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Managing exam entries, late entries, amendments, withdrawals, and access arrangements applications

In our latest blog, Lisa Longstaff (exams officer at Dunottar School) highlights the key tasks which exams officers will be undertaking following the submission of entries and in the build up to the summer exams series.

February is one of my favourite months in the exams' cycle, and not just because of the half term break! However, I work through the half term break as the quiet period allows me to complete a range of tasks which would take an age when candidates and staff are in the centre and constantly asking me questions...

Submitting examination entries is one of the major tasks for any exams officer. It requires attention to detail, good communication with teaching staff, and most importantly time management skills. Yet, it is a rewarding feeling when my entries have been submitted successfully and I can move on to the tasks associated with preparing for the summer exams series.

It is imperative that every exams officer is aware of dates relating to entry submission, withdrawals and amendments – and they may not be the same for all exam boards. These dates are key to [avoiding late, or very late, entry fees](#).

The Exams Office has produced a very useful template which lists/links to the [deadlines for entries, fees and charges](#) for each (GCE/GCSE) awarding body.

Exams officers should be aware that it is very possible that they may need to make amendments, including tier changes, withdrawals or late/very late exam entries ahead of the summer series, and therefore they should maintain regular contact with teaching staff to identify any changes which they wish to make.

Updates from awarding bodies are a valuable source of information for exams officers. They detail upcoming webinars, focus on key tasks and deadlines, and provide useful hints and tips which will help you to complete everyday tasks. Ensure that you sign up to receive these by visiting awarding body websites.

New exams officers should note that if examination entries are made well ahead of the 21 February deadline, changes can be made to these entries until this deadline date at no additional cost. However, if an entry needs to be made for a 'new' candidate – for example, a candidate who joins the centre after the entry deadline date - exams officers must be aware of the relevant awarding body deadlines and fees for submitting this entry after 21 February.

For any entries submitted after the 21 February entry deadline, a **late** entry fee will normally apply – this is usually double the original entry fee.

Very late entry fees (also known as **high late** entry fees) apply for entries submitted and changes made from a later point (the cost may be up to treble the original entry fee). Exams officers should check the key dates and fees which apply for late and very late entry fees with the relevant awarding body.

Withdrawals and amendments (including tier changes) may be made after 21 February. However, the deadline dates for submitting these without incurring costs vary across awarding bodies, with

some having notably shorter 'windows' than others. It is good practice to set an internal deadline and make Heads of Department aware of this so they are aware of the dates by which they can make tier changes or even withdraw a candidate from an examination. I add my centre deadline to internal notifications to avoid a last-minute rush from teaching staff and to allow for any 'technical' issues.

Withdrawals within the deadline will generate a credit note, and tier changes within the deadline are not charged. I ask teaching staff to confirm the exam entry information and any subsequent changes following mock exam results.

It may be that you are required to amend a candidate's entry due to a change in their name or other personal details. It is very likely that your initial entries were made using the information contained within your Management Information System (MIS), but it may be that a candidate does not want this information to be replicated on the certificates. Some candidates may want to be known by a different first name than that on their birth certificate.

However, unless you have been notified of particular circumstances, or a candidate has gone through the legal process to change their given legal name, the information contained on your school roll/MIS should be used for exam entries. If you have issued candidate entry statements generated by your MIS for candidates to check, prior to entry submission, then ensure that they are aware of the deadline by which they must make you aware of any changes.

The Exams Office has produced a very useful [Managing entries: Candidate names and gender identity](#) document which signposts to reference information and useful links to support centres in managing the entries process in this respect.

If your centre accepts private candidates, they must be asked to bring photographic ID to verify their identity. This includes a birth certificate, driver's license or a passport. Entry details should match those shown on this documentation.

Centres should use the same entry method for amendments and withdrawals as they originally used to submit the initial entries, either via A2C transport application or via awarding body secure websites. You can utilise the [late entry and changes to entry templates](#) as provided by The Exams Office to internally record and process these requirements.

This is also a time to liaise with your SENCO and ask if you will be required to support the submission of any outstanding access arrangements applications using *Access arrangements online* (AAO). If this is the case, then you should be aware that the deadline for processing applications for the summer series using AAO is 21 March 2023.

As with exam entries, candidates' access arrangement requirements may also change following mock examinations. Therefore, it is recommended that you arrange a meeting with your SENCO to [confirm your role and responsibilities in relation to access arrangements](#), and if required, to check through amendments to existing arrangements and be briefed on new ones.

Not all access arrangements require awarding body approval. Some, such as supervised rest breaks require a file note from your SENCO, which a Jcq Inspector may ask to see. However, Jcq Inspectors will very likely ask to see any access arrangement approvals and the relevant evidence during their inspection which takes place during the exam series, or during a targeted access arrangement inspection. However, it should also be noted that for some Pearson qualifications – for example, BTECs and International GCSEs – access arrangements will need to be processed using their online system, *Pearson Access Arrangements Online* (PAAO).

The contents of this article were correct at the time of writing (January 2023)