

Welcome pack for **Exams Officers**

Your step-by-step guide
to becoming part of AQA's
exams officer community and
conducting our exams.

This guide

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Introducing our Exams Officer Engagement team

Hello Exams Officer, my name is Gemma Miller and I'm your Exams Officer Engagement Manager. Welcome to AQA, we're looking forward to working with you to ensure you have all the tools and information you need to be successful in your role. I truly hope you find this information useful and thorough.

We are your Exams Officer Engagement Team, my team are unique in that they have all done the Exams Officer role before joining AQA in April 2024, shortly after I also joined AQA. I've worked in the awarding body world since 2007 and have a real passion for the Exams Officer role.

As a team, we are determined to make AQA the best exam board to work with, to ensure you feel valued and listened to and we look forward to working with you.

Information about my team can be found here: [Exams Officer Engagement Team](#)





Vic Taylor, North

Before joining AQA I spent 12 years in education, 7 of those as an Exams Officer. In my previous centre I held a dual role and therefore understand the challenges faced by those responsible for more than one role. I am dedicated to raising the profile of Exams Officers and providing stakeholders with an opportunity to shape future developments. As part of my role, I am keen to develop strong, professional working relationships with centres in the North.

Vtaylor@aqa.org.uk



Jon Edwards, Midlands and The Wirral

I started as an invigilator and worked up to Exams Manager of an independent, mainly private candidate centre before joining AQA. Being disabled and struggling with my own mental health, I empathise with how hard this process can be for everyone involved, no matter your situation. I am keen to work with you to give your students the best chance to succeed. You are appreciated and I am here to support you.

Jedwards@aqa.org.uk



Jo Lemon, East and North London

I have been involved in exams for 14 years and from 2016-2024 as an Exams Officer for an independent school conducting A-levels, GCSE and international qualifications. I have the utmost respect for anyone who becomes an Exams Officer, and I am committed to supporting them and helping AQA develop new processes and procedures with the students, centre and the Exams Officer in mind.

Jlemon@aqa.org.uk

We'd love to talk to you.
examsofficerengagement@aqa.org.uk



Gemma Moody, South London and South East

Having worked as an Exams Officer in a large 11-16 state secondary school for five years, I know first-hand how challenging, yet rewarding the Exams Officer role can be. I am excited to work in collaboration with Exams Officers in the South East area, whether you are new in post, or an experienced Exams Officer. I am here to support you and your students.

Gmoody@aqa.org.uk



Sam Vowles, South West

Before joining AQA I worked as an Exams Officer for 25 years, in FE/HE Colleges and an 11-16 state funded boarding school. I have lived the struggles and challenges that Exams Officers face and want to help make your AQA journey the best it can be, by listening to your feedback and ideas, and by being your voice in AQA. I look forward to working with you and helping support you in your role.

Svowles@aqa.org.uk



Sarah Robinson North West

My career in exams began in 2007 and I have experience with a wide range of exams and assessments. Prior to joining AQA, I was a JCQ inspector which gave me a valuable view of the exams system from a different perspective. I am passionate about Exams Officers being recognised for their dedication and hard work, and I see my role as helping to create a 'one team' approach between AQA and centres.

Srobinson@aqa.org.uk

We'd love to talk to you.
examsofficerengagement@aqa.org.uk

Your journey with AQA

As a member of the Exams Team for your centre, there will be key stages of the academic year where different tasks take place. In this guide we have broken them down as follows.



This guide also gives information on how you can access our:

- systems
- training and support
- network events.

Step 1 – Planning and preparation

Planning and preparing for exams will help you deliver an exams session that runs as smoothly as possible.

Entries

Students need an entry for each subject they wish to gain a qualification for, which triggers us sending you the right number of question papers. Entries can be made via Centre Services, or via your centre's MIS by EDI file. In order to make entries you need:-

- **Basedata, if using EDI.** Basedata contains key exam information such as entry codes, exam dates and times and exam durations. Basedata can be found [here](#).
- **Student information** such as legal name, date of birth, gender, candidate number, UCI number and ULN, which can be found in your centre MIS. If a learner moves from another centre to yours, they will need to use their original UCI number, which should be on their results slip. If not, it can be obtained from the learner's original centre.

Access arrangements

Access arrangements such as extra time, a reader, a scribe, supervised rest breaks etc. enable students with special educational needs, physical disabilities or temporary injuries to access the exams. Some of these need to be applied for, see the [Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments Regulations and Guidance and Instructions for Conducting Examinations \(ICE\) document](#) for more detail.

Your SENDCo is the person that leads the access arrangements process in your centre, but you have an important role to play in administering them before exams and putting them in place during exams.

