AVOIDING AND/OR MINIMISING LATE ENTRY FEES

In this article, we consider the actions which an exams officer may take to mitigate the risk of late or missed entries.

Exams officers should ensure that late entries are avoided (or minimised where they are necessary) as they can have a serious impact on a centre's exams budget and potentially put students' futures at risk

Centre policy

Ensure that the centre's exams policy clearly sets out roles and responsibilities within the exams process. The policy should:

- Specify which members of staff are responsible for providing the exams officer with final entry information
- Describe the entry process that must be followed within the centre
- Emphasise that internal entry deadlines must be met, regardless of external awarding body deadlines

Additionally, ensure that all relevant teaching teams understand their responsibilities and recognise the importance of submitting/providing accurate final entry information on time.

Gather information

Effectively gather information on all qualifications delivered within the centre and use this to develop an *annual qualifications plan*.

Research each awarding body's exams administration processes for the qualifications your centre offers, identifying all key dates for entries, fees and charges. This includes entry deadlines, amendment and withdrawal dates, and the points at which late and very late entry fees apply. Be aware that these processes and deadlines can vary between awarding bodies and across different qualifications.

Stay informed about any education reforms or changes that may affect the qualifications delivered in the centre, as these may also impact awarding body administrative processes and key entry deadlines.

Share information

Establish clear lines of communication with teaching teams (or those staff responsible for providing entry information).

A practical way to do this is to request a regular exams-related agenda slot at appropriate meetings, such as departmental meetings or head-of-department meetings. This provides an

opportunity to explain what information is required, why it is needed, and when it must be provided.

To strengthen communication and reduce the risk of late or missed entries:

- Provide regular updates on deadlines and review each department's progress towards meeting them

- Involve senior leaders to help minimise the risk of late or missing entries

- Ensure senior leaders are aware of the potential cost of late or penalty fees and the level of support the centre may need to avoid these charges

Processes and deadlines

Provide relevant staff with clear information about the entry collection processes and internal deadlines. Ensure they also understand the procedures for managing any non-standard entries, which may include:

- Candidates on the centre's roll who are educated elsewhere or in alternative provision

- Candidates who transfer into the centre part-way through the academic year

- Resit entries

Ensure that entry processes are easy to follow and that internal deadlines are reasonable and achievable. Plan well in advance and request that these deadlines are added to the centre's calendar, so they are recognised as significant events within the school/college year.

Set internal deadlines well ahead of the awarding bodies' external deadlines to allow sufficient time to gather and process entries for all subjects.

Where possible, build in time for relevant staff to re-check entries once internal processing is complete, so that all entries can be confirmed before final submission to the awarding body.

Identify the awarding body deadlines for making amendments without charge or for withdrawing entries that qualify for a refund.

Make the process for requesting changes to entry information a formal, recorded procedure. This ensures:

- A clear audit trail of what changes were requested

- Who made the request

- When the request was made

Specify in the centre's exams policy that ad-hoc or informal requests made outside this formal process will not be accepted.

Fees

Keep an accurate record of entry fees and any additional or penalty charges applied by awarding bodies. Include a summary of these costs in the end-of-year exams review report for senior leadership.

Consider how best to present this information for maximum impact. This may include:

- Reporting on-time entry fees by department or subject to illustrate the overall scale of exam-fee expenditure

- Reporting, again by department or subject, any late fees, amendment fees, or refunds received for withdrawals submitted by the deadline

- Summarising the main reasons why penalty fees were incurred - such as missed internal deadlines, internal processes not being followed, or incorrect information being provided

- Recommending actions to help reduce the level of penalty fees in future years.

Deadlines

Ensure that you are aware of awarding body entry, amendment and withdrawal key dates and deadlines. You should also be aware of fee information to calculate and report late entry costs to your senior leadership team.

