

Five ways to demonstrate your value as an exams manager whilst supporting your head of centre/SLT in meeting JCQ requirements

One of the NAEO's key objectives is to give exams officers the option of having their role retitled **Exams Manager**. This is important not only for raising the profile and status of the profession, but also for accurately reflecting the responsibilities of those who manage, administer and conduct examinations and assessments within centres.

Exams officers considering how to make the case for changing their job title should make use of the resources available on the [NAEO website](#).

To help exams officers present their case to their head of centre or senior leadership team (SLT) with clear, practical evidence, this article highlights five actions they can take to demonstrate that their role aligns with that of an **Exams Manager**, while also supporting their head of centre/SLT in ensuring that they are compliant with JCQ regulations and awarding body requirements.

1. Job description

The NAEO is currently researching whether exams managers' and officers' job descriptions accurately reflect the role and its responsibilities.

Accurate job descriptions are important for two key reasons.

Firstly, they help new entrants understand what is expected of them, reducing the likelihood of them leaving the role within their first 12 months. Secondly, they provide a clear basis for ensuring that those responsible for managing, administering and conducting examinations are remunerated appropriately for their role and responsibilities.

All exams managers/officers should obtain a copy of their current job description and check that it accurately reflects the full scope of their role. Download the sample job description from the [NAEO website](#) and compare it with your own, identifying any duties or responsibilities that have been omitted.

Ensuring that your job description is accurate also helps your head of centre and SLT make informed decisions when recruiting to the role in the future, ensuring that the job requirements reflect the actual demands and responsibilities of the position.

Once your job description has been updated, use it as evidence to support discussions about whether your job title should be changed to Exams Manager and whether your salary appropriately reflects the responsibilities and demands of your role.

2. Utilise your expertise to keep your head of centre/SLT informed

One of the most effective ways to raise the profile and status of your role is to support your head of centre and SLT in meeting their responsibilities for ensuring compliance with JCQ regulations and awarding body requirements.

Establish a system for providing your head of centre and SLT with regular, concise updates on key examination-related matters. This could include:

- **JCQ changes and updates** – Provide a summary or presentation of key regulatory changes and their implications for your centre. Make use of resources from The Exams Office, including links to live streams and recordings of training events, and highlight sections containing information relevant to senior leaders.
- **Centre-specific actions** – Recommend practical actions to implement regulatory changes within your centre, ensuring compliance while also supporting candidates and centre staff.
- **Training for senior leaders** – Encourage senior leaders to undertake online training by providing access to online training and assessments provided by The Exams Office and [The Learning and Skills Office](#) to develop their understanding of the examination system and JCQ requirements.
- **Regular examination updates** – Provide a regular summary of the latest examination-related information, drawing on the *News and Notifications* area of The Exams Office Hub and its monthly member updates.
- **Evidence of compliance** – Keep senior leaders informed about compliance-related activities, such as staff training, policy reviews and updates, JCQ inspection feedback, malpractice cases and special consideration applications.

By providing regular, evidence-based updates, you can demonstrate the breadth and importance of your role while ensuring that your head of centre and SLT have the information they need to fulfil their responsibilities.

3. Demonstrate the scale and impact of your role

It is important that your head of centre and SLT understand the scale of the examination-related activity for which you are responsible throughout the academic year.

Use the [Exams Year Review Tool](#) within The Exams Office Hub to create a report that evidences your achievements, identifies opportunities for improvement, and establishes clear priorities and targets for the year ahead.

A well-prepared summary report not only demonstrates the scale and complexity of your role but also highlights the areas for which you have responsibility and the risks you manage through your knowledge, skills and diligence.

Your report should highlight areas where you have significant responsibility or involvement, including:

- Staff and invigilator training
- Examination policies which have been created, reviewed or updated
- Qualifications
- Candidates
- Entries and registrations

- Access arrangements – the number of arrangements administered and the number of candidates granted these arrangements
- Modified papers – the number ordered/administered
- Examination time – incidents and exceptional circumstances
- Inspections and their outcomes
- Candidate malpractice – the number of any reported instances
- Special consideration – the number of applications administered
- Post-results services – the number of requests and any improved outcomes

Where appropriate, include evidence of the work you undertake and the impact it has on the centre. For example, when reporting on **entries and registrations**, demonstrate that your responsibility extends beyond managing the examination budget. Effective examination management includes ensuring accurate and timely entries and taking action to minimise or eliminate late and very late entry fees, which may not have been accounted for in the centre's budget. JCQ regulations state that 'failing to adhere to awarding organisation key dates and deadlines relating to the delivery of examinations and assessments (such as those relating to the return of scripts, reporting of internal assessment marks/grades, making entries/claims and Head of Centre Declarations)' is defined as maladministration.

