following:

- A guide to administering post-results services: A guide to support exams officers in understanding the post-results services offered by awarding bodies after the issue of exam results and how to effectively plan and prepare to administer them
- A guide to managing results and post-results: A brief overview of the main aspects of the processes that need to be managed in the main summer results and post-results period
- Candidate permission form template: A template to gather permission for results and/or certificate collection where candidates cannot attend the centre to collect these in the normal way
- Certificate collection information for candidates template: A template for use where a centre issues certificates on a set date (or several set dates) and expects candidates to collect them
- Moderation returns log template: A template to log candidates' work returned to the centre at the end of the moderation period and confirming retention for the required period
- Post-results services - Deadlines, fees and charges template: A template to collate awarding body information on deadlines, fees and charges for post-results services into one document as a point of reference for candidates and centre staff
- Post-results services – Request, consent and payment form template: A template which explains to candidates the full range of post-results services available and the agreement they are entering into by requesting to review their result(s) or requesting the return of copies of their scripts

- Post-results services – Tracking log template: A spreadsheet template to log and track requests submitted to awarding bodies

JCQ provides the following regulations/publications:

- Notice to centres: Release of results, June 2024 examinations
- Notice to centres: unclaimed certificates
- Examination certificate security
- Post-Results Services: Information and guidance to centres June 2024 and November 2024 series
- Infographic: Post-Results Services, Summer 2024 (A student guide)

Each awarding provides a range of support materials to ensure that exams officers are fully prepared to deal with any issues which may occur before, during and after a results day. These include:

- AQA – Results days and Post-results services
- OCR - Results and Post-results
- Pearson – Results & post-results
- WJEC/Eduqas – WJEC Results, Grade Boundaries and PRS, Eduqas Results, Grade Boundaries and PRS

The contents of this article were correct at the time of publication (End of May 2024)