

MEMBER MESSAGE

A happy new year to all exams officers...as preparations begin for the summer exam series

The Exams Office would like to wish every one of our members a very Happy New Year and a happy and successful 2025.

Please ensure that you read our updates as in the coming weeks we will be announcing the launch of additional online tools which will support exams officers in their everyday role and be available within the Hub as part of your membership to The Exams Office.

Annual survey

You can now view the outcomes of the annual NAO [Exams Officer Survey](#).

The NAO CEO message, written by Jugjit Chima, provides a summary of the outcomes of the survey and supports the view that a significant number of centres - possibly one in three - are not fully complying with JCQ regulations. Some of the key statistics include:

Exams officer role

- **73.1%** of exams officers spent more time working on implementing access arrangements during the 2023/2024 academic year than the previous year
- **53.4%** of exams officers do not receive any support/assistance in performing/undertaking their role
- **51.3%** of exams officers perform an additional role within their centre
- **24.5%** of exams officers do not have access to an annual appraisal
- **19.6%** of exams officers do not feel well/actively supported and valued by their senior leadership team/line manager
- **18.7%** of exams officers do not receive appropriate training and support to facilitate the effective delivery of examinations and assessments, and ensure compliance with the published JCQ regulations

Senior leader role

- **60.1%** of centres do not have adequate succession planning in place, and/or support for a new exams officer if the current exams officer were to decide to leave their role
- **40.8%** of senior leaders with overall responsibility for examinations and assessments do not receive appropriate training and support to facilitate the effective delivery of examinations and assessments, and ensure compliance with the published JCQ regulations, within their centre
- **37.3%** of senior leaders with responsibility for examination administration within their centre do not read/refer to/understand/familiarise themselves with the entire contents of the relevant JCQ documents (particularly the *General Regulations for Approved Centres, Instructions for conducting examinations, Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments*)
- **37.3%** of heads of centre/senior leaders/line managers believe that their exams officer is only required/busy when examinations are taking place

- **30.8%** of centres do not have adequate contingency plans in place in the event of the absence of their exams officer during a critical stage of the exam cycle (e.g. entry deadline, during an exam series, results day, etc.)
- **26.6%** of senior leaders/line managers with responsibility for examinations within their centre do not possess a good working knowledge of the examination system

Many thanks to the 2,044 exams officers who took the time to answer the questions and provide their opinions. The importance of your feedback should not be underestimated as not only are your responses shared with key stakeholders including the DfE, Ofqual, JCQ and the major awarding organisations, but they also shape the aims and objectives of the NAEO.

To thank you for your participation, the following exams officers who participated in the survey were selected in the prize draw to receive a £20 gift voucher:

- Sarah Hamer, West Bridgford School
- Kelly Hardy, Haggerston School
- Harriet Jaegar, Southfields Academy
- Natalie Smith, John Hanson Community School
- Stuart Lester, Bayside Comprehensive School

Exams Officer Conferences

Delegate letters which contain venue information and the agenda, workshop timings and other logistical details will be available to download from [The Exams Office website](#) during week commencing 6 January.

As a reminder, the conference dates, locations and venues are:

- 23 January - Leeds (The Queens Hotel, New Station Street City Square, Leeds LS1 1PJ)
- 28 January - Bristol (Ashton Gate Stadium, Ashton Rd, Bristol BS3 2EJ)
- 30 January - London (Wembley Stadium (Bobby Moore & Wembley Suites), Wembley Park, Wembley HA9 0WS)
- 3 February - Manchester (Emirates Old Trafford, Lancashire Cricket Club (The Point & 1864 suites), Talbot Rd, Old Trafford, Stretford, Manchester M16 0PX)
- 7 February - Coventry (Coventry Building Society Arena, Judds Lane, Coventry CV6 6AQ)

Please note that if a cancellation is made within 14 days of the conference date, a £50+VAT administration fee will be charged.

