

JARGON BUSTER

Access Arrangements

Formerly known as 'special arrangements'. Pre-examination arrangements, such as the use of prompters or Braille papers, primarily based on history of need and provision, for which an application to an awarding body may be necessary.

Access Arrangements and Special Consideration

Published by JCQ each September and distributed to centres in autumn. Describes inter-board policies regarding access arrangements and special considerations. For use with GCE, VCE, GCSE, GNVQ, entry level certificates and key skills.

Accreditation

The process by which the regulatory authorities confirm that a qualification and associated specification conform to the relevant accreditation criteria.

Aggregation

The process whereby performances achieved on individual units are combined to give a grade for an award, qualification or certification. Also known as 'certification' and 'cashing-in'.

Aggregation Code

A four-character code that needs to be submitted by a centre to an awarding body to indicate that the marks for the separate elements of an assessment scheme should be combined to form a grade for an award, a qualification or certificate. Also known as 'cash-in code'.

ALS Manager

Additional learning support manager in a college or FE institution. A designated teacher responsible for the day-to-day operation of the centre's special educational needs (SEN) policy. A candidate is counted to be in receipt of ALS where direct support is provided over and above that which is normally provided in a standard learning programme, helping to achieve the learning goal. (See Access arrangements and Special consideration.)

Appeal

The process available to centres or private candidates who remain dissatisfied after the outcome of an enquiry about results. The internal appeals process consists of two stages. Stage 1 is a review of the case by a senior member of the awarding body's staff who has had no previous involvement with the case. Stage 2 involves the case being presented to the appeals panel convened by the awarding body. The external appeals process is available to centres or private candidates who remain dissatisfied after the outcome of a Stage 2 appeal to the awarding body. (See EAR.)

AQA

The Assessment and Qualifications Alliance. An awarding body.

Assessment

The process by which evidence of candidate attainment is evaluated against assessment criteria, including mark schemes, to provide the evidence for an award.

ATS

Access to scripts. A process whereby scripts can be seen by candidates and/or teaching staff, either as

photocopies or originals, after they have been marked. Available via post-results service.

Authentication

Confirmation that work has been produced solely by the candidate on whose behalf it is being submitted. Authentication is a mandatory requirement for coursework/portfolio submissions. An authentication form is provided by awarding bodies for declaring this and should accompany coursework sent to moderators.

The process by which an awarding body uses evidence from assessment to determine the award that each candidate's performance merits.

Awarding Body

An organisation accredited by a regulatory authority to develop qualifications, set examinations and award certificates, subject to criteria laid down by the regulator.

BMAT

BioMedical Admissions Test. A university admissions test used as an additional means of assessing an applicant's potential for studying medical and veterinary courses. It tests scientific aptitude and is administered by UCLES on behalf of Oxford, Cambridge, University College London, Bristol and the Royal Veterinary College. BMAT is taken in early November.

BTEC

The Business and Technology Education Council. A brand used mainly for vocational qualifications.

Candidate record form/sheet

The form that records the coursework for a candidate and that accompanies the coursework when it is sent to a moderator. The authentication form is also sent at the same time.

Carried forward marks

Marks awarded for a component or unit in one examination series and carried forward to another series to be used for an award.

Most centre-assessed component/unit or externally assessed coursework/oral marks may be carried forward to a subsequent examination series following the subject award and within a 12-month period.

Cash-in code

A code for cashing-in, ie. turning a set of individual results into an award, grade or certificate. Also known as 'aggregation code' or 'certification entry'.

Cashing-in

The term used to describe the process by which candidates claim the results of units or modules, which aggregate to a recognised qualification (eg. AS level) but could also be used as units, which are part of a larger qualification (A level).

Centre

School, college, establishment or institution approved and registered by an awarding body for the entry of candidates to its assessments and for the conduct of those assessments.

Centre Number

The five-digit number allocated to all approved centres by the National Centre Number register (NCN

register). Forms the first five characters of a unique candidate identifier (UCI).

Certificate

The official document issued by an awarding body to confirm the achievement of results in an examination series. A certificate is unique and remains the property of the body and is often protected by security features to guard against fraud.

Certification

The process whereby performances achieved on individual units or modules are combined to give a GCE, VCE, GCSE, GNVQ or Entry Level Certificate grade. Also known as 'aggregation' and 'cashing-in'.

Certification Code

Four-character code that signals to an awarding body that a candidate wishes to claim an award or certificate at the end of a modular or unitised assessment scheme.

Certification entry

An entry code that instructs an awarding body to aggregate units and award a grade and a certificate for a qualification. Also known as 'cash-in code' or 'aggregation code'.

CMIS

Computerised management information system. A centre's computer system that is used to manage candidate information, entries and timetables, for example SIMS, Phoenix Gold.