Awarding body	AQA	Cambridge OCR	Pearson	WJEC Eduqas
Entry deadline	**21 February 2026** (A-level, Applied General, AQA L3 Cert, ELC, EPQ, FCSE, GCSE, L1, L2, Project) Closing date for June 2026 entries	**21 February 2026** (AS and A Level, Entry Level Certificate, FSMQ, GCSE, Level 3 Certificate Core Maths, Extended Project, Cambridge Nationals) Entries deadline (Cambridge Advanced Nationals, Level 3 Certificate in Sustainability) Deadline for examined unit entries and moderation window 2 NEA unit entries **21 March 2026** (Cambridge Technicals) Examined unit entry window closes **4 April 2026** (Extended Project, Cambridge Nationals) Final date for entering June 2026 resit entries following the issue of the January 2026 results without incurring late fees (Cambridge Advanced Nationals, Level 3 Certificate in Sustainability) Resit entry deadline for January	**21 February 2026** (AS/A level, GCSE, AEA, ELC(A), Mathematics in Context, Level 2 Extended Mathematics Certificate, BTEC Tech Awards from 2022) Entry deadline **20 March 2026** (BTEC Nationals (Including 2025 AAQ), BTEC First, BTEC Technicals) Entry deadline **21 March 2026** (International GCSE, Edexcel Award, Project qualifications) Entry deadline **27 March 2026** (BTEC Nationals, BTEC First) Entry deadline for re-entering learners who sat BTEC Nationals and BTEC First assessments in the January 2026 series **10 April 2026** (BTEC First, BTEC Technicals) Entry deadline for re-entering	**21 February 2026** (GCE, GCSE, Entry Level Certificate, Level 1 / 2 General, Applied Certificates/Diplomas, Vocational & Technical Awards, FAD, Advanced Skills Baccalaureate Wales, National Foundation) Final date for receipt of entries **21 February 2026** (T Levels) Final date for receipt of entries. Late fees applicable from 22/02/2026 **18 March 2026** (Entry Pathways) Final date for receipt of entries **21 March 2026** (Extended Project) Entry deadline

Awarding body	AQA	Cambridge OCR	Pearson	WJEC Eduqas
		2026 examined units following the issue of results **15 May 2026** (Cambridge Advanced Nationals) Resit entry deadline for February 2026 NEA units following the issue of results (Level 3 Certificate in Sustainability) Resit entry deadline for February 2026 NEA unit F228 following the issue of results	learners who sat BTEC First and BTEC Technicals assessments in the February 2026 series	
Late entry	**22 February 2026** (All) Entries submitted on or after this date for June 2026 will be charged a 'late entry fee'	**22 February 2026** (AS and A Level, Entry Level Certificate, FSMQ, GCSE, Level 3 Certificate Core Maths, Extended Project, Cambridge Nationals, Cambridge Advanced Nationals, Level 3 Certificate in Sustainability) Late entry and entry amendment fees apply (Stage 1)	**22 February 2026** (AS/A level, GCSE, AEA, ELC(A), Mathematics in Context, Level 2 Extended Mathematics Certificate, BTEC Tech Awards from 2022) Late entry fees will be charged from this date **21 March 2026** (BTEC Nationals (Including 2025 AAQ), BTEC First, BTEC Technicals) Late entry fees will be charged from this date **22 March 2026** (International GCSE, Edexcel Award, Project qualifications) Late entry fees will be charged from this date	**19 March 2026** (GCE, GCSE, Entry Level Certificate, Level 1 / 2 General, Applied Certificates/Diplomas, Vocational & Technical Awards, FAD) Late fees payable from (Late date) **5 April 2026** (Extended Project) Late fees payable from (Late date) **16 April 2026** (Advanced Skills Baccalaureate Wales, National Foundation) Late entry fee is payable
Withdrawals and Amendments	**21 April 2026** (All) Last date to apply for an entry fee refund for a student withdrawn from June 2026 exams **22 April 2026** (All) June 2026 entries submitted on or after this date are classified as very late and will be charged a very late entry fee, and you will be charged to make any amendments	**22 February 2026** (AS and A Level, Entry Level Certificate, FSMQ, GCSE, Level 3 Certificate Core Maths, Extended Project, Cambridge Nationals, Cambridge Advanced Nationals, Level 3 Certificate in Sustainability) Late entry and entry amendment fees apply (Stage 1) **21 March 2026**	**21 April 2026** (AS/A level, GCSE, International GCSE, AEA, ELC(A), Edexcel Award, Mathematics in Context, Level 2 Extended Mathematics Certificate, Project qualifications) Last day that withdrawn entries will be refunded **22 April 2026** (AS/A level, GCSE, International GCSE, AEA, ELC(A), Edexcel Award,	**18 March 2026** (GCE, GCSE, Entry Level Certificate, Level 1 / 2 General, Applied Certificates/Diplomas, Vocational & Technical Awards) Final date for receipt of amendments or withdrawals without incurring fees (for withdrawals) or late fees (for amendments/new entries) **18 March 2026**

