

**Examination Officers' Seminar – November 2009
Discussion Forum**

OPERATIONAL

Distribution

Question: Can question papers only go into the confidential packaging box?

Answer Some Question Papers are dispatched with their associated stationery items because it is more economical for CCEA to dispatch them together. This is also a more environmentally friendly approach by reducing the amount of packaging required by CCEA and the subsequent recycling by the centre.

Question: Why is Parcelforce failing to deliver results on 16th March?

Answer This year the release date of results to candidates for the January 2010 examinations series will be Thursday 18 March 2010. CCEA would normally deliver results into centres the day before the issue date to candidates which this year causes a difficulty as it is St. Patrick's Day and Parcelforce will be not be working. If results are dispatched for delivery on Thursday 18 March they may not arrive until the end of that working day. The solution is to offer the same collection facility that we operate during the August Issue of Results period and make the packs of results available for collection on Tuesday 16 March. CCEA will use the same collection points as are normally used in August and as usual the time for collections would be between 10am and 11am.

A notice has been sent out in the November 2009 general dispatch to inform centres that this change is being made for the issue of the January 2010 results.

Distribution staff will send out the Fax-back reply in the January 2010 general dispatch and this will have a return date of Friday 12 February 2010.

Question: On what date can candidates obtain their January 2010 exam results?

Answer GCE & GCSE (January 2010) results will be available to centres via EDI at 00:01 hours on Wednesday 10 March 2010. The official publication of results to candidates is from 06:00 hours on Thursday 11 March. For hard copy results, please see above.

Question: Why does CCEA use separate answer booklets?

Answer CCEA has traditionally used 'own brand' answer booklets as a means of identifying CCEA scripts. There was discussion some years ago in relation to using common stationery but at the time CCEA took the decision to retain own brand answer booklets. In light of the transition into ESA this is an issue CCEA will revisit.

Question: Is the AS/A2 Issue of Results date in August 2010 going to be moved back?

Answer Issue of GCE AS/A2 results to candidates for the June 2010 Examinations Series is 19 August 2010.

Question: The GCSE Issue of Results date in August 2009 was very late, will 2010 be similar?

Answer Issue of GCSE results to candidates for the June 2010 Examinations Series for candidates is 24 August 2010.

Question: Will CCEA be issuing GCSE results on the same date as the other awarding bodies?

Answer The issue of GCSE results to candidates for the June 2010 Examinations Series for all awarding bodies is 24 August 2010.

Question: Can centres keep old of CCEA stationery to use for internal exams?

Answer As part of the transition to ESA, CCEA Distribution Section intends to collect all unused CCEA stationery from centres. However, from an environmental viewpoint CCEA will investigate the potential for centres to retain old stationery for internal use.

Access Arrangements/Special Consideration

Question: Are there any plans for Special Consideration to go online as AQA and OCR have this facility?

Answer At present there has been no decision about CCEA going online with Special Consideration.

Question: Can the online facility for Access Arrangements be accessed through any of the JCQ Awarding Body websites?

Answer Yes, as Access Arrangements online is a JCQ facility it can be accessed through the secure portal on any of the Awarding Body websites. A centre is only required to make one application for a candidate and this will cover all their exams with all Awarding Bodies.

Question: How can Examinations Officers deal with a large number of candidates requiring a reader? What is the ratio of readers to candidates?

Answer Depending on the level of assistance needed, readers may work with more than one candidate. The JCQ regulations *Access Arrangements, Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration* state that if candidates only require occasional words/phrases to be read then 3 or 4 candidates may share a reader, putting their hand up when they need assistance. A reader must not read the same paper to a group of candidates at the same time, as this imposes the timing of the paper on the candidates.

At the Examinations Officers' Seminars, a number of Examinations Officers raised the issue of the increase in the number of candidates requiring readers. As this is becoming an increasing problem for centres CCEA will raise this through the appropriate channels at the Joint Council (JCQ).

Question: What access arrangements apply to a candidate with dyslexia? e.g. 25% extra time?

Answer This will depend on recommendations from the Specialist Teacher or Educational Psychologist based on the results of tests carried out with the candidate. Some candidates may require up to 25% extra time, while others may require the use of other access arrangements such as a reader or a scribe if their test results identify a particular need. Any statement or diagnostic report carried out must identify a particular need for a candidate to qualify for a particular access arrangement

Question: Will there be any Specialist Teacher training for centres this year?

