

JANUARY 2025

MANAGING EXAMINATION ENTRIES AND AVOIDING / MINIMISING LATE ENTRY FEES

The spring term is a very busy time for exams officers. The first half of the term is dominated with preparation for, and the submission of, examination entries, whilst after half term, preparations begin for the summer series.

When planning for exam entries, it is imperative that a generous internal deadline is set which provides sufficient time for an exams officer to receive and process entry information from teaching staff and submit this to the relevant awarding bodies. The amount of time needed will depend on a range of factors including the number of qualifications and number of candidates.

In this article, we consider the main areas associated with successfully managing the examination entry process. This also includes ensuring that entries are submitted within the deadline to avoid/minimise late/ very late entry fees.

Information gathering

Before making an exam entry, qualification and candidate information will need to be acquired from each subject area.

At this stage of the academic year, exams officers should make it clear to teaching staff that this is final entry information which needs to be as accurate as possible as it will be submitted to the relevant awarding bodies.

Once entries have been submitted, exams officers must ensure that they regularly liaise with teaching staff to capture any changes to an existing entry so that any amendment (for example, a change of tier) or withdrawal to a candidate's entry can also be made in an awarding body's system.

Entry types and codes

Ensure that you are aware of the different entry structures/models for different qualification types.

Awarding body exams administration information should clearly show the entry type, but when making entries, entry types and entry rules should be taken into consideration.

Entry types include linear, unitised and registration/qualification entry

For example, GCSE, AS and A Level qualifications (in England) are linear which means that the qualification is made up of a specified number of components - these can be timetabled exams and/or non-exam assessment - but these are not entered individually. A single qualification entry is made in the final exam series at the end of the course (to meet the entry deadline for the exam series).

Basedata

If your centre utilises a MIS (Management Information System) for exams administration, ensure that you are aware of how the system manages exams-related information – including, where applicable, the use of basedata.

Basedata is an electronic data file which contains exams information (including specification codes, entry codes, timetable and fee information) particular to an exam series. Basedata is provided by awarding bodies for centres to download into the exams administration module within their MIS for creating entry files, completing subsequent exams administration/organisation tasks and receiving results files.

For centres without a MIS facility, basedata has no relevance.

Deadlines

Be aware of the key dates and deadlines associated with submitting entries, withdrawals and amendments – see *The Exams Office Deadlines for entries, fees and charges template* for more information.

Exams officers must note the different entry, late entry, higher/very late entry, amendment and withdrawal deadline dates as these do vary between awarding bodies and their qualifications.

For example:

The deadline dates for GCSE entry amendments and withdrawals amongst the major awarding organisations without incurring a fee differ as follows:

AQA

- 21 April: Last date to apply for an entry fee refund for a student withdrawn from June 2025 exams
- 22 April 2025: June 2025 entries submitted on or after this date are classified as very late and will be charged a very late entry fee, and you will be charged to make any amendments

OCR

- 21 March: Entry withdrawals with refund deadline
- 22 April: Entry amendment fees apply from this date

Pearson

- 21 April: Last day that withdrawn entries will be refunded
- 22 April: Amendment fees will be charged from this date

WJEC/Eduqas

- 18 March: Final date for receipt of amendments or withdrawals for the June 2025 series without incurring fees (for withdrawals) or late fees (for amendments/new entries)

The importance of avoiding late and higher/very late entry fees

The importance of submitting exam entries to deadline is emphasised by the cost of late and higher/very late entry fees. For example:

OCR GCSE Mathematics (J560)	
Activity	Cost
Entry made by 21 February	£53.25
Entry made between 22 February and until 21 April (Stage 1)	£106.50 (This fee is the equivalent of the original entry fee - £53.25 - and is charged in addition to the entry fee - £53.25...Total cost £106.50)
Entry made from 22 April onwards (Stage 2)	£159.75 (This fee is equivalent to double the original entry - £106.50 - fee and is charged in addition to the entry fee - £53.25...Total cost £159.75)

Checking entry information

Once entries (and any subsequent amendments) have been made/submitted and the awarding body has processed them, entry checks should be made on the individual awarding body's secure extranet site/secure system. Any identified errors should normally be corrected using the original entry method (EDI or secure site).

Awarding bodies normally provide entry feedback information on secure extranet sites. Warning reports may also be provided where issues have been identified. These should be checked and any discrepancies resolved with the awarding body as a matter of urgency.

Conclusion

Submitting exam entries is a key part of the exams officer role. It is imperative that entries are made accurately and to the deadlines set by the awarding bodies, as the impact for failing to do so is felt by the students, teaching staff and the centre's budget.

Exams officers should be aware of the tasks that they must undertake in the weeks and months prior to an entry deadline, the deadlines for the various general and vocational qualifications taken at their centre, and the actions which must be taken after entries have been submitted.

It is also important that all exams officers appreciate that the exam entry process can only be completed with the support of teaching staff, so good communication skills and practices are required. This includes:

- early contact and maintaining regular contact with teachers to acquire entry (and changes to entry), withdrawal and amendment information
- acquiring information in hard copy format or via email
- informing their line manager/senior leader if information is not received to internal deadline

- maintaining a record of entry/late/very late entry costs

Support materials

JCQ

- [Hints and tips for exams officers - Entries](#)

The Exams Office (select the *Entries* category within the *Key Documents* area of the Hub)

- A guide to managing entries - An overview of the terminology and processes that have to be managed and administered in this important stage of the exam cycle
- A guide to avoiding late entry fees - Good practice suggestions that might help to mitigate the risk of late or missed entries which can have a serious impact on the exams budget and potentially put students' futures at risk
- Changes to entry information form template – A template which ensures a formal process (providing an audit trail) is in place to collect requests for changes to be made to final entries that have already been collected (and ultimately submitted to awarding bodies)
- Deadlines for entries, fees and charges template - A record of awarding body entry, amendment and withdrawal key dates and deadlines for the summer series with links to fee information
- Exam entry/resit form template – A template which provides a way of collecting entry information directly from candidates (this may be first-time entry or re-sit entry information)
- External entries collection form template – A template which provides a way of collecting information on individual candidates and the external exams/assessments they will be taking in a particular exam series
- Information gathering form template - An example form to gather early qualification and estimated candidate information from teaching staff. This template is available from the *Planning* category within the *Key Documents* area of the Hub
- Internal entries collection form template - To inform planning, timetabling and preparation for internal exams, this template provides a way of collecting information
- Late entry form template - This template has been designed for use in the case of new entries that are made after the final entry deadline has passed and where any late entry fees that may be charged by awarding bodies will be recouped (re-charged) to the relevant subject department budget
- Managing entries: Candidate names and gender identity guide - Links to guidance to support the management of entry information
- Private candidate: Provisional entry confirmation template – A template which provides a way of confirming provisional entry information to a prospective private candidate

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