

Produced on behalf of AQA, CCEA, OCR, Pearson and WJEC

Notice to Centres - question paper security

As the summer 2019 examination series is almost upon us, we wanted to let you know of an important change to the 'ICE' regulations as well as the escalation process for security incidents.

The 'second pair of eyes check'

Maintaining question paper security is fundamental to ensuring the integrity of examinations. We know that centres and exams office staff work hard to support the awarding bodies in maintaining question paper security.

Unfortunately, each year a small number of centres open one or more question paper packets on the wrong day. In most cases this error is identified before the question papers are taken to the designated exam room(s). However, in some cases, the error is not spotted until candidates have sat some or all of the paper. In all cases, even when spotted early, risk has been introduced to the examination system. The consequences of such mistakes can be very significant.

In order to reduce the risk of this happening, the JCQ awarding bodies introduced the 'second pair of eyes check' into the JCQ publication *Instructions for conducting examinations* ('ICE' booklet) (www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/ice---instructions-for-conducting-examinations).

Section 18.1 of the 'ICE' booklet states: *'To avoid potential breaches of security, care must be taken to ensure the correct question paper packets are opened. An additional member of centre staff, who can be an invigilator, must check the day, date, time, subject, unit/component and tier of entry, if appropriate, immediately before a question paper packet is opened.'* This is often referred to as the 'second pair of eyes check'.

For the **summer 2019 examination series** and each series thereafter, centres are required to ensure that records are kept of the 'second pair of eyes check'. The records **must** capture the following information:

- centre number and name;
- the date of the examination;
- awarding body, unit/component code;
- the names, signatures and roles of the two individuals who checked the question paper details before the packet was opened.

The records may be checked by a JCQ Centre Inspector and/or awarding body staff. They might be requested in the event of concerns being reported to an awarding body. The records **must** be retained until the deadline for reviews of marking has passed or until any appeal, malpractice or other results enquiry has been completed, whichever is later.

To support centres in meeting this requirement, the JCQ awarding bodies have developed a suggested template – <https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/ice---instructions-for-conducting-examinations/second-pair-of-eyes-check-form>

You are not required to use this form but may adapt or create your own for recording the 'second pair of eyes check'.

Breaches of security

On rare occasions, despite the best intentions of all parties, potential breaches of security can occur. Awarding bodies are experienced at dealing with these and will be able to provide you with appropriate guidance.

If a potential breach of security occurs where question papers have been given to candidates on the wrong day or in the wrong session, you **must**:

- ensure that all candidates remain in the exam room(s), under centre supervision;
- ensure that the incorrect question papers are collected from the candidates and not removed from the exam room(s);
- **immediately** contact the relevant awarding body for further instructions.

If your candidates or centre staff report concerns relating to a breach of security, you **must** inform the relevant awarding body immediately. Individuals can report such concerns anonymously to the awarding bodies whose breach of security investigation teams are experienced at receiving and processing confidential reports.

The awarding bodies can be contacted as follows:

- AQA - Telephone: 0161 958 3736
- CCEA - Telephone: (028) 9026 1215
- OCR - Telephone: 01223 553998
- Pearson - Telephone 0344 463 2535
- WJEC - Telephone 02920 265474

Please ensure that all exams office staff and invigilators are aware of how to deal with potential breaches of security.

Thank you for your continued assistance in managing the smooth running of examinations.