Code of Practice

Document issued by the regulatory authorities that determines the policy and procedures of an awarding body. The awarding bodies are regulated by its criteria.

Component

An assessable part of a specification that is not certificated as a separate entity, for example a unit may comprise two separately assessed components such as a written paper and a practical.

Coursework/Portfolio

Tasks undertaken by candidates according to the requirements of a prescribed component of a qualification specification. Normally marked by the candidate's own teacher according to the awarding bodies' criteria. This work is then standardised within the centre and then standardised by the awarding bodies.

Coursework/Portfolio internal standardisation meeting

A meeting to ensure that teachers within a centre or group of centres apply the same standards in assessing their candidates' work.

If a coursework/portfolio internal standardisation meeting is arranged by an awarding body, attendance by at least one teacher from a centre may be a mandatory requirement.

DfES

The Department for Education and Skills. The government department responsible for education and lifelong learning in England.

EAB

The Examinations Appeals Board. An independent body set up in 1999. The EAB is the final stage of the enquiries and appeals process, the earlier stages being carried out by the awarding bodies responsible for the assessment in question. An appeal to the EAB must be made in writing by the head of centre.

EAR

Enquiries about results. First stage of the enquiries and appeals process that allows for clerical checks, re-marks and re-moderations. Available via the post-results services governed by JCQ regulations.

Edexcel

An awarding body incorporating BTEC and London Examinations.

ELC

Entry level certificate. Formerly known as the 'Certificate of Achievement'. An award designed for those candidates who are not yet ready for GCSE and other NQF level qualifications. There are three stages of achievement, broadly in line with national curriculum levels 1-3.

Enhanced award

A term used by some awarding bodies to mean an adjustment made to the terminal grade where a timetabled component was missed through acceptable absence in a terminal series and where the minimum requirements have been met.

An application for an enhanced award must be accompanied by appropriate medical evidence that the candidate was unfit to take the paper. (See Special consideration.)

Enquiry about results

A process by which an awarding body may be asked to check one or more steps leading to an awarding decision.

Entry code

Usually a four-character code used to make entries for examinations. May have additional characters to identify a particular option or type of assessment. May be numeric or alphanumeric.

Entry deadlines

Dates by which entries must be made for examination series. Later entries will be accepted, but only at an extra charge.

Exam series

The period in which examinations are taken, usually June for GCE AS/A2 and June or November for GCSE.

Exam session

The period – morning or afternoon – in which an examination takes place. Each session is usually of not more than three hours' duration.

Exams office

Refers to the office run by a team of exams staff.

External assessment

Tasks set or defined by the awarding body, taken under specified conditions (which must include details of

supervision and duration) and assessed by the awarding body.

Extra time candidates

Candidates who have been awarded extra time for examinations based on evidence of their specific learning difficulties.

Centres may award up to 25 per cent extra time without reference to the awarding bodies but must have the evidence to hand when visited by a JCQ inspector. Applications for more than 25 per cent extra time must be made in advance to the awarding bodies. (See Access arrangements)

Final timetable

Timetable for examinations issued by an awarding body after all amendments have been agreed.

GCE

The General Certificate of Education. This qualification is aimed at post-16 candidates but there are no age restrictions on entry. It is subdivided into two sections, each normally comprising three units and each commonly delivered in one year: the Advanced Subsidiary (AS) and the A2. The AS is a qualification in its own right. The full A level is an aggregation of the AS and A2 sections.

GCSE

The General Certificate of Secondary Education. Examinations designed for key stage 4 candidates.

Grade

A point on a scale of performance used to record achievement within a qualification (for example, grade A* indicates the highest GCSE achievement on a scale running from A* to G).

Guided learning hours

The average amount of contact time that a centre would typically need to commit to ensure the achievement of a qualification. These are agreed by the awarding bodies in consultation with the regulator and are used, for example by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC), in part to allocate funding.

HAT

History Aptitude Test. Oxford University admissions test for selection of candidates for all degree courses involving history. Taken in early November.

Head of centre

The head of centre is the most senior member of an education/ training organisation, usually the headteacher or principal of a school/college.

The head of centre is responsible for ensuring the integrity of the administration and conduct of awarding body examinations, though in practice this responsibility is delegated to the exams officer.

Head of Subject

The usual point of contact between Exams Officers and a particular subject department/faculty. A member of that department/faculty may be in charge of a particular qualification type, such as GCE or GCSE.

Head of Year

Head of Year (pastoral managers, year coordinator, head of house) The Head of Year is responsible for the social welfare of the pupils within their year group or house. They will manage their team of form tutors

who deal with pupil attendance and welfare.

HoD/HoF

Head of Department/Faculty. The usual point of contact for communications between Exams Officers and subject departments/ faculties, though there may be a nominated member of the department/faculty who is in charge of a particular qualification type (for example GCE, GCSE, GNVQ, VCE).

