

SEPTEMBER 2025**NEW EXAMS OFFICERS: A GUIDE TO STARTING YOUR NEW ROLE**

One of the biggest challenges faced by anyone who is new to the exams officer role is to know what is expected of them, and which tasks they must be undertaking, during their initial weeks in post.

An exams officer performs a pivotal role within every centre. Well-structured examinations are the bedrock of effective teaching and learning, ensuring that students have every chance to fulfil their academic potential.

The Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) recognises the vital nature of this role and mandates that exams officers be given the support and guidance they need. In parallel, awarding organisations offer a suite of resources and tools to help them meet critical deadlines and carry out essential tasks.

Despite these frameworks, many centres fall short when it comes to mentoring new exams officers. Without a thorough induction, newcomers can struggle to find their feet. To address this, The Exams Office provides a [New Exams Officer Induction: Task Completion Checklist](#) - a practical guide to get an exams officer started in their new role.

Upon appointment, a new exams officer should start to complete [The Exams Office New Exams Officer Induction and Assessment module](#) which will support a centre induction and an introduction to the exams officer role.

In this article, we outline five core areas for new exams officers to tackle during their first weeks in post.

1. Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

All exams officers should insist on an annual structured CPD programme.

JCQ regulations state that an exams officer must:

- receive appropriate training and support to facilitate the effective delivery of examinations and assessments within the centre, and ensure compliance with the published JCQ and awarding body regulations
- undertake regular CPD, such as attending an annual update course

Therefore, it is imperative that a new exams officer meets with their line manager to agree a CPD programme which helps them to meet these JCQ requirements. This programme should include the following:

- completing [The Exams Office online New Exams Officer Induction and Assessment Module](#)
- attending face-to-face training (including [verified new exams officer training](#) and [The Exams Office National Conferences](#)) to acquire a thorough understanding of JCQ regulations, and in particular the [Instructions for conducting examinations](#) document
- awareness of how examinations are conducted by completing all four units of [The Exams Office Invigilator Training and Assessment Module](#):

- (Unit 1) New invigilators: Instructions for conducting examinations
- (Unit 2) Instructions for conducting on-screen tests
- (Unit 3) Update for existing/experienced invigilators (including JCQ regulation changes)
- (Unit 4) Supervising and supporting access arrangements: Instructions for invigilators and facilitators
- acquire training in the use of your centre's management information system (MIS)

The National Association of Examinations Officers' (NAEO) [Exams Officer Professional Standards](#) should be used as a framework to manage a CPD programme. The *Standards* also provide certification to confirm achievement of a CPD programme.

2. Support – Internal and External

As a new exams officer, you should access the wide range of support which is available both within your centre and from organisations within the wider exams community.

Internal support

Staff	Role (examples)
Head of centre/Senior leadership team	<p>To adhere to JCQ regulations which state that an exams officer must have access to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Training ● Support ● Adequate time to perform their role ● Line management from a member of the senior leadership team
Line Manager (this should be a member of the senior leadership team)	<p>To have a good working knowledge of the examination system to provide effective line management support and supervision of the exams officer</p> <p>To support exams officers in making effective decisions in line with the published regulations</p> <p>To approve and provide access to professional development opportunities, including attending training events (online and face-to-face), conferences and network meetings</p> <p>To devise/approve and annually review and update exam-related policies</p> <p>To deal with candidate/parental enquiries</p> <p>To liaise/resolve issues with other members of staff</p>
Heads of Year (or equivalent role title)	<p>To provide candidate information (pastoral)</p> <p>To deal with candidate/parental enquiries</p>

Heads of Department (or equivalent role title)	To provide candidate information (academic)
Special Educational Needs lead (SENCo or equivalent role)	To provide candidate access arrangements information To lead/support the delivery of training to staff facilitating access arrangements during an examination/assessment To submit/support the processing of applications for access arrangements and adjustments
IT staff	To support the preparation and delivery of on-screen tests and the use of assistive technology in exams/assessments
Facilities staff	To support the preparation of the examination room(s)
Reception staff	To be the point of receipt for confidential examination materials and involved in the dispatch of exam scripts process
Invigilators	To conduct examinations in line with JCQ regulations

External support

Awarding bodies

Visit these pages for more information on the support offered to exams officers by the JCQ awarding bodies:

- AQA - [Exams Officer Services](#)
- OCR - [Support and tools](#) (From 8 September 2025, new name will be **Cambridge OCR**)
- Pearson - [Exam Officers](#)
- WJEC - [Administration](#) (Eduqas (for centres in England) - [Administration](#) | [Eduqas](#))

OCR has a team of [customer support managers](#) who provide dedicated [support, training and guidance for exams officers](#) which includes:

- Network meetings
- Training for new exams officers
- Online exams officer updates
- Admin Essentials (online training sessions for Cambridge Nationals and Cambridge Technical qualifications)
- Check-in sessions for new exams officers
- Live online events to support the management of results and post-results services
- Online support

AQA has an [Exams Officer Engagement Team](#) which offers:

- Engagement and collaboration
- Network events
- Development and support

Pearson offers:

- Online Exams Officer Updates and webinar events for [UK centres](#) and [International centres](#)

- [Video tutorials](#)

Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ)

New exams officers should subscribe to JCQ's [newsletter](#) and read the [blogs](#).

Other organisations

The Exams Office

The support from [The Exams Office](#) includes [resources specifically designed for new exams officers](#), and the following:

- Face-to-face training for [new exams officers](#), [experienced exams officers](#) and [senior leaders/line managers](#)
- A range of key documents, including guides, checklists and templates
- [Online tools](#), including:
 - New Exams Officer Induction and Assessment Module
 - Invigilator Training and Assessment Module
 - Exams Officer Digital Accreditation
 - Cyber Security Training and Assessment Module
 - Policy Generator Tool
 - Key Dates Calendar Tool
 - Exams Timetable Tool (including a Provisional Exams Timetable Tool)
 - Interactive Online Calendar
 - Exam Room Clock Tool
 - Invigilator Rota Planning Tool

The Exams Office also hosts [free-to-attend National Exams Officer Conferences](#).

The National Association of Examinations Officers (NAEO)

The [NAEO](#) is the professional membership body for examinations officers working in the United Kingdom and offers a range of support including:

- Free access to the [Exams Officer Professional Standards](#). These provide annual certificated evidence of the completion of professional development targets and competence in fulfilling the exams officer role
- Access to an [annual exams officer survey](#) which represents the views of the exams officer community to key stakeholders including the Department for Education, Ofqual, JCQ and its member awarding bodies
- [An annual summer conference](#) – exclusive access for members-only - which focuses on developing skills, enhancing wellbeing, and recognising and celebrating excellence and commitment
- [Articles](#) detailing good practice and developing key skills required in the role, and to promote personal and professional development
- Advice and guidance on [mindfulness and well-being](#), including techniques on improving mindfulness and mental health
- [Exams Officer of the Year](#) award

3. Key Documents

New exams officers should access the *Key Documents* area of [The Exams Office Hub](#) (and filter on the category *New Exams Officer Support*) to download the following resources which will provide an introduction to their role:

- Guides to key aspects of exam administration and the five stages of the 'exam cycle'
- Monthly and termly checklists to aid planning and to ensure that deadlines are met
- Exams Key Terms Glossary – To help exams officers in understanding the many key terms/acronyms which are used, and need to be understood, in the management, administration and conducting of examinations and assessment
- New Exams Officer: Induction Support Guide – This supports new exams officers who start their role at any point in the year. The content is designed to support new exams officers in managing their induction and introduction to the exams process by suggesting areas about which questions should be asked, research which should be undertaken and information which must be acquired
- New Exams Officer: Task Completion Checklist template. This supports new exams officers in recording the completion of tasks during their induction period

New exams officers should also:

- Download the *Checklist for Senior Leaders/Line Managers* to identify the tasks which their line manager will expect them to undertake during each month. This document is available in the *Key Documents* area of The Exams Office Hub
- Acquire an [Exams Manual](#) from The Exams Office to collate and retain key centre-related exams information

Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ)

