KEY INFORMATION RELATING TO EXAMINATION ENTRIES

The key task for exams officers in the coming weeks will be the submission of examination entries for the summer exam series.

In this article, we highlight five areas which every exams officer should consider in relation to examination entries – both before and after these have been submitted to the relevant awarding body/bodies.

Deadlines

The importance of submitting examination entries to deadline should not be underestimated. In addition to the impact upon candidates and the negative financial implications, centres must also be aware of the increased focus on the importance of meeting awarding body deadlines. The JCQ *Suspected Malpractice: Policies and Procedures* publication requires centres to have robust procedures in place to ensure that deadlines are met, failure to do so may be classified as malpractice/maladministration.

Exams officers should carefully check awarding body deadlines, as although the summer series entry deadline date for AQA, OCR, Pearson and WJEC / Eduqas GCEs and GCSEs is common (21 February), the date from when late fees will be charged, the deadline for withdrawals (with refund) and amendments (without charge) vary between awarding bodies.

To view the various deadline dates, exams officers should consult the awarding body websites:

- *AQA Key dates 2023/24*
- *OCR Key dates 2023/24*
- *Pearson UK Key Dates 2023/24*
- *WJEC / Eduqas Key Dates 2023/24* and *Entry Fees 2023/24*

The Exams Office provides a *Deadlines for entries, fees and charges template* (available in the Key Documents area of The Exams Office Hub) which collates this information for GCEs and GCSEs delivered by AQA, OCR, Pearson and WJEC/Eduqas.

Fees/charges for late/higher late entry fees

Senior leaders within centres should be made aware of the cost of late examination entry fees and therefore the importance of avoiding these at all costs where possible.

Naturally, there will be instances where such fees cannot be avoided (for example, when a candidate joins a centre after the entry deadline, or if a tier change is required) but there should be no reason for missing the entry deadline if subject staff are given sufficient time to provide candidate and confirmed entry code information.

Exams officers are advised to highlight entry, late and very late entry costs to senior leaders and heads of departments and ask that an explanation is provided if late/very late entry costs are incurred.

It is good practice for exams officers to provide a report detailing these costs per department to their senior leadership team either once all entries have been submitted or at the end of the academic year.

AQA and WJEC / Eduqas levy the following charges:

- Late entry fee - double the original entry fee
- Very late entry fee - 250% of the original entry fee

OCR and Pearson levy:

- Late entry fee - double the original entry fee
- Very late entry fee - treble the original entry fee

Subject and candidate information

In short, examination entries cannot be made without receiving subject and candidate information from subject staff.

Exams officers should be provided with the details of a named member of staff in each department who is responsible for submitting the necessary information to the internal deadline set by the exams officer. An escalation process should be in place if this information is not provided by the deadline. In return, exams officers should provide clear details of the information they require and set an as generous as practicably possible internal deadline. The exams officer should also be accessible to support staff who are unclear of the information which needs to be provided or where to locate this information.

All information should be received in a format where a clear trail can be established in the event of a dispute.

The type of information which an exams officer will require from each department includes:

- Awarding body
- Qualification type
- Specification title and code
- Qualification number
- Entry code
- Option code (if applicable)
- Unit entry code (if applicable)
- Candidate forename and surname

The Exams Office has produced a range of documents which support exams officers in collating and submitting information in preparation for making examination entries.

Exams officers should also liaise with relevant heads of years to be kept informed of any students who join the centre once entries have been submitted/deadlines have passed, so the entry information for these students can be provided to the relevant awarding bodies as soon as possible. Likewise, if a student leaves the centre, an exams officer should be informed to make the necessary entry withdrawal.

Sharing entry information

As far as practicably possible, prior to entries being submitted to the relevant awarding bodies, final entry information collated by the exams officer should be shared with subject staff and candidates to check for accuracy.

Subject staff requiring an amendment to, or withdrawal of, an entry, should make this request in writing/via email/by completing a centre-devised form or utilising The Exams Office *Changes to entry information form template*.

Candidates should be asked to check that they have been entered for examinations which they are studying, including the correct option and/or tier.

Exams officers should be aware of the deadline(s) for amending/withdrawing entries without charge and set appropriate internal deadlines which allow them to complete the necessary administration in a timely manner.

Private candidates

Where applicable to centres accepting private candidates, exams officers should meet with their senior leadership team/line manager to agree the process.

Centres should strive, wherever possible, to support private candidates in taking their exams, however, it is strongly recommended that centres devise a policy (by, for example, adding a section to their general Exams Policy) which confirms the circumstances/conditions under which the centre will accept a private candidate, the information which is required from the private candidate, and the service/support which the centre will provide to the private candidate.

If private candidates are accepted by the centre, an exams officer will need to be aware of:

- Relevant awarding body information and guidance
- How the identity of the candidate will be verified before an entry is accepted
- Implementing/facilitating any access arrangements and/or reasonable adjustments
- Arrangements for any qualification which contains a centre-assessed component(s)
- Information which will need to be provided to the candidate. This includes:
  - The centre's charging structure
  - Candidate statement of entry and exam timetable information
  - Exam rules and regulations including relevant JCQ information for candidates documents and centre-specific exam information
  - What authorised materials the candidate needs to bring to each exam
  - What time to report to the centre and what to do on arrival
  - What the candidate needs to do if arriving late or feeling ill on the day of the exam
  - Information about when and how results will be issued and the arrangements for post-results services
  - Confirmation of when and how certificates will be issued

The Exams Office provides a range of [resources](#) to support exams officers in managing and supporting private candidates, these include:

- A guide to managing private candidates
- Private candidate: Checklist template

- Private candidate: Final exam information template
- Private candidate: Preliminary information and entry form template
- Private candidate: Provisional entry confirmation template

The contents of this article were correct at the time of publication (December 2023)