Instructions for conducting examinations

Instructions drawn up by the JCQ in order to rationalise procedures for the conduct of examinations in examination centres. Reissued in September every year, the most up-to-date version should be in use.

Internal assessment

A form of assessment that does not meet the definition of external assessment for a general or vocationally related qualification or the definition of independent assessment for an occupational qualification.

Internal standardisation

Process carried out by teachers in relation to internally-assessed work to ensure that all candidates are judged against the same standards, across different assessors and teaching groups. A mandatory requirement.

Invigilator

Person charged with ensuring that an external examination is conducted in accordance with the JCQ Instructions for conducting examinations.

JCQ

The Joint Council for Qualifications. Includes AQA, CCEA, Edexcel, OCR and WJEC.

Key skills

A suite of six national qualifications: Application of Number, Communication, Information and Communication Technology, Working with Others, Improving Own Learning and Performance and Problem Solving at levels 1, 2, 3 and 4 of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF).

Key stages

The national curriculum is organised on the basis of five key stages. The key stages apply to pupils in the following age ranges: foundation stage: under-5s; stage 1: 5-7; stage 2: 7-11; stage 3: 11-14; and stage 4: 14-16.

Level

Qualifications accredited by QCA are assigned recognised levels from 1–8 based on the levels of the national qualifications framework (NQF) (i.e. an A level is accredited at level 3 on the NQF). All qualifications assigned the same level are broadly comparable with each other (see www.qca.org.uk/493.html for more information).

Linear examination

An examination in which all examination components are taken in one examination series.

LNAT

Law National Admissions Test. A uniform test to be taken by all candidates applying to do law at eight

English universities. Designed to provide an assessment of a candidate's potential for law degree courses. Taken in early November. Participating universities: Birmingham, Bristol, Cambridge, Durham, East Anglia, Nottingham, Oxford and University College London.

LSC

Learning and Skills Council. Responsible for funding and planning education and training for over-16-year-olds in England.

Malpractice

The infringement by candidates, administrators or teachers of the regulations governing the conduct of external examinations. Must be reported to an awarding body and may lead to a candidate being disqualified from one or more examinations or to a centre being deregistered.

MIS

Management information systems. MIS is a formalised computer information system that can integrate data from various sources to provide the information necessary for decision-making at management level.

Moderation

The process by which internal assessment is monitored by an awarding body to ensure that it is reliable, fair and consistent with required standards. Usually done by sampling a centre's coursework/portfolios across the range of candidates and teaching staff. May lead to an adjustment to a centre's coursework/portfolio marks.

Notices to centres

Issued by JCQ to inform centres of key information regarding dates and procedures common to all the awarding bodies. Issued in September. These may also be issued by awarding bodies.

NQF

National Qualifications Framework. The framework for qualifications available in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Designed to organise and ensure the quality of general, vocational and occupational qualifications. From September 2004, a nine-level framework including entry level.

OCR

Oxford, Cambridge and RSA Examinations. An awarding body.

Ofsted

The Office for Standards in Education. Headed by the Office of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools in England.

Portfolio

A portfolio is a collection of internally assessed work that a candidate completes. A unit portfolio refers to the work required to satisfy the assessment requirements for an individual unit. A full portfolio includes all the internally assessed work required to complete the qualification. (See Coursework and Internal standardisation.)

Post-results services

Services provided by awarding bodies following JCQ requirements for enquiring about results (clerical checks, re-marks and re-moderations), access to scripts, etc.

Prompter

A responsible adult who may sit beside the candidate in order to keep his or her attention on the task in hand.

Provisional timetable

Timetable issued by an awarding body to inform centres and candidates of likely examination dates. Usually issued at least 12 months in advance of the series and designed to enable centres to plan and comment on any problems that may arise from it.

Qualification

A certificate of achievement or competence specifying the awarding body, qualification type and title.

Qualification category

A group of qualifications with broadly similar purposes, for example vocational qualifications, academic qualifications.

Qualification type

A group of qualifications with distinctive structural characteristics, for example GCE, GCSE, GNVQ.

Reader

A responsible adult who reads the questions to the candidate.

Re-mark EAR

Service 2 EAR during which a candidate's script is clerically checked and then re-marked by a senior examiner. Marks may stay the same, go up or go down.

Re-moderation EAR

Service 3 EAR during which a centre's coursework submission is re-moderated. Re-moderated marks may stay the same, go up or go down. Candidates' subject grades may only be confirmed or raised but a lowered mark may be taken forward for future certification.

Scribe

A person who writes down what the candidate dictates when the candidate is unable to write. Permission is required from an awarding body in advance, though it can be given at short notice for unexpected occurrences. Also known as an 'amanuensis