Exam preparation

Other tasks that will help your exam session be a success include:

- arrange exam rooms according to the regulations in the [JCQ ICE document](#).
- recruit and train your invigilators.
- ensure students are aware of the regulations. JCQ have produced various notices and information for candidates that should be shared with them. These can be found in the [appendices in the ICE booklet](#) and on the [JCQ website](#) [Information for Candidates](#) documents.
- organise timetable clashes. If a student has two exams scheduled at the same time you'll need to make alternative arrangements, which may involve moving one of the student's exams to an earlier or later session, and organising supervision of the student to ensure they don't have any contact with those that have not yet sat the exam. See the [JCQ ICE document](#) for more information on clashes.

Management information systems (MIS)

The majority of our centres use an MIS provider to process learner information and complete their entries.

You can use these systems to produce your seating plans in readiness for the exam period, and many allow you to do this for your mock exams as well. Please contact your MIS provider for guidance on how to complete these tasks.

Step 2 – Non-exam assessment

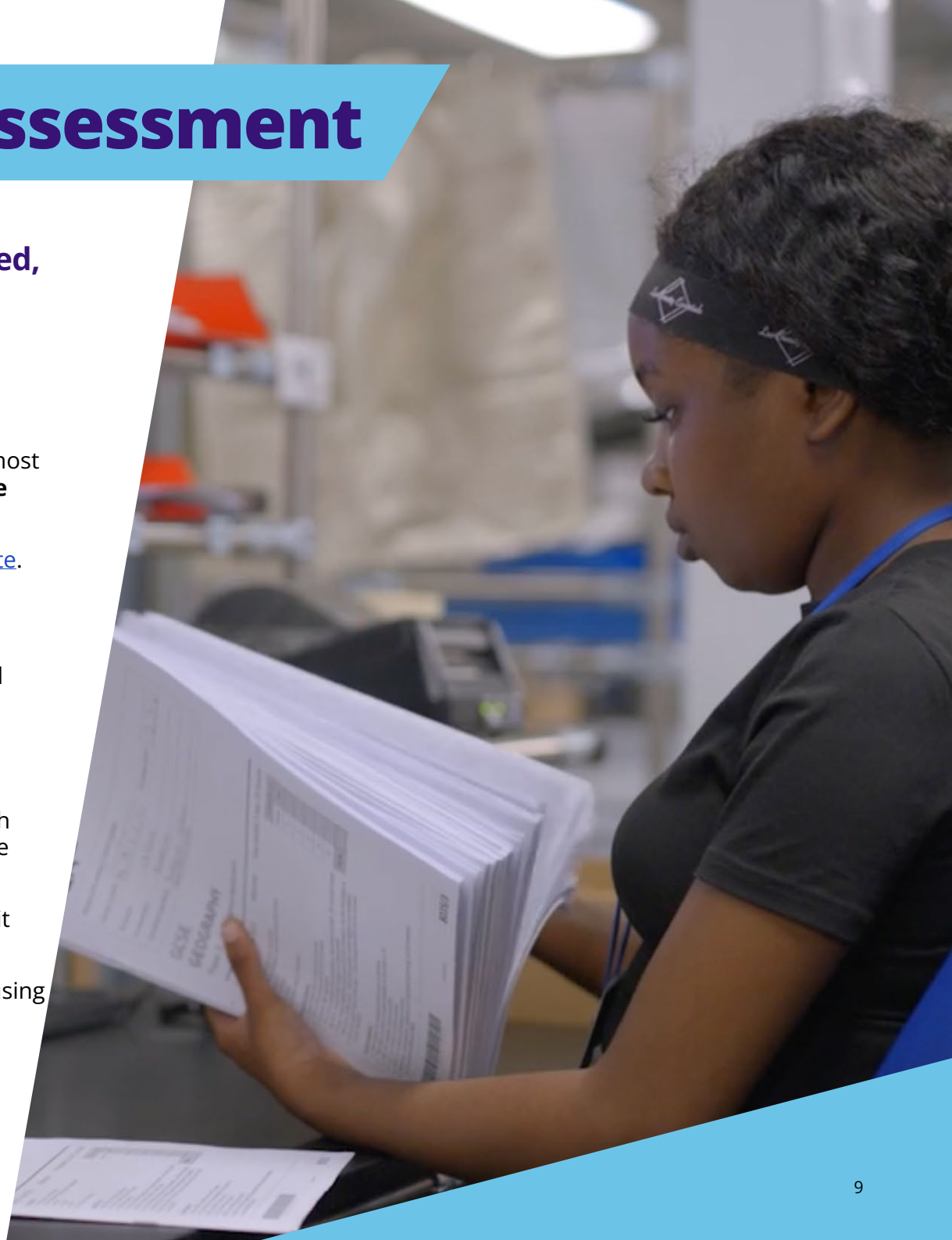
Non-exam assessment (NEA) measures subject-specific skills that can't always be tested by timed, written exams.