Awarding body	AQA	Cambridge OCR	Pearson	WJEC Eduqas
	30 July 2026 (All) Last date to amend or withdraw entries for June 2026 exams in series 6A26 **6 August 2026** (All) Last date to amend or withdraw entries for June 2026 exams in series 6G26	(Entry Level Certificate, GCSE, Cambridge Nationals) Entry withdrawals with refund deadline **7 April 2026** (Cambridge Technicals 2016) Entry withdrawals with refund deadline **21 April 2026** (AS and A Level, FSMQ, Level 3 Certificate Core Maths, Extended Project, Cambridge Advanced Nationals, Level 3 Certificate in Sustainability) Entry withdrawals with refund deadline **22 April 2026** (AS and A Level, Entry Level Certificate, FSMQ, GCSE, Level 3 Certificate Core Maths, Extended Project, Cambridge Nationals, Cambridge Advanced Nationals, Level 3 Certificate in Sustainability) Late entry and entry amendment fees apply (Stage 2)	Mathematics in Context, Level 2 Extended Mathematics Certificate, Project qualifications) Amendment fees will be charged from this date	(FAD) Final date for receipt of amendments to entries without incurring late fees **4 April 2026** (Extended Project) Amendment date **24 April 2026** (Health & Social Care & Childcare) Final date for receipt of amendments or withdrawals without incurring fees (for withdrawals) or late fees (for amendments/ new entries) **5 May 2026** (Entry Pathways) Final date for receipt of amendments to entries without incurring late fees
Higher late entry	**22 April 2026** (All) June 2026 entries submitted on or after this date are classified as very late and will be charged a very late entry fee, and you will be charged to make any amendments	**22 April 2026** (AS and A Level, Entry Level Certificate, FSMQ, GCSE, Level 3 Certificate Core Maths, Extended Project, Cambridge Nationals, Cambridge Advanced Nationals, Level 3 Certificate in Sustainability) Late entry and entry amendment fees apply (Stage 2) **16 May 2026** (Cambridge Advanced Nationals, Level 3 Certificate in Sustainability) Late entry fees also apply for resit units (Stage 2)	**22 April 2026** (AS/A level, GCSE, International GCSE, AEA, ELC(A), Edexcel Award, Mathematics in Context, Level 2 Extended Mathematics Certificate, Project qualifications) High late entry fees will be charged from this date (BTEC Tech Awards (from 2022), BTEC Nationals (including 2025 AAQ), BTEC First, BTEC Technicals) High late fees will be charged from this date	**19 April 2026** (GCE, GCSE, Entry Level Certificate, Level 1 / 2 General, Applied Certificates/Diplomas, Vocational & Technical Awards, FAD) Very late fees payable from (Very late date) **1 May 2026** (Advanced Skills Baccalaureate Wales, National Foundation) Very late entry fee payable **5 May 2026** (Extended Project) Very late fees payable from (Very late date)

Fee information

Visit the relevant awarding body website for its fee information:

- AQA - https://www.aqa.org.uk/exams-administration/entries/entry-fees
- Cambridge OCR - https://www.ocr.org.uk/administration/fees/
- Pearson - https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/support/support-topics/centre-administration/fees.html#step1
- WJEC Eduqas - https://www.eduqas.co.uk/home/administration/entries/#tab_0

Review and monitor

Once entries have been submitted, ensure your MIS or manual system is regularly updated with any changes. Amendment submissions reflecting these updates should be promptly sent to/made with awarding bodies.

Where awarding bodies provide a window of opportunity during which amendments can be made without charge, or withdrawals can be made with a refund of entry fees, ensure these deadlines are clearly identified. As these deadlines approach, carry out an additional check with teaching teams so that any necessary changes can be actioned and submitted before the deadline, avoiding penalty fees.

Support materials

JCQ

- Getting your entries right first time

The Exams Office (filter on the *Entries* category within the *Key Documents* area of the Hub)

- A guide to managing entries - An overview of the terminology and processes that have to be managed and administered in this important stage of the exam cycle
- A guide to avoiding late entry fees - Good practice suggestions that might help to mitigate the risk of late or missed entries which can have a serious impact on the exams budget and potentially put students' futures at risk
- Changes to entry information form template – A template which ensures a formal process (providing an audit trail) is in place to collect requests for changes to be made to final entries that have already been collected (and ultimately submitted to awarding bodies)
- Deadlines for entries, fees and charges template - A record of awarding body entry, amendment and withdrawal key dates and deadlines for the summer series with links to fee information
- Exam entry/resit form template – A template which provides a way of collecting entry information directly from candidates (this may be first-time entry or resit entry information)

- External entries collection form template – A template which provides a way of collecting information on individual candidates and the external exams/assessments they will be taking in a particular exam series
- Information gathering form template - An example form to gather early qualification and estimated candidate information from teaching staff (This template is available under the *Planning* category within the *Key Documents* area of the Hub)
- Internal entries collection form template - To inform planning, timetabling and preparation for internal exams, this template provides a way of collecting information
- Late entry form template - This template has been designed for use in the case of new entries that are made after the final entry deadline has passed and where any late entry fees that may be charged by awarding bodies will be recouped (re-charged) to the relevant subject department budget
- Managing entries: Candidate names and gender identity guide - Links to guidance to support the management of entry information
- Private candidate: Provisional entry confirmation template – A template which provides a way of confirming provisional entry information to a prospective private candidate

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