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**Exams Office Review**

**[June 2013]**

**How to use this document**

It is good practice to carry out an annual review of the work undertaken by the exams office and to compile a written report to present to your senior leadership team. You could do this at any time during the year, or at the end of an academic year.

This *Exams Office Review* document suggests information you could include when reviewing the exams office, and how you could structure a report.

* You may want to think about who will see the review and its purpose, for example, will it be read by the head teacher, governors or your line manager? Will you use the report as part of your own performance management, to demonstrate how the exams budget was spent, or as a record of what was done well and what areas of exams administration could be improved, with suggestions as to how to improve them?
* You will probably need to refer to the most recent JCQ Inspection report and to some key documents on the [Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ)](http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office) website. Among the key documents are the *General Regulations for Approved Centres*, the *Instructions for Conducting Examinations*, the *Instructions for Conducting Controlled Assessment*, and the *Instructions for Conducting Coursework* booklets.
* You may wish to compile some statistical information such as the amount of money spent on entries, late fees, invigilators employed, etc. There are other statistics you can provide, such as the number of candidates who took exams, which will help illustrate the scale and importance of the work you do. Think about the best place to find this information.

A good way to start thinking about what to include in your review and how to present the information is to consider using the [exam cycle](https://www.education.gov.uk/nctl/examsadmin/b00197212/examcycle-) structure.

* The exam cycle covers everything that needs to take place to administer exams effectively. It is an established model for describing the processes required. It is recognised as a means of splitting exams administration into five key sections:
  + [Planning](https://www.education.gov.uk/nctl/examsadmin/b00197212/examcycle/planning)
  + [Entries](https://www.education.gov.uk/nctl/examsadmin/b00197212/examcycle/entries)
  + [Preparation](https://www.education.gov.uk/nctl/examsadmin/b00197212/examcycle/exam-prep)
  + [Exam day](https://www.education.gov.uk/nctl/examsadmin/b00197212/examcycle/examday)
  + [Results and post-results](https://www.education.gov.uk/nctl/examsadmin/b00197212/examcycle/results)
* This document contains specific questions, areas of good practice, challenges you might have met and ideas for future development for each section of the exam cycle.

There may be other information, which is specific to your role and/or your type of organisation that you may wish to include.

**Report Structure**

Once you have researched the information you need and considered the questions and ideas in this document, you should be in a good position to write a suitable review report.

Your organisation may have an agreed format for the production of reports. If not, you may like to consider including:

* **An introduction**

This section should describe what the report is, who it is for and the time period it covers.

* **Your review and statistics**

This section should contain detailed information about the work undertaken by the exams office. You may wish to provide a review of the financial performance of the exams office against its budget and any other supporting statistics you have collated, possibly presented in graph format.

* **Summary and recommendations**

This should include the main successes of the year, any specific issues that need to be addressed and suggestions about how they might be resolved. You might also refer to the main lessons you have learned this year that can help you in the future.

**Suggested topics**

| **General topics across the exam cycle** | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| * Personnel working in the exams office (including assistants, invigilators, line manager) - their roles, hours of work and main responsibilities * The organisation’s exams ‘hardware’, software, and equipment - what worked well, what did not and what improvements are needed * Training undertaken by exams staff - what you used, which training worked best and why * If any of the JCQ regulations presented challenges and how these should be addressed for the coming year * If the key dates for the year were identified and how well they were adhered to by staff * What the main internal and external risks in the exam system are for the organisation * What contingency plans were in place and if they were adequate to cope with risk situations during the year * What impact changes to qualifications had during the year and what needs to be planned for to ensure future changes are managed | | | | |
| **Planning** | **Entries** | **Exam preparation** | **Exam Days** | **Results and post results** |
| **Communication**   * What methods of communication did you use, e.g. email, notice boards, intranet * Why did some methods work better than others * What improvements could be made   **Meetings**   * How often did you meet with your line manager/senior leadership team   **Key dates**   * How well did any internal key dates calendar work * What changes will you make to ensure all staff adhere to the deadlines you set | **Data collection**   * How good was your data collection process for identifying qualifications delivered in your organisation * How well did your timelines and methods for collecting entries work * How well did teaching staff respond   **Late entries**   * If there were any late or unexpected entries, why did these happen * How could these be reduced in the future | **Invigilator training**   * What training did you provide * How will you ensure your invigilators will be kept up to date with changes for next year   **Storage of materials**   * How well did your system for recording receipt of confidential materials work * How effective were the arrangements for receipt and secure storage of papers and scripts   **Access arrangements**   * How did you work with your SENCO to process/provide access arrangements | **JCQ regulations**   * How well did the exams adhere to the JCQ regulations * If there were any problems, what were they * How will you address any issues/actions arising from the JCQ Inspection report   **Invigilators**   * How well did your invigilators carry out their role * How will you ensure you have sufficient invigilators for future exams   **Exam rooms**   * How good were the rooms you used for exams * What rooms will you need to accommodate exams in the future * What problems did you have accessing specialist equipment/support | **Results**   * How well did your arrangements for results days work * Were there any issues obtaining results for students   **Post results**   * Were all staff and students aware of the different services; costs, deadlines and implications of applying |

**Suggested statistics**

| **Planning** | **Entries** | **Exam preparation** | **Exam days** | **Results and post results** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Data collection**   * Number of staff/departments who responded to requests for data on time   **Estimated entries**   * Number submitted   **Private candidates**   * Number entered for exams * Number of extra rooms/invigilators required | **Entries**   * Numbers of candidates entered for exams * Number of component / unit entries during the year   **Late entries**   * How many * How much did they cost * How many were unnecessary * How many were made on-the-day and how much did they cost | **Access Arrangements**   * Number of applications made * How many of each type were required   **Invigilation**   * Number of invigilators * Hours of work * Total cost | **Malpractice**   * Number of incidences of suspected malpractice * What types * What were the penalties   **Special Consideration**   * Number of applications made * How many of each type were required | **Enquiries about Results (EARs)**   * Number of applications * What were the outcomes   **Access to Scripts**   * Number of applications * What were the outcomes   **Appeals**   * Were there any * What were the results |



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