Some components are marked by teachers which then need to be moderated by trained AQA examiners.

- Centres will need to inform us of the marks the teachers have given and then AQA will ask for a sample of learner work. For most subjects, marks and samples will be submitted using the **Centre Marks Submission** area in Centre Services.
- More information on how to do this can be found on our [website](#).
- Samples should be kept secure until the end of the post-results period.
- Every centre must have an NEA policy which a JCQ inspector will want to check.
- Students should be informed of their mark for this work before sending it to AQA.
- Teaching staff normally need to complete a few forms to go with the sample. Any forms that are needed to be submitted with the sample will be detailed on the website.

There are also some components where centres will need to submit recordings of learner work for marking by AQA examiners.

- This will need to be submitted to us online via Centre Services using the **Digital Media Portal**.
- Information on how to do this can be found on our [website](#).



Step 3 – Examinations

Exam days are the highlight of the season, the days you have been working towards.

In addition to the JCQ General regulations and ICE books, you might find the JCQ Exam Day Checklist useful to support your readiness to deliver examinations.

Sometimes exam days can be unpredictable, therefore it is important to identify support within your centre.

Exam checklist

1. Conduct a second pair of eyes check when opening the paper packets and keep a log of this.
2. Ensure you read out the invigilator announcement (see JCQ ICE).
3. Place question papers face-up on desks before students enter the room.
4. Check identity of students.
5. Retain a seating plan to record where the students sit in the room.
6. Keep a record of key information – what time the exam started and ended, any issues or incidents that occurred.



Step 4 – Results and post-results

Results are issued on the JCQ published dates. Our [results days page](#) on our website provides lots of useful information. We also have a [student page](#) for students, parents and other candidates.

Restricted release to centres happens on the day before the learner results day, to allow you to prepare. It is very important that you keep the results confidential. Most centres access their results on their EDI systems via A2C. We provide results reports on Centre Services as well.

Centres can only release results to students and teachers from 8 am on designated results days. You can direct your teaching staff to **Data Insights** on Centre Services for in depth information on results and grade boundaries.

If the student wants to query their exam result, there are a range of post results services available for you to apply for on Centre Services, such as access to scripts, or reviews of marking.

You must ensure that you have student consent before requesting any post results services. There is more information on our [website](#) and also look at the JCQ website - [JCQ Post Results](#).

You will receive your centre's certificates three months after results day. These show the final, confirmed results. These can be given to learners as soon as received.



Systems

Here are some useful links which you will need in your role.

[Centre Services](#)

[Centre Marks Submission \(CMS\)](#) - Uploading NEA marks and samples

[Digital Media Portal \(DMP\)](#) - Uploading digital NEA files

[Special consideration](#)

[Access arrangements](#)

[JCQ Centre Admin Portal \(CAP\)](#) - For processing alternative site, overnight supervision and access arrangements among others

[Data Insights](#) - Dig deeper into your exam results and see how your school, subject, class and individual students have performed.



Training and support

We look forward to welcoming you to one of our free new **Exams Officer training events**, to give you practical guidance and knowledge to help you in your role. You have the option to attend these in person (a 2-day event) or online (4 sessions).

We also host **free live webinars** throughout the year where you can ask questions from the experts about key events during the exam cycle, for example, entries, non-exam assessments and results.

You can find more about our training and what courses and webinars are available to book [here](#).

You can also find a great deal of information on each aspect of being an Exams Officer on our [website](#), from exam preparation all the way to post results. You will also find short **video guides** [here](#), recordings of previous webinars and our [podcasts](#).

Also look out for our regular **onboarding emails** in your first year, with key information and reminders to help you with your planning. You can also view this information at any time through our [Onboarding Hub](#), which you will be able to access through [myAQA](#).



Network events

We know there is a lot to learn when you become an Exams Officer, but you have joined an amazing community of people who want to support you.

If you would be interested in becoming part of an Exams Officer network in your area, please contact us using this [form](#), or by scanning the QR code below.



Most networks meet 2 or 3 times per year. At meetings you'll receive updates from awarding bodies and there is an opportunity to share best practice and network with fellow Exams Officers.



Glossary

We know that education is full of jargon. Below is a list of some key terms and definitions which will, we hope, help clarify things.

Access arrangements (AA) – adjustments that can be made to support a student with specific requirements in accessing an exam. These adjustments are called ‘reasonable adjustments’ and can include the use of assistive technology, breaks during an exam or specially adapted exam papers to support visual impairments.