This approach helps your head of centre and SLT understand not only **what you do**, but also the expertise, responsibility and risk management involved in your role.

4. Benchmark your role and responsibilities

To ensure that your role is recognised and rewarded appropriately, it is important to benchmark your responsibilities against comparable roles within your centre and, where possible, against exams manager roles in other centres.

Identifying the key performance indicators, responsibilities and skills required of an exams manager can also help your head of centre and SLT establish a more structured approach to training, performance management and future recruitment.

Use the information in the NAEO March 2026 article, [Why you should be known as an exams manager and not an exams officer](#), to:

- Identify the key responsibilities associated with your role
- Highlight the skills and expertise you demonstrate in carrying out those responsibilities
- Compare the scope and level of your role with comparable roles within your centre

Compare your role with other management roles

Ask to see the job descriptions for comparable management roles within your centre, such as:

- Finance Manager
- Bursar
- Business Manager
- Office Manager
- Premises Manager
- ICT Manager

Consider whether these roles have responsibilities similar to those you undertake, including:

- Possessing detailed technical and specialist knowledge
- Managing complex processes, such as results and post-results services, a summer exam series, as well as operational and regulatory risks
- Managing, leading and coordinating teams and staff, including invigilators, premises staff, reception staff and IT technicians
- Contributing to contingency and succession planning
- Advising and supporting the head of centre and SLT to ensure regulatory compliance
- Liaising extensively with internal and external stakeholders
- Undertaking mandatory annual training to maintain professional standards, security and compliance

You can also use the presentation from the 2026 National Exams Manager/Officer Conference, [Exams Officer vs Exams Manager](#), which outlines the responsibilities that should be considered when reviewing the role and deciding whether the title Exams Manager more accurately reflects its scope and responsibilities.

Benchmarking your role in this way can support future recruitment by ensuring that the job description accurately reflects the position. It can also help establish clearer career pathways, identify professional development opportunities and support discussions about appropriate remuneration in recognition of your knowledge, skills, experience and responsibilities.

5. Develop and evidence your professional skills

Managing, administering and conducting examinations and assessments requires a broad range of professional skills. Developing and evidencing these skills can help demonstrate the breadth and complexity of the exams manager role.

You should complete the free-to-access CPD training and assessments provided by [The Learning and Skills Office](#) to develop the skills required to perform the role effectively, including:

- Time management
- People management
- Risk management and contingency planning
- Prioritising and managing competing workloads
- Problem-solving
- Communication
- Managing difficult conversations
- Presentation skills
- Decision-making
- Meeting deadlines
- Collaborative working

Keep evidence of your training and achievement and record practical examples of how you apply these skills in your role. For example:

- **Time management** – Planning and coordinating tasks across multiple examination series (exam cycles) to ensure that awarding body deadlines are met
- **People management** – Recruiting, training, managing and evaluating invigilators
- **Risk management and contingency planning** – Preparing for unexpected events, minimising disruption and contributing to the centre's examination-related contingency and succession planning
- **Problem-solving** – Responding calmly and effectively to unexpected challenges during an exam session or exam day
- **Communication** – Communicating clear and accurate information to a wide range of stakeholders, including senior leaders, teaching staff, candidates and parents/carers
- **Managing difficult conversations** – Handling sensitive or challenging discussions professionally and empathetically, including situations where candidates or parents/carers seek concessions that cannot be permitted during an examination
- **Presentation skills** – Delivering invigilator training and candidate or staff briefings confidently and clearly
- **Decision-making** – Making informed decisions under pressure, such as responding when the wrong question paper has been issued because of incorrect entry information, or when dealing with an emergency in the examination room, such as an evacuation or medical incident
- **Deadline management** – Managing competing deadlines and ensuring that awarding body deadlines are met to minimise financial, operational and reputational risks and avoid adverse consequences for candidates
- **Collaborative working** – Building effective working relationships with colleagues across the centre, including senior leaders, pastoral and teaching staff, premises and reception staff, SEN staff and IT staff

Maintaining a record of your training, achievements and practical examples provides tangible evidence of the knowledge and skills you bring to the role. This evidence can support discussions with your head of centre and SLT about your responsibilities, professional development, job title and career progression.