

FEBRUARY 2024

EIGHT WAYS TO GET THE MOST OUT OF THE EXAMS OFFICE HUB

A major development in the support offered by The Exams Office was the launch of the hub in September 2023.

As exams officers have utilised the support available on the hub, we have received and acted upon feedback to create additional resources and improve the functionality of the interactive tools, therefore further improving the user experience.

In this article, we detail the resources available within the hub and how exams officers can fully utilise this support.

1. News and Notifications – Stakeholder updates

The latest updates from key stakeholders, such as the Department for Education, Ofqual, the Joint Council for Qualifications and its awarding bodies, are available in the *News and Notifications* area.

In recent weeks, functionality has been updated to allow users to view historic stakeholder information and updates. This can be accessed by selecting the *View Archive* tab, from which notifications can be selected/filtered by organisation (origin).

2. Calendar

The *Calendar* on the homepage/dashboard is pre-populated with JCQ key dates and training/conference information from The Exams Office and the National Association of Examinations Officers.

In the coming months, awarding bodies will also be adding events to the *Calendar*, for example, online training dates and information.

Updated functionality in the *Calendar* now allows users to add centre specific events to create a bespoke, centre-specific calendar. Events and dates can be added by following these steps:

- Select *User Events* from the Resources menu
- Select *+Add*
- Select the date, add a title and relevant description of the event to be added to the Calendar
- Click *Submit*

A previously added event can be amended by following these steps:

- Select the event from your list
- Select the *Edit* icon in the *Action* column

- Amend the event details as needed
- Click *Submit*

3. **Centre Management** (adding/updating centre/Centre Admin information)

For contingency and/or shared role purposes, there is now functionality for each centre membership to assign an additional *Centre Admin* role.

As only the *Centre Admin* user is able to edit/update centre details and upload a centre logo in the *Centre Management* area, centres are now able to request another user is also assigned the role of *Centre Admin*.

The Exams Office recommends that the individual nominated to act as the contingency in the event of the absence of the exams officer at critical stages of the exam cycle is assigned *Centre Admin* access rights.

If an additional user needs to be assigned as a *Centre Admin* for your centre, please ensure this user already has an Exams officer/Exams assistant account registered in the hub, and email contact@theexamsoffice.com to request the addition.

4. **User Management**

Creating individual accounts

The *Centre Admin* and users assigned the role of Exams officer/Exams assistant can create individual accounts (e.g, for an invigilator/senior leader/line manager) in the *User Management* area by selecting *+Add*, completing the required fields and clicking *Submit*.

Creating multiple accounts

If accounts need to be created for a large number of users – for example, a team of invigilators – this can be done by selecting *+Upload Users* and then selecting *Download Template*.

The template must include each user's role (either *EO*, *SLT* or *INV* as shown in the *Role column* header) and when completed be uploaded by selecting *+Upload Users* and choosing the saved *User Upload* file.

Where users are created via a template/bulk upload, it is the responsibility of the centre to inform each user of their login details (email and password). Permission must be acquired from each user to create an account and use their email address (wherever possible, a centre email address should be used to create an account, including those for invigilators).

Users must also be informed that their information/assessment results will be kept by The Exams Office and may be shared with stakeholders including the Department for Education, Ofqual, JCQ and its awarding organisations.

Managing users

A user's details can be edited by selecting the *Edit* icon. Please note that the email address field can only be edited by a *Centre Admin*.

A user can be deleted by a *Centre Admin* by selecting the *Delete* icon, inputting the word *DELETE* then clicking *Confirm*.

Please note that once a user's account is deleted, it CANNOT be recovered.

Monitoring user progress and acquiring certificates

Those registered as Centre Admin and Exams officer/Exams assistant can view the progress made by users on their *Assessments* and have access to certificates which have been issued on the successful completion of an assessment.

Hiding assessments (Invigilator training)

Invigilators can attempt any/all of the following assessments:

- (Unit 1) New invigilators: Instructions for conducting examinations
- (Unit 2) New invigilators: Instructions for conducting on-screen tests
- (Unit 3) New invigilators: Experienced invigilators: Changes to Instructions for conducting examinations/Centre-specific arrangements relating to the conducting of examinations
- (Unit 4) Supporting and supervising access arrangements: Instructions for invigilators and facilitators
- Invigilator Digital Accreditation

It is for the exams officer to determine which assessment(s) their invigilators should attempt. This decision will be based upon factors such as their experience and the type of examinations/assessments they will be invigilating.

Additional functionality now allows exams officers to hide the assessments which they do not want their invigilators to attempt by following these steps:

- Select *User Management* from the menu on the left-hand side of the screen
- In the *Action* column, select the *Assessment Access* icon for the relevant invigilator
- By ticking the *Hide Assessments* box next to the relevant assessment(s), access can be limited (hidden) so the invigilator can only view the remaining assessments. To save this limitation click *Save/Save & Close*

5. Tracking user progress

Exams officers can track the progress of users in the assessments which they have been asked to complete by visiting the *User Summary* area.

Individual user progress

By selecting the **Information** icon, an exams officer can view information relating to the sections and user progress in a particular section in more detail. This includes details of how many attempts the user has taken on a specific section and which questions have been answered incorrectly if the user has achieved a 'Fail'.

All users progress

The *User Summary* area is also where a spreadsheet can be downloaded by clicking the *Export* button. This summary contains the full *User Summary* (including where applicable, *Result – Status – Passed Date*).

6. Certificates

Assessment certificates

Certificates can be downloaded in bulk by selecting the *Download Certificates* button.

To download individual certificates, select the orange *Certificate* icon which is shown against a user's Assessment.

Training/Conference certificates

In the coming months, attendees will be able to download their training events and conference attendance certificates.

