



NAEO exams article – October 2025

What is CPD...and what should I include in my CPD?

In recent weeks, we have received several requests from exams officers to define the JCQ regulation in section 5.3 of the *General Regulations for Approved Centres* document which states that exams officer must undertake regular CPD, such as attending an annual update course.

Before we consider what your CPD should look like, let us consider the definition of CPD.

CPD stands for Continuing Professional Development and refers to the ongoing learning activities that you should take to improve and develop your skills. Your CPD will support you in performing your role and developing your career.

CPD is very personal to the individual and therefore your annual programme will depend upon your circumstances which will be influenced, amongst other factors, by the level of your experience and the scope of your role within your centre.

As an exams officer, the NAEO recommends that your CPD should focus upon the following three areas:

- Acquiring a thorough knowledge and understanding of regulations and processes
- Developing the skills which will help you to perform your role effectively
- Maintaining and protecting the integrity and security of the examination system within your centre

Knowledge and understanding

As an exams officer, you will need to ensure (or develop if you are new to the role) a thorough knowledge and understanding of the following:

- (new exams officers) JCQ and awarding body regulations and requirements
- (existing exams officers) An awareness of any changes in JCQ and awarding body regulations and requirements
- Online resources including awareness of awarding body secure websites, JCQ's shared services, such as the Centre Admin Portal (CAP) and Access Arrangements Online (AAO) and the various tools available within The Exams Office Hub.

The above may not be an exhaustive list, but it includes the core areas related to the exams officer role - the management, administration and conducting of examinations and assessments.

If you are a new exams officer, your CPD should also consider acquiring knowledge of the following:

- the tasks which you will need to perform and how to perform these
- key dates and deadlines and areas for which you may not be responsible for but do have a role to play – such as access arrangements
- building an awareness and understanding of the various JCQ documents and how they are applied, and impact upon, the examination system within your centre.

How you acquire this information is for you to decide, but examples of this include:

- Attending training events*/sessions – this may include a face-to-face event such as The Exams Office Exam Changes training/JCQ and awarding body webinars/The Exams Office and NAEO conferences and virtual conferences
- Awarding body network meetings
- Personal research, including dedicated time to view the information contained on the JCQ and awarding body websites, read stakeholder updates and ensure awareness of the centre's exams-related policies
- Practical support and advice from peers (fellow exams officers)

*If you attend an exams-related training event, ensure that it is delivered by experts with the content verified by an awarding body. When booking your place at a training event, research who is delivering the training, their experience in the role, and whether their content has been checked by JCQ, an awarding body, or another reputable source, such as the National Association of Examinations Officers (NAEO)

Skills

As well as applying JCQ and awarding body regulations and requirements, a key aspect of the exams officer role is to have the ability to deal with a variety of situations, many of which involve liaising with centre staff, candidates and their parents/carers. To do this, exams officers should consider developing a range of skills, including:

- Time management
- People management
- Contingency planning/risk management
- Prioritising tasks/workload/multitasking
- Problem solving
- Communication skills
- Handling difficult conversations
- Presentation skills
- Effective decision making
- Managing deadlines
- Working collaboratively

It is recommended that you select one or two skills each year as part of your continuing professional development. Your senior leader/line manager should support you in acquiring these skills by allowing you to attend relevant training events, complete a course, shadow a member of staff who possess strength in this area, or allows you time to undertake research.

When deciding upon the skills which you should develop, you should consider issues which you may have previously struggled to deal with (for example, dealing with a difficult request/conversation with a member of staff, candidate or parent/carer) or a situation which you may encounter during the current academic year (for example, delivering a training session to your invigilators).

Maintaining and protecting the integrity and security of the examination system



The third area to address as part of your continuing professional development should focus upon activity which maintains the integrity and security of the examination system within your centre. This can be achieved by considering best practice as suggested by Ofqual, JCQ, the awarding bodies, the NAEO and The Exams Office.

The areas in which an exams officer may look to develop their knowledge to maintain the highest possible standards in relation to integrity and security include:

- Question paper security
- Cyber security
- Entries and registrations
- Candidate information/managing personal data
- Conducting examinations and assessments
- Collating and distributing results
- Malpractice
- Post-results services and appeals
- Issuing, retention and destruction of certificates

Practical advice on maintaining the integrity and security within your examination system can also be acquired from fellow exams officers who may be able to provide practical hints and tips to prevent a breach of integrity/security in the above areas. This peer support can be acquired in a variety of ways, including attendance at local network meetings and by engaging with other exams officers within your trust.

To confirm a commitment to protecting and maintaining the integrity and security of the examination system within their centre, exams officers should download and sign the NAEO *Values and Attributes statement*.

Exams Officer Professional Standards

The NAEO have designed the Exams Officer Professional Standards to provide a framework for exams officers to utilise as part of the annual CPD programme.

This free-to-access resource serves as a 'wrap around' for the three core areas within an exams officer's professional development and includes an annual certificate to evidence the successful completion of all targets.

Conclusion

When considering your CPD, an exams officer should focus upon the following five factors:

- Highlight areas which will improve your performance
- Set realistic targets – consider the amount of time you will have to achieve your targets
- Set targets based upon knowledge and understanding, skills and maintaining the integrity and security of the examination system within your centre
- Involve your senior leader/line manager in deciding on the activity which will support you in achieving your targets and/or monitoring and revising (if needed) targets
- Utilise the Exams Officer Professional Standards as a framework to set, monitor and recognise achievement against your CPD targets