Approved centre – centre approval from an exam board confirms that a provider or ‘centre’ has met a set of standards and has the relevant qualified or experienced employees and resources to deliver qualifications. Approved centres can be schools, colleges, training providers or sole providers.

AQA centre – a school, college or training provider with approval for delivering AQA’s qualifications.

AS and A-levels – following on from GCSEs, AS and A-levels usually take two years to complete during full-time study at school or college. The first year of study is known as the AS (Advanced subsidiary) level with the full qualification being the A-level (Advanced level).

Assessment policy – a set of goals, expectations or objectives linked to an assessment approach, set out in the form of a policy, documentation or guidance.

Awarding organisation – in the UK an awarding organisation or awarding body is an exam board that sets exams and awards qualifications such as GCSEs and A-levels.

Compliance – in an exams context, compliance refers to regulatory compliance or the act of conforming to a set of rules, policies, standards or laws relating to the creation and delivery of assessments.

CPD – continued (or continuing) professional development is the process of ongoing training and development. It allows teachers to carry on with learning relevant to their role and which benefits short-term objectives and longer-term career goals.

EDI – Electronic Data Interchange. This is an electronic file that you produce using your centre MIS and send to us via the A2C carrier. Awarding Bodies also send results files etc to centres by EDI.

Entries – the numbers of students sitting particular exams.

Entry Level Certificates – also known as ELCs, are qualifications offered in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. They sit at the Entry Level of the National Qualifications Framework and are pitched at just below GCSE level.

Exams officer – also known as exams manager or exams administrator, the exams officer is responsible for the efficient and effective running of the administration of all internal and external exams within a school or college, including liaising with staff, students, invigilators and exam boards, adhering to national regulations and guidelines and an annual budget.

Functional Skills – also known as FCSEs, are applied qualifications which allow students to demonstrate real-life skills across a range of subject areas.

GCSEs – short for General Certificate of Secondary Education. The GCSE is an academic qualification offered for a range of subjects in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Grade boundaries – the minimum mark you need to achieve a certain grade.

Invigilation/invigilator – to supervise students in an exam/the person with responsibility for supervising students during an exam.

Malpractice – any breach of regulations that apply to an exam or assessment being taken.

Moderator – a moderator is the person appointed to do ‘moderation’, which is an internal check on marking to ensure that marking criteria have been applied in a fair and consistent manner.

MIS – Management Information System. A school or college’s computer system that is used to manage student information, entries and timetables, for example: SIMS; Bromcom, Phoenix Gold.

Moderator – a moderator is the person appointed to do ‘moderation’, which is an internal check on marking to ensure that marking criteria have been applied in a fair and consistent manner.

National centre number – a five-digit number that all schools and colleges (centres) entering candidates into exams need to have.

NEA – non-exam assessments. These measure subject-specific skills or knowledge that can’t be tested by timed written papers in an exam setting.

Post-results – a range of services offered to centres and candidates after the distribution of exam results, e.g. a clerical recheck or review of results.

Private candidate – also known as an external candidate, a private candidate is a person who enters an exam but is not enrolled as a student at the centre in which they sit the exam.

Qualifications – qualifications can be academic, vocational or skills-related and are grouped into levels. They show universities and employers the depth and breadth of your learning and what you're likely to be able to do as a result.

Reasonable adjustments – agreed in advance, these are changes to an exam (either to the paper itself or the conditions in which it is sat) which allow individuals with specific needs to access the exam.

Regulation – an official rule, or the act of controlling something.

Script – a candidate's answer to an exam paper.

Specifications – exam specifications describe the specific content areas of an exam and stipulate the number and proportion of items for each assessed competency.

Switching – the act of changing exam boards.

Useful links

Below are some links to websites you may find useful as general sources of information and support, and we would recommend signing up for their updates.

DfE – [Department for Education](#)

JCQ – [Joint Council for Qualifications](#)

Ofqual – [The Office for Qualifications and Examinations Regulation](#)

AQA – here are some quick links to some of the pages on our website which you may need to refer to regularly:

- [Dates and timetables](#)
- [Key dates](#)
- [Making entries](#)
- [GCSE History entry codes & GCSE Religious Studies A entry codes](#)
- [Submit non-exam assessment files](#)
- [Results days](#)
- [Post results services](#)
- [Training for exams officers](#)

Contact us

We are here to support you. If you need any support with AQA processes or systems or have a general enquiry please contact our **Customer service team**.

Tel: 0800 197 7162

Email: eos@aqa.org.uk

Our opening hours are:

8am–5pm Monday to Friday

[aqa.org.uk](https://www.aqa.org.uk)

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