Answer The training held in May 2009 was conducted by the Education and Library Board Educational Psychologists. CCEA facilitated and contributed to this training. At this point CCEA does not have any information from the Education and Library Boards regarding further training for this academic year.

Question: Should posters be displayed outside all rooms being used for language exams? e.g. the exam room and the prep room?

Answer As stated in the JCQ regulations *Instructions for Conducting Examinations* any room in which an examination is held must provide candidates with appropriate conditions for taking the examination. A copy of the JCQ Warning to Candidates and the JCQ Mobile Phone poster must be displayed both inside and outside the examination room and a copy of the JCQ Notice to Candidates must be displayed outside the examination room.

Transfer & Consortium Arrangements

Question: Consortium Arrangements – if a candidate from another centre is doing examinations at your own centre, does a separate form need to be completed for exams or for coursework only?

Answer Consortium Arrangements: These arrangements are only available for Coursework/Controlled Assessment components and refer to centres which have joint teaching arrangements (i.e. candidates from two or more centres being taught by one teacher as part of a single teaching group). The Joint Council form (JCQ/CCA) must be submitted to CCEA stating the consortium details at the start of each academic year.

Transferred Candidates: Refers to candidates sitting an examination(s) at another registered centre due to exceptional circumstances, e.g. candidate moving house after entry made or suspension from the entering centre. All arrangements should be agreed in advance with the admin/sitting centres. The Joint Council form (JCQ/TC) must be completed and signed by the Examinations Officers from both centres to inform CCEA of the details no later than four weeks before the start of each exams series.

Alternative Site Arrangements: Centres need to inform CCEA if they intend to hold an examination for all candidates at an address other than their centre. The Joint Council form (JCQ/Altsite) must be completed to inform CCEA of these arrangements no later than six weeks before the start of each exams series.

Arrangements outside Regulations: If your centre is operating joint teaching arrangements and require candidates to sit written/online components/units at a centre other than their own, you must inform CCEA in writing to seek permission to put suitable arrangements in place (e.g. in relation to movement/security of exam papers) no later than four weeks before the start of each exam series. None of the above Joint Council forms currently cover these arrangements.

Vocational & Assessment

Question: How are the codes for Occupational Studies generated? – They are not always consistent and are changing all the time.

Answer The codes are only changed if the specification is revised or replaced. CCEA set the codes and the most current ones are always available in the Qualifications Handbook on the CCEA website.

Question: Does Online Registration of Occupational Studies need to be done by a specific time?

Answer The registrations for each series should be done prior to EDI entries being submitted. The January series entries are between 7-21 October and Summer entries are 7-21 February. This is detailed in the timetable of events in the Qualifications Handbook on the CCEA website.

Malpractice/Maladministration

Question: Plagiarism – could a visual poster be created for centres and candidates?

Answer This has been noted and has been forwarded to the Examinations Manager for consideration.

At the Examinations Officers' Seminars it was reported that CCEA is currently developing guidance information for centres regarding plagiarism.

E-Candidate Record Sheets

Question: Will the record sheets be available at the start of the academic year or not until after the closing date of entries?

Answer The candidate record sheet link will be available from the start of the academic year. During the pilot stage (for academic year 2009-10) queries relating to e-Candidate Record Sheets should be forwarded to Donna Mullan at CCEA on 028 9026 1200, ext 2230, dmullan@ccea.org.uk

Question: Can centres still have TAC1s and TAC2s?

Answer Centres that decide to sign up to the pilot for Summer 2010 will not receive TAC1s or TAC2s. It is CCEA's intention to have all centres using e-Candidate Record Sheets for the controlled assessment units of the revised GCSE specification in Summer 2011, therefore, TAC1 and TAC2 forms will not be sent to these centres.

Question: Will it be the responsibility of the Exams Officers to send in one centre file of marks or will the marks be sent in from the Heads of Department?

Answer On the date for submission of coursework marks, the total of the candidate's marks inserted to candidate record sheets by HODs will be transferred to CCEA's computer system. After this date centres will have 'read only' access to the candidate record sheets.

Question: If it is the Head of Department that sends the file, can the Exams Officer have the facility to see that e-Candidate Record Sheets have been sent?

Answer The information is transferred from the e-Candidate Record Sheet to CCEA's computer system on the closing date for the submission of marks. After this date centres will have 'read only' access to the candidate record sheets.

Question: Will the Exams Officer or Head of Department get a faxback or an e-mail if a mark has not been submitted?