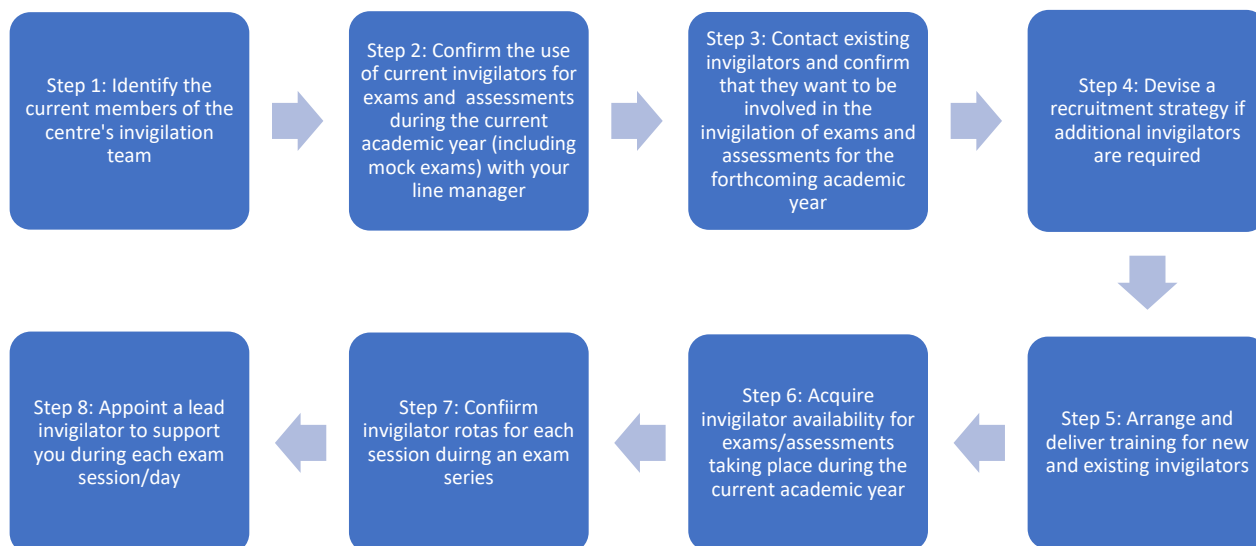
New exams officers should ensure they become familiar with the contents of the [JCQ website](#) to develop a thorough understanding of the following JCQ documents/tools:

- [General Regulations for Approved Centres](#)
- [Instructions for conducting examinations](#)
- [Centre Admin Portal](#)
- [Exam Room Posters](#)
- [Entries information](#)
- [Information for candidates documents](#)
- [Key Dates and Timetables](#)
- [Malpractice \(including the Suspected Malpractice: Policies and Procedures document\)](#)
- [Online Forms](#)
- [Post-Results Services and Appeals](#)
- [Results and Certification \(including the Notice to Centres: Release of results document\)](#)

If your centre accepts [private candidates](#) and/or delivers [vocational and technical qualifications \(VTQs\)](#), the relevant JCQ documents/information should be consulted.

4. Invigilators

As new exams officers will not be aware of the invigilators who are used by their centre to conduct examinations, the following steps should be taken within the initial weeks in post:



Invigilator training

Visit [The Exams Office website](https://www.theexamsoffice.org) to view the options to train your new and experienced invigilators. These include:

- Certificated online training and assessments
- Centre-devised training utilising The Exams Office and JCQ resources/support materials
- In-house training delivered by The Exams Office staff trainers for new and existing invigilators on JCQ regulations
- Online training delivered by The Exams Office trainers via Teams on regulation changes for existing/experienced invigilators

5. Planning

Within the first few weeks in role, a new exams officer should create the following two documents (see The Exams Office Hub under *Key Documents - Planning* category for templates):

Annual Exams Plan

This provides a framework/starting point on which to build an annual exams plan. This is a selection of key dates, deadlines and events relating to examinations and assessments within your centre.

An Annual Exams Plan will:

- aid your planning for the academic year
- minimise the risk of deadlines being missed, and essential tasks not being undertaken
- help you to easily identify the busiest periods

Your Annual Exams Plan should be shared with your line manager to highlight key aspects of your role, exam activity within your centre and why you need to be kept informed of centre-wide decisions or events.

Annual Qualifications Plan

This plan complements the use of the *Information Gathering Form* – which should be used to gather information from teaching staff about all the qualifications being delivered within their subject area and that will be examined/assessed during the academic year.

The Qualifications Plan provides a way of collating/summarising all the information gathered from each subject department into one single point of reference. From this plan, an exams officer can view, and plan for, the examination/assessment requirements for each subject within their centre.

The contents of this article were correct at the time of publication (End of August 2025)