In case of query, email conference@theexamsoffice.com.

Senior Leader Conference

Our inaugural [National Senior Leader/Line Manager Exams Conference](#) takes place in Coventry on 6 February.

As capacity is limited at the Coventry Building Society Arena, we urge exams officers to inform/encourage their senior leaders to [book their place](#) as soon as possible to avoid disappointment.

The conference content will be tailored specifically to meet the needs of senior leaders in managing exams and assessments within their centre and effectively supervising and supporting their exams officer. Attendees can choose to attend four of the following workshops on the day – all workshops will be filmed and made available via our Virtual Conference:

- **AQA:** Top tips to help your teachers work effectively with your exams officer
- **JCQ Centre Inspection Service:** JCQ centre inspections
- **National Association of Examinations Officers:** Effectively managing, supporting and supervising your exams officer (including utilising the *Exams Officer Professional Standards*)
- **OCR:** Special consideration – your role and best practice
- **Pearson:** Cyber security leadership: cyber security – protecting your systems, student data and exam papers
- **The Exams Office:** The role of senior leaders in devising exam-related policies and procedures
- **ATP Cyber (external organisation):** Be cyber safe and regulation ready – The ATP workshop will focus on addressing the most pressing cyber threats facing educational institutions today, from data breaches and ransomware attacks, to unauthorised system access and sophisticated phishing campaigns.

New exams officer training – Spring into Summer: Getting ready for the summer exams series

Our [Spring into Summer training event](#) prepares new to role exams officers (or those requiring a refresher course) for the summer exam series by focusing on the pre-exams and exam time stages of the exam cycle.

The content covers the key tasks, dates and deadlines which an exams officer needs to be aware of to successfully undertake their role between March and June including:

- The Exams Cycle
- The Exams Community
- Entries
- Access arrangements
- Assessments/Internal assessment
- Timetabling, rooming and seating plans
- Storing confidential exam materials
- Exam briefings/guidance for candidates, staff and parents
- Preparing your invigilators
- The exam day
- The JCQ centre inspection
- Packing and dispatching scripts

The dates and locations for these events are:

- **24 February – Bristol** (The Bristol Hotel, Prince Street, Bristol, BS1 4QF)
- **28 February – Coventry** (Coventry Building Society Arena, Judds Lane, Coventry CV6 6AQ)

- **3 March – Manchester** (Emirates Old Trafford, Lancashire Cricket Club, Talbot Rd, Old Trafford, Stretford, Manchester M16 0PX)
- **4 March – Leeds** (Headingley Stadium, St Michaels Lane, Leeds, LS6 3BR)
- **10 March – London** (Wembley Stadium, Wembley Park, Wembley HA9 0WS)

Managing examination entries

The Exams Office January article focuses upon supporting exams officers in [Managing examination entries and avoiding/minimising late entry fees](#).

The article considers 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 including:

- Information gathering
- Entry types and codes
- Basedata
- Deadlines
- Checking entry information
- Support materials/key resources

National Association of Examinations Officers

The NAEO's January article has been written in response to the annual Exams Officer Survey to highlight the importance of [Appointing an exams assistant](#).

The article identifies the busy periods when an exams officer may need additional support to complete tasks to deadlines, and how an exams assistant can help a centre in meeting contingency and succession planning arrangements.

The NAEO has also confirmed that its summer conference will be held on **Monday 30 June** at the **Kia Oval** cricket ground in **London**, so please save the date and book any required accommodation to acquire the most favourable rates. Further information will be provided in the coming months, but please [visit the NAEO website](#) for the latest information.

January ARTICLE

[MANAGING EXAMINATION ENTRIES AND AVOIDING/MINIMISING LATE ENTRY FEES](#) considers the main areas associated with successfully managing the examination entry process.

The Exams Office NEWS and UPDATES

The Exams Office Hub

Access to the Hub - do we hold the correct information for you and your centre?

Please regularly log into your Hub account to review the information we have listed for your centre.

To avoid any issues in receiving our next Annual Dispatch in summer 2025, please check the following:

- **We have the correct Centre Admin listed for your centre** (this can be reviewed within the User Management area of the Hub)
- **Your centre number, centre name and postal address are correct** (this can be reviewed within the Centre Management area)
- **Your centre's Finance email address is correct** (this can be reviewed within the Centre Management area)

If any of the above information requires updating/amending, please email contact@theexamsoffice.com.

National Exams Officer Conferences

Delegate letters will be available to download from [The Exams Office website](#) during week commencing 6 January.

National Senior Leader/Line Manager Exams Conference

As a reminder, the [conference](#) takes place at the Coventry Building Society Arena, Coventry on Thursday 6 February.

Exams Training

Bookings continue to be taken for our training events taking place in the spring for:

[NEW EXAMS OFFICERS](#)

[SENIOR LEADERS & LINE MANAGERS](#)

National Association of Examinations Officers NEWS and UPDATES

Important update: NAEO Summer Conference 2025

The date and location of the [conference](#) have now been confirmed as **Monday 30 June 2025** at the **Kia Oval, London**.

The provisional details given in The Exams Office diary, calendar and wall planner (Friday 27 June - Coventry) no longer apply.

January message and articles

CEO Message: [The outcomes of the annual exams officer survey](#)

(Exams article) [Why every centre should appoint an Exams Assistant](#)

(Mindfulness and Wellbeing article) [How Mocks Help Us Prepare for Exams Ahead](#)

Member rewards

The randomly selected winners of the January member rewards draw are:

Tonisha Braithwaite
Brendan Mascarenhas
Rupal Patel
Charlotte Robinson
Victoria Sheffield

Well done to the individuals above. A £20 gift voucher will be on its way to you.

Membership reminder

Please remember that you need to renew your NAEO membership from 1 September every year.

Membership renewal simply requires clicking on the re-registration details link at the bottom of the [Join](#) screen.

KEY TASKS and KEY DOCUMENTS

JANUARY key tasks

A 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 January to March.

Note you should always 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.

PLANNING

As the spring term begins the exams process continues to build. For many this will be a time when mock exams/assessments are being conducted potentially alongside:

- making entries (**March** and/or **summer 2025** exam series)
- preparing for exams (**March** and/or **summer 2025** exam series)
- conducting external exams (**January 2025** exam series)
- processing results and administering post-results services (**November 2024** exam series)

ENTRIES

(Where applicable) Make final entries for the **March 2025** exam series (where an awarding body March series entry deadline falls in January).

If not already underway or submitted, collate and finalise entries for the **Summer 2025** exam series prior to the February deadline.

PRE-EXAMS

Confirm all arrangements are in place to conduct the **January 2025** exam series and where relevant confirm marks and samples of candidates' work have been submitted to the awarding body deadline (where an awarding body deadline may fall in January).

Submit any modified paper orders for the **Summer 2025** exam series and where/if relevant to any joint teaching arrangements, submit centre consortium arrangements for centre assessed work.

RESULTS AND POST-RESULTS

Access the **November 2024** exam series results under restricted release arrangements and issue statements to candidates on results day.

Prepare to administer any requested post-results services.

For more detailed information on key tasks and JCQ key dates, refer to the monthly support guide added to the website by the beginning of each month – see the [JANUARY guide](#)

JANUARY key documents

Key documents and resources are provided to support member centres in the management and administration of the exams process.

Templates can be customised for use in centres/content of templates can be used to inform electronic processes in centres.

Updated documents/resources to be published this month include:

[NEW EXAMS OFFICER: FEBRUARY SUPPORT GUIDE](#)

A reminder of updated documents/resources published in December:

[NEW EXAMS OFFICER: JANUARY SUPPORT GUIDE](#)

[TERMLY CHECKLISTS: SPRING TERM CHECKLIST](#)