

Examinations Officers' Seminar – Discussion Forum November 2011

Question: Is there a facility to edit applications for access arrangements made using the online Access Arrangements (AAO) system?

Answer: Applications can only be edited by centres when they are in draft format. Once an application has been submitted it is no longer possible to make changes to this. If access arrangements for a candidate need updating or amending, a new application will have to be made.

Question: Will an inspection of access arrangements be carried out at the same time as a general inspection of examination arrangements?

Answer: No, the inspection of access arrangement visits will not normally be considered as fulfilling the annual examination inspection visit and therefore the two will be treated as separate inspections and will require two separate visits.

Question: Can a letter be issued to centres regarding inspection of access arrangement visits to provide more information about these inspections?

Answer: A letter will be issued to Examinations Officers in February 2012 in order to provide clarification around the purpose and conduct of these visits.

Question: Will centres be able to apply for special consideration online?

Answer: The current situation is under review. If an online system is introduced, centres will be informed immediately.

Question: Why can't modified papers for Key Skills be requested online?

Answer: The online system for ordering modified papers was developed by JCQ for general qualifications only, therefore it is not possible to request modified papers online for Key Skills. However, centres can request early opening to enlarge the question paper themselves. Please refer to sections 6.8 and 6.9 of the JCQ *Access Arrangements, Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration* for details on how to do this

Question: Can entries be made now for May/June series? (closing date 21st February 2012)

Answer: Yes, Summer 12 basedata is now available to download by centres and entries may be submitted after download completed.

Question: Why do grade boundaries change for different years?

Answer: Grade boundaries are changed to ensure fairness to candidates. Changes are made when evidence indicates that the level of demand in a paper is different from the level of demand in the same paper in the previous series. For example, if evidence indicated that a paper was more challenging than the same paper was in the previous series, then, to be fair to the candidates, the grade boundaries may be lowered to compensate for that increased demand.

Question: Can Grade Boundaries and other report information be more user friendly for candidates and parents?

Answer: An online consultation regarding issue of results is live at present on the CCEA website http://www.rewardinglearning.org.uk/surveys/issue_of_results.asp This is an opportunity to provide feedback and we would encourage all Examinations Officers to complete this so that we can improve our service delivery around issue of results

Question: Can centres receive the summary sheets and hardcopy results the day before issue to candidates?

Answer: CCEA is issuing hard copy results for the January and June 2012 series of examinations. Hard copy will be received in centres to coincide with the restricted issue of results dates.

Question: The online results system was very well received by candidates but can more information be made available to teachers?

Answer: The online result service for AS & A2 candidates, available in the June series of examinations, provides centres with the facility to draw comparisons between cohorts and identify trends in performance. This can be accessed by using the centre analysis tool on the CCEA website. Further developments to enhance this service are currently under review.

Question: Centres can print copies of the results from the online system but some universities and colleges are not accepting these copies as official documents as they do not carry the CCEA logo.

Answer: For the January and June 2012 series of examinations, CCEA will be offering an opt-in service whereby centres can receive hard copy statements of results. The hard copy statements carry the CCEA logo.

Question: Are statistics for changes of grade as a result of Enquiry About Results available?

Answer: All Awarding Organisations submit statistics to Ofqual post examinations series. The EARs statistics are available on the Ofqual website. Those pertaining to the

summer series 2011 are currently available on the Ofqual website
www.ofqual.gov.uk

Question: When will GCSE English candidates have an opportunity to re-sit now that this is not available in November?

Answer: Opportunities to sit the CCEA GCSE English specifications will be available in the January and June series of examinations. Please refer to the relevant CCEA timetable for information on dates and times for these.

Question: The CCEA specific times for start and finish of examinations do not appear on the candidate timetable downloaded from the centre SIMS system. Have CCEA given any thought to changing to generic slots and not specific times for examinations?

Answer: A change to am/pm sessions in the timetable is under review. However, given that this would be a radical change to the timetable, a consultation process with centres will be required as part of this review before a decision can be reached.

Question: What are the rules around controlled assessments for each specification?

Answer: Centres should refer to the CCEA website and controlled assessment micro site for generic information on controlled assessment. Reference should also be made to the relevant subject specification for information at subject level.

Question: Has any consideration been given to the administrative burden around the conduct of GCSE Sciences controlled assessment?

Answer: Unfortunately, due to the confidential nature of the controlled assessments for the new GCSE Sciences this is the most secure way CCEA will be providing the controlled assessment. It is the responsibility of the Examination Officer to ensure that these materials are held confidentially as is the case with all other confidential examination materials and to liaise with science teachers in centres to make them available when required.

Question: Where can centres locate the Centre Consortium Arrangements form?

Answer: This is a Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) form and is available to download from the JCQ website www.jcq.org.uk > Exams Office > Forms

Question: Can the information on the return labels be made bigger as at present the font is too small?

Answer: CCEA are investigating the possibility of making changes to the label layout. This will include making the component code more visible. It is our plan to introduce these changes from summer 2012 series.

Question: **Centres are receiving too much stationery, can this be reduced?**

Answer: This may be reviewed before the summer 2012 exams series. If any centre has an 'overstock' of examination stationery please contact CCEA Distribution and we will make individual arrangements for collection if appropriate.

Question: **A lot of material is sent to the Exams Officers which may not relate to them. Can this be changed?**

Answer: It is important that there is a uniform system of despatching materials into centres to ensure effective communication. A central point of contact for materials pertaining to examinations is therefore necessary to provide an audit trail of communication. Materials are therefore sent to the Examinations Officers on the understanding that they will be distributed to the individual Heads of Department or other relevant recipients. Examinations Officers should not receive materials that are not examination related (the exception is of course the Key Stage 3 statutory tests). Please contact CCEA Distribution if you find you are the recipient of material that is unrelated to examination conduct or support.

Question: **Can Key Stage 3 papers be returned any earlier to centres?**

Answer: In order that CCEA can complete its rigorous quality checks in the marking and issue of results in Key Stage 3 tests, it is not possible to return papers earlier to centres than the end of June.

Question: **How are question papers developed?**

Answer: Question papers are developed by teams of Senior Examiners. Senior Examiners are experienced teachers who are employed by CCEA to oversee the writing and marking of examination papers. The process followed in developing question papers is described in detail in the ***GCSE, GCE, Principal Learning and Project Code of Practice***. This Code of Practice is operated by all awarding bodies. The Code of Practice is available on the CCEA web-site.

Question: **Will CCEA GCSE specifications be returning to linear similar to that offered by awarding organisations in England?**

Answer: This decision rests with the Department of Education. The Department has conducted a consultation with stakeholders in the education system and will base its decision on the feedback from that consultation. The decision is expected soon.