

NAEO exams article – August 2026

The importance of reviewing the previous academic year

As we begin a new academic year, it is important not to overlook the value of reviewing the previous year from an exams perspective.

The National Association of Examinations Officers (NAEO) is therefore delighted to endorse the newly launched *Exam Year Review Tool* from The Exams Office, which is available to member centres through the Hub.

Why should I conduct a review of the previous academic year?

The NAEO particularly welcomes the introduction of this tool because it provides exams managers/officers with an opportunity to demonstrate the significant contribution they make to the successful delivery of examinations and assessments throughout the academic year.

An effective review can also help raise the profile and status of the exams function within the centre by highlighting the scale, complexity and importance of the exams manager/officer's role, as well as their pivotal contribution to maintaining the integrity, security and effective operation of the examination system.

The review can also provide a valuable basis for discussion with your line manager or senior leader. It can be used to reflect on the previous academic year, identify priorities for the year ahead and inform your CPD programme and professional development targets.

In particular, the review provides an opportunity to identify:

- **Achievements** – what went well and what you successfully delivered
- **Challenges** – the issues or difficulties encountered during the year
- **Areas of strength** – where processes, knowledge or practice were particularly effective
- **Areas for improvement** – where changes, additional support, training or development may be beneficial

Taking time to review the previous academic year can therefore help you recognise your achievements, demonstrate the value of your role, identify opportunities for improvement and establish clear priorities for the year ahead.

The Exam Year Review Tool

When reviewing the previous academic year, consider including quantitative and qualitative evidence that demonstrates the scale, complexity and impact of your role.

The Exams Office *Exam Year Review Tool* provides an opportunity for exams managers/officers to provide information on the following areas to emphasise the importance and scale of their role to senior leaders/heads of centres:

- **Staff and invigilator training:** Demonstrate your responsibility for ensuring that all staff involved in the management, administration and/or conduct of examinations and assessments received the training and support required to meet JCQ and awarding body requirements.

- **Exam policies and procedures:** Provide evidence that all required policies and procedures were in place, appropriately maintained and reviewed. This should include policies required to meet JCQ requirements, as well as centre-specific policies and procedures.
- **Qualifications summary:** Demonstrate the scale and complexity of your role by providing an overview of the qualifications administered and the number of candidate entries managed across the academic year.
- **Non-examination assessments:** Where you are involved in the administration of non-examination assessments, highlight the additional administrative demands these qualifications place on your role. This could include managing secure materials; distributing pre-release materials and set assignments, where applicable; notifying awarding organisations of consortium arrangements, where relevant; and submitting centre-assessed marks and samples of candidates' work for moderation or verification.
- **Candidate information:** Provide details of the number of candidates managed across each year group and examination series to demonstrate the volume of candidates for whom you are responsible.
- **Entries, registrations and fees:** Record the total number of entries and, where applicable, late and very late entries, amendments and withdrawals. Identify the subject areas in which entry, amendment or withdrawal deadlines were or were not met. This can highlight any additional and potentially avoidable costs incurred, as well as the additional work undertaken following the initial submission of entries. It can also demonstrate the financial impact of actions taken to reduce or minimise late entry fees.
- **Access arrangements:** Evidence the scale of your involvement in managing, implementing, facilitating and invigilating access arrangements across the centre.
- **Modified papers:** Highlight the impact of requesting, preparing and managing modified papers on your workload, particularly during the period leading up to each examination series.
- **Examination incidents and exceptional circumstances:** Record the incidents and exceptional circumstances that occurred during each examination series and their impact on staffing, rooms and other resources. This can demonstrate your ability to respond to, manage and successfully resolve a wide range of situations while maintaining the smooth and compliant delivery of examinations.
- **Inspections:** Summarise the outcomes of any inspections undertaken by JCQ and/or awarding bodies. Include any comments received, areas of good practice, identified strengths, recommendations for improvement and the actions you took in response.
- **Candidate malpractice:** Provide data on the total number of any reported malpractice incidents, broken down by type. This demonstrates the scale of your responsibility for managing and administering malpractice cases and ensuring that they are dealt with in accordance with JCQ requirements and regulatory procedures.
- **Special consideration:** Record the total number of any special consideration applications submitted across all examination series, broken down by application type.

This demonstrates the volume of applications managed and your role in ensuring that the special consideration process is administered in accordance with JCQ requirements.

- **Post-results services:** Record the number of post-results service requests submitted across all examination series. This demonstrates the scale of your responsibilities beyond the issue of examination results, including the ongoing management and administration of post-results processes.