Answer The intention is that the Head of Departments will be notified of any queries in early May and be asked to inform the Exams Officer to take the appropriate actions relating to the query, e.g. a candidate has not been entered or no mark has been submitted for an entered candidate.

Question: How will candidates sign e-Candidate Record Sheets to authenticate work?

Answer There is a form built into the system which includes the authentication statement and produces a list of the candidates. The form is to be printed to capture the signature of the candidate to authenticate their work.

Centralised Log-ins

Question: Is it the Exams Officer's responsibility to give Heads of Department access to the centralised log-in facility?

Answer The Exams Officer is responsible for giving access to anyone who needs it to do their job within a centre.

Controlled Assessment

For answers to all questions relating to controlled assessment please refer to CCEA's Controlled Assessment microsite at www.ccea.org.uk/controlled_assessment

GENERAL QUESTIONS

Basedata & Entries

Question: Is it possible that basedata could be made more user friendly e.g. the descriptor field for Moving Image Arts and A-Level History are not clear?

Answer This issue is being considered by the ICT Department.

Question: Can Estimated Entries be made online? AQA have a very good system for this which also provides centres with the previous year's entries.

Answer At present there is no online facility for centres to submit estimated entries although this has been brought forward for consideration as a future development.

Charges

Question: Late entry charges will increase charges for schools – What date will these come into effect? Will the date be 21 days after 21 February for GCSE Entries?

Answer From the June 2010 Examinations Series, there will be a charge for change of candidate tier occurring 21 days or more after the published closing date. Therefore a change of tier is free for the first 20 days after the published closing date for entry. The penalty is equivalent to 100% of the entry charge.

Question: Is there a withdrawal fee for candidates?

Answer There is no additional charge for a withdrawal but if a candidate is withdrawn more than 21 days from the closing date for entries the entry fee will not be refunded.

Question: Is there an easy place to locate information on charges?

Answer The charges for the current academic year can be located on the CCEA website within the Qualifications Handbook. www.ccea.org.uk/examhandbook>Handbook Sections>Charges for Academic Year 2009/10

Advance notice of changes for 2010/2011 can also be obtained on the CCEA website. www.ccea.org.uk>Qualifications>Administration>Advance Notice of Charges 2010/11.

Question: Charges for a module – will this be per module or as a whole qualification?

Answer If a subject is modular the entry fee is applied to each module.

Invigilation

Question: Can invigilation be provided for Single Award Science and Double Award Science?

Answer Currently invigilation is not provided for SAS and DAS. This issue has been forwarded within CCEA for consideration.

Question: How will invigilation arrangements work for new GCSEs with modules being sat by 4th year candidates?

Answer The ratio of Invigilators for each examination session remains as 1 Invigilator to each group of 30 candidates.

Question: For large exams like Religious Studies, accommodation is a problem.

Answer This is an issue which needs to be dealt with in the Centre.

Question: Is CCEA aware of the problem of providing invigilation for candidates with readers?

Answer Centres can utilise auxiliary staff as Invigilators if necessary. Also, Centres can contact CCEA's Appointments Section to use names from a reserve list.

Timetables

Question: The GCSE English Literature exam is timetabled for a pm session; it would be helpful if this could be changed to an am session.

Answer This issue will be forwarded to the Timetable Manager at CCEA to be brought forward to the Timetable Committee at Joint Council (JCQ).

Question: In 2009 there were clashes with A-Level Geography and Biology and in January 2010 there is a clash between Biology and Business Studies, can this be resolved?

Answer The JCQ Awarding Bodies work hard to minimise the number of timetable clashes that occur each year. To help this process, the common timetable is agreed for subjects with the largest entries and this common timetable helps to prevent many potential clashes occurring. However, Awarding Bodies also offer a wide range of other subjects which leads to a range of possible combinations for candidates sitting examinations.

The period in which examinations can be scheduled is limited. If examinations are scheduled earlier this will cut into valuable teaching and revision time. If they are scheduled later this will not allow sufficient time for examinations to be marked and subjected to the rigorous quality assurance process that is essential to ensure not only that the results are delivered to candidates on time but also that they are correct and fair.

Question: Double Award Science modules in May 2009 – Biology & Chemistry are taken on the one day with Physics being the next day. However, in May 2010 all three exams are scheduled to take place on the same day, can this be resolved?

Answer This issue will be forwarded to the Timetable Manager at CCEA to be brought forward to the Timetable Committee at Joint Council (JCQ).