These can be acquired by visiting the *Event Attendance* page, and clicking the *certificate icon* under the *Certificate* column.

7. Booking, amending or cancelling a place at a training event/conference

Booking a place at a training event or conference

Follow these steps to attend an upcoming training event or conference:

- Visit the *Event Programme* area
- Select *Book Now* next to the relevant event
- Complete the booking form with the information required
- Click *Submit* to reserve your place

When an event reaches the end of the booking window, the status will show as *Booking Closed*. When an event reaches full capacity, the status will show as *Fully Booked*.

Amending or cancelling your booking

Follow these steps to cancel your booking:

- Go to the *Event Attendance* area
- Select the event
- Select the *Cancel* icon
- Click *Confirm Cancellation*
- An email will be immediately sent to confirm the cancellation

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

Follow these steps to amend your booking (e.g. changing the name of the attendee):

- Select the *Change User* icon
- From the dropdown, select the name of the individual who will be attending instead, click *Submit*
- An email will be immediately sent to both the original attendee (cancelling their booking) and the new attendee (confirming their booking)

8. Support resources

The following resources and tools are available to exams officers to support them in their everyday role.

Key Documents

These resources are designed to support you in managing and administering the examination process, to promote good practice and to save you time in your centre.

Specific documents can be found by searching on a keyword or filtering on one or more of the following categories:

- Planning
- Entries
- Pre-exams
- Exam Time
- Results and Post-Results
- Exam Policy Templates
- Exams Review
- Exams Manual
- Access Arrangements
- Private Candidates
- Invigilation Support
- Termly Checklists
- New Exams Officer Support
- Senior Leader/Line Manager Support
- Audio (Invigilator Announcement)

Training Videos

A range of videos are available to support exams officers in their role. These can be found by searching on a keyword or filtering on any of the following categories:

- Exam Changes
- Actions for Autumn training for new exams officers
- Managing an exam day: Prepare for and managing an examination day, and dealing with emerging situations and issues which may occur during the examination
- JCQ suggested wording for the invigilator's announcement at the beginning of written examinations in video (MP4) format (An audio (MP3) format is available in the Key Documents area)
- 'Instructions for candidates' animated video based upon JCQ's *Information for candidates for written examinations* document
- Invigilator Training videos, including exam regulation changes and centre specific invigilation arrangements videos

Exams Timetable Tool

The tool offers a composite list of the contributing awarding bodies examination dates (AQA, OCR, Pearson, WJEC/Eduqas, NCFE, OxfordAQA and LIBF) to support an exams officer's planning and exam preparation.

The *Exams Timetable Tool* provides the functionality to filter and/or search for dates between to create a timetable for exams/exam dates relevant to your centre.

To fully utilise the *Exams Timetable Tool*, follow these steps:

- Select (by ticking the *Select* box) the rows you require (or tick the *Select all* box)
- Click *Create/Add Exam Timetable*
- Insert an appropriate name for your timetable
- Click *Submit*
- This timetable can now be viewed and/or exported (to save locally for further use/manipulation) by selecting *Saved Exam Timetable*
- *Re-set Filters* and *Clear selections* to further search/filter to add other exams to a saved (existing) timetable
- Make your selections
- Click *Create/Add Exam Timetable* and select the timetable you wish to add them to
- Always remember to *Re-set Filters* and *Clear selections* before starting to create a new exam timetable

Provisional Exams Timetable Tool

The *Provisional Exams Timetable Tool* provides the functionality for exams officers, and in particular, senior leaders to filter and/or search to review the scheduling of subjects within the timetables and provide feedback to the awarding bodies on the proposed timetabling arrangements for next summer's GCSE, AS and A-level examinations.

It can be accessed and used in the same way as the *Exams Timetable Tool*.

Key Dates Calendar Tool

This tool offers a composite list of JCQ and the contributing awarding bodies key dates.

The *Key Dates Calendar Tool* provides the functionality to filter and/or search for dates between to create a key dates calendar which is relevant to your centre. This functionality is intended to support an exams officer in identifying the key dates and deadlines that affect their centre - highlighting key tasks to be undertaken – and informing the 'annual exams plan'.

To fully utilise the *Key Dates Calendar Tool*, follow these steps:

- Select (by ticking the *Select* box) the rows you require (or tick the *Select all* box)
- Click *Create/Add Calendar*
- Insert an appropriate name for your calendar
- Click *Submit*
- This can then be viewed and/or exported (to save locally for further use / manipulation) by selecting *Saved Calendar*
- *Re-set Filters* and *Clear selections* to further search/filter to add other key dates to a saved (existing) calendar
- Make your selections

- Click *Create/Add Calendar* and select the calendar you wish to add them to
- Always remember to *Re-set Filters* and *Clear selections* before starting to create a new key dates calendar

Policy Generator Tool

The *Policy Generator Tool* allows users to create and save exams-related policies/procedures which can be quickly and easily edited/updated, thus saving a considerable amount of time.

To create a policy/procedure for the first time, follow these steps:

- Select *+Create New Policy*
- From the dropdown list select from the options the template you require
- Click *Submit*
- Go through the template creating your document, inserting centre-specific information in free text fields, and keeping Yes statements (unless you disagree with a statement by clicking on the dropdown No and inserting relevant text).
- To save the document you have created, you must ensure all mandatory insert fields (those flagged with an asterisk*) have been populated
- Click *Save & Close*
- Your document can then be reviewed/edited as often as needed by clicking on the *Edit icon*
- It is good practice to regularly save your progress during the creation/editing of your document, in case of time-out. This can be done by ensuring that all mandatory insert fields have been populated (even if that is with a temporary insert, such as 'To be confirmed')
- Click *Quick Save*

A final page is provided in each template which records any changes made to content during its annual review and update. To review these, select the *Edit icon* against your saved document.

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