

Why JCQ ask for a senior designated contact...and why this should not be the exams manager/officer

Most queries from awarding bodies can be handled during term time using the centre's usual contact details. However, during the summer holidays, an awarding body may occasionally need to contact the centre with an urgent request to resolve a results related issue so that students receive their results on the designated results day. If the issue is not resolved quickly, there is a risk that a student's results could be delayed.

For this reason, and in line with JCQ's *General Regulations for Approved Centres*, every centre must provide the details of one or more senior designated contacts who can be reached outside term time to deal with any urgent results-related issues. This helps awarding bodies release students' results on time.

The JCQ National Centre Number (NCN) team requests this information each year in early May by sending a link to a form for completion to all Heads of Centre.

Because marking and moderation continues until mid-August, there are always a small number of cases where awarding bodies need extra information before results day.

How many senior designated contacts are needed?

Centres must provide details for at least one senior designated contact who will be available during the summer holiday period to deal with urgent requests.

Centres may choose to nominate more than one contact so that this responsibility does not fall on one person for the whole holiday period.

When would an awarding body contact a senior designated contact?

A senior designated contact will only be contacted about urgent matters relating to results.

Awarding bodies will first try to contact the NCN contact, who is usually the exams manager/officer. The senior designated contact will only be used if there is no response within 24 hours.

Centres must also provide their last day of term so awarding bodies know how long the main NCN contact is likely to be available.

The contact details collected each summer are kept until 30 September and then securely destroyed.

What is the role of a senior designated contact?

A senior designated contact must:

- have the authority to access the information needed and arrange the right support to resolve queries quickly

- be available to respond to urgent issues such as:
 - suspected malpractice
 - safeguarding concerns where a student may be at risk
 - ineligible claims
 - an invalid order of merit
 - missing scripts

This is why the senior designated contact is usually a senior leader within the centre.

What does the Head of Centre need to do?

Step 1: Identify the senior staff who will be available outside term time. Decide how many contacts to provide and, if naming more than one person, confirm when each will be available during the holiday period.

Step 2: Provide the name, job title, contact details and availability of each senior designated contact.

Step 3: State the preferred method of contact, for example phone if email will not be monitored regularly.

Summary

Heads of Centre are asked to provide the details of one or more senior members of staff as senior designated contacts. Unless the exams manager/officer is also a senior member of staff, they should not be nominated for this role.

As usual, awarding bodies will continue to contact the person listed on the NCN register first, escalating to the Head of Centre if needed. A senior designated contact will only be approached in exceptional circumstances.

If the exams manager/officer works during the summer holidays and the NCN contact number is the centre's main switchboard, they should ensure calls are diverted to their office so awarding bodies can reach them.

If the exams manager/officer's contact details will change during the results period, the National Centre Number Team must be informed. The same applies if the Head of Centre is due to leave at the end of term - updated details must be provided straight away.