

Dear Head,

Let's have a successful exam series

Before the 2019 series of exams gets underway, I want to draw your attention to some issues we see every year. Most schools and colleges will have an incident-free series of exams, but we understand that sometimes things go wrong. From speaking with exams officers, we have identified areas where they might benefit from some extra support to ensure your exams run without a hitch:

Exam package security: Packages from exam boards must be delivered directly to the exams office secure storage, and should not spend any longer than absolutely necessary in reception areas. At least two members of staff must be present to check the right packets are opened, which should only occur up to an hour before the exam starts ([page 5 of Instructions for Conducting Examinations](#)). This can be difficult to manage depending on staffing and other responsibilities exams officers have during that hour. It is, however, vitally important that this rule is followed.

If the wrong packet is opened and given to students, your staff should do two things:

- 1) Make sure that affected students remain supervised under exam conditions, even if other students have finished the original exam. This is to make sure that any work they have done on the wrong paper can be accepted by the board, and if necessary they can be given the correct paper.
- 2) Contact the exam board for specific instructions. Your centre is unlikely to have experienced this before, but the exam board has, so they will be able to advise you on what to do next.

Timetable clashes: Students must be properly supervised if they are sitting exams at a different time to the rest of the cohort, owing to a timetable clash. Several clashes can mean timetables become complex but supervision is very important to ensure there are no opportunities for exam security to be breached.

Mobile phones and smart watches: As you know, mobile phones and smart watches must be stored away from students during exams. We know that exams officers put a lot of work into getting this message across, but still some students do not understand the gravity of breaching this rule. Any extra support you are able to give to communicate this to students will help add weight to the message.

We have engaged with exams officers throughout the last year to find ways we can support their work. Along with the below resources, we created [a short film to help raise awareness of the importance of their role to the successful running of summer exams](#), which I encourage you to share with your teaching staff.

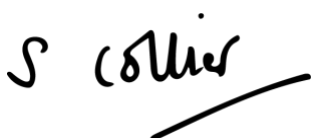
We hope that the following will help you, your exams officer and students this summer:

- a [personal checklist which can be printed off for students](#) to use ahead of their exams
- a [guide on how to cope with pressure associated with test and exam anxiety](#), produced in conjunction with Professor Dave Putwain at Liverpool John Moores University
- a [list of ways centres across the country keep mobile phones out of exams](#)
- a [blog post](#) on the reasons students still take mobile phones into exams

We would welcome any feedback on resources we have produced via [this short survey](#).

Thank you for all you and your staff will do over the coming months and we wish you an incident-free exam series.

Yours sincerely,



Sally Collier
Chief Regulator