

30 April 2018

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Dear

I am writing to set out our expectations about your delivery of the summer 2018 exam series, and our approach to monitoring this. We recognise that many of your qualifications are available to learners in Wales and Northern Ireland, and the regulators in these jurisdictions (Qualifications Wales and CCEA) support our expectations.

We know that you, like us, want every exam series to run smoothly. We recognise that in such a complex and high volume delivery system it is impossible to eradicate all risk of issues occurring. Our priority during this summer is to ensure that where these arise you deal with them promptly and appropriately.

Management of risks and incidents

We expect you to have already taken all reasonable steps to identify the risks associated with the summer series and that you have appropriate contingency plans in place to prevent or mitigate any Adverse Effects.

Notifying us about events

In accordance with Condition B3, you must tell us promptly if you believe an event has occurred, or is likely to occur, in relation to a 'regulated qualification¹', that could lead to a potential or actual Adverse Effect. You should also have regard to our Guidance to Condition B3, which sets out when you should notify us of an event. You should make any notification through our Portal.

Last year we highlighted particular types of issues, which we consider notifiable. We continue to expect you to notify us about those types of issues for all qualifications.

¹ A regulated qualification is an academic or vocational qualification awarded or authenticated in England. A qualification is awarded or authenticated in England if there are, or may reasonably be expected to be, persons seeking to obtain the qualification who are, will be or may reasonably be expected to be assessed for those purposes wholly or mainly in England.

For example,

- We recognise that there will be minor or isolated events that cause a disturbance or disruption to the delivery of an assessment, such as an individual school experiencing unexpected fire alarms during an exam. We understand that you will deal with these cases in line with established procedures so that they will not cause prejudice to learners, or adversely affect standards or public confidence in qualifications. However, we would expect you to notify us promptly where an event occurs out of the ordinary, or affecting a number of centres, that could cause a significant and / or uncontained disturbance or disruption, which then requires you or your centres to follow a specific course of action.
- We expect you to notify us promptly where scripts are confirmed missing (e.g. destroyed or stolen) before the issuing of results. We would not expect you to inform us of instances where you become aware of missing scripts and before you have finished looking for them.
- We expect you to notify us promptly about any potential for, or actual, media or social media coverage that would have a potential or actual Adverse Effect. This includes where the volume of coverage triggers you to take some form of action to monitor or respond to the potential issues raised.

We wish to minimise any unnecessary and time-consuming exchanges about the information we need to consider how you are dealing with the event. Where you do not have the information available at the time of your notification, it would be helpful if you can set out when you expect to be able to provide additional details. If the event is complex and it would be easier to discuss with us the detail of it please let us know. In these cases, following discussion, we would expect the necessary notification or information in writing.

Now that you submit event notifications via our portal, we also take this opportunity to emphasise the importance of completing the fields on the portal as fully as possible, but particularly in linking to the relevant qualification from the Register.

Assessment material errors

You must continue to notify us promptly of assessment material errors (including in modified or Braille papers) in accordance with Condition B3. We will continue to collect data about all assessment material errors after the summer.

When you notify us about an error in your assessment materials we will categorise the error using the definitions below. We have retained the wording we used last year.

Category 1	Assessment material errors which could or do make it impossible for learners to generate a meaningful response to a question / task
Category 2	Assessment material errors which could or do cause unintentional difficulties for learners to generate a meaningful response to a question / task
Category 3	Assessment material errors which will not affect a learner's ability to generate a meaningful response to a question / task

Our approach to monitoring your delivery

We will continue to acknowledge and monitor any notifications you send to us.

We will leave you to manage the event once we have information about the nature, scale and impact of the event, and we have sufficient assurance that you are managing it appropriately. We will close the event notification as soon as we are assured that the event itself has been contained, and that you have sufficiently prevented or mitigated any Adverse Effects. This does not mean that we will not carry out further work or actions after the summer to address any outstanding thematic or compliance issues.

We may intervene if we believe your approach is inadequate or inappropriate, or if we believe you are likely to breach your Conditions. Depending on the nature of the event and the urgency with which it must be dealt, we may

- Give you the opportunity to review your approach in light of our concerns; and /or
- Direct you to take a specific course of action.

Where appropriate, we will strive to monitor your delivery in a coordinated way with the other qualification regulators.

In July and September, we will provide you with interim updates on the trends and patterns we have observed; and we may ask you for further information on the way in which you have delivered the summer series.

Your named contact

Your named contact at Ofqual for any matter related to the delivery and performance of the summer series (including vocational qualifications in performance tables) is: [Maariyah Rahman](#), telephone: 02476 716828.

Should you wish to discuss an issue you do not consider to be notifiable, or any complex event notification with us, you should approach your named contact (either by telephone or through the Portal) to arrange for a meeting or phone call. We will respond to you as soon as possible, and, if required, we will arrange for a teleconference or meeting to take place within 24 hours of your email.

We would encourage you to keep us updated verbally on an emerging situation even if you do not consider it to be officially notifiable under Condition B3, for example, about delays in marking progress.

If an issue continues to escalate to a point where you believe it is notifiable under Condition B3, you should notify us via the Portal.

Reporting

In line with previous years, we will publish a report on the issues that occur during the summer exam series. We will give you an opportunity to provide feedback on the report's factual accuracy before we publish. Last year you agreed for us to share a complete version of the draft report (unredacted - so each exam board's data is visible) with the other exam boards. We will do the same this year unless you express concern about this approach.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'ES', written over a horizontal line.

Emma Scott

Associate Director, Standards for Delivery and Performance of GQ
Direct line: 02476 716611

CC: Qualifications Wales; CCEA Regulator