

## Issues for Exams Officers to address

Some of the issues identified by JCQ inspectors during the June and November 2018 exams series highlight areas which all Exams Officers should ensure are addressed in their centre to ensure a successful Summer 2019 exams series.

Here are the key areas identified by inspectors:

- A failure to have in place a written statement from a member of the centre's senior leadership team which details the criteria the centre uses to award and allocate word processors for examinations (referred to as '*Word processor policy*')
- Approval of access arrangements for candidates—no appropriate evidence of need readily available (GCE & GCSE qualifications)
- A failure to have in place written procedures for planning and managing non-examination assessments, including staff responsibilities and risk management.
- The secure room not solely assigned to examinations
- Unsatisfactory receipt and storage of examination/assessment material
- Centre number, subject details, date, examination start and finish times not displayed
- Unauthorised material introduced into exam room by staff or candidates - in particular, labels on water bottles, calculator cases with printed instructions on desks
- A copy of the *Instructions for conducting examinations* booklet not available to invigilators in the main examination hall/room(s). This may be a printed paper copy or an electronic copy which is accessible via a laptop or tablet

As the focus upon the security of confidential materials remains a key issue for the JCQ and the awarding bodies, they are continuing to develop a more robust inspection process. The JCQ Centre Inspection Service has expanded the range of inspections to include:

- Readiness Inspections –ensuring a centre is fully prepared for the June 2019 series
- Question Paper Integrity Inspections –ensuring question papers are stored appropriately in line with the 'ICE' regulations
- General Inspections – introduced for the GCSE November series. A centre could also receive two General Inspections during the June series.

A wider variety of inspections will be conducted in addition to the standard summer General Inspections, pre-registration visits, change of address/secure storage visits and Access Arrangements Inspections. Centres could also receive a Question Paper Integrity Inspection and a General Inspection during an exam series. For details refer to [JCQ Centre Inspection Service changes – 2018/19](#).

As a greater emphasis is now being placed upon question paper security; centres must ensure that an additional member of staff, who can be an invigilator, must always check the day, date, time, subject, unit/component and tier of entry, if appropriate, immediately before a question paper packet is opened (a second pair of eyes check).

This is particularly significant where you are using a number of rooms on one or more sites for conducting examinations.

Finally, there has been some additional information/clarity around regulations contained in the 2018/19 ICE booklet. In response to feedback from *The Exams Office's* 'Exam Changes' training events, and other feedback, the JCQ and the awarding bodies should be commended for listening to the Exams Officer community and providing this clarity in the form of [FAQs – 2018/2019 Exam Administration](#) – this is a very welcome addition to the support offered by the JCQ.

Two areas where clarity has been given concerns the designated examination room and the storage of examination stationery.

A room becomes 'a designated examination room' as soon as exams office staff begin to check and prepare it to ensure compliance with Section 11 of the ICE booklet. As soon as preparation for the examination(s) begins, no other activity can take place in the room and candidates must not be allowed into the room until the preparation is complete.

The room remains a 'designated examination room' up to the point when all candidates have left and all related materials such as candidates' scripts, question papers and resource materials have been removed from the room.

When a room is 'designated' as an examination room you cannot use it for any other purpose other than conducting external examinations. Formal examination conditions must be maintained for those candidates taking external examinations and internal school tests, mock examinations, revision sessions, coaching sessions cannot be held in the 'designated examination room'. At all other times the room may be used for alternative purposes.

Many Exams Officers have highlighted the pressure which will be placed upon their secure storage facility if examination stationery is also required to be stored in the 'box within a box'. The JCQ have clarified that although confidential examination materials, such as question papers and pre-release materials, as issued by the awarding bodies, must always be stored in the centre's secure storage facility, examination stationery, such as answer booklets and formula

booklets, must be stored in the secure room. Although it is good practice to store examination stationery in the secure storage facility, it is not mandatory.

The Exams Office works closely with the JCQ and the awarding bodies and recognises their actions which clearly prove that they do act upon feedback and that they are committed in supporting the Exams Officer community in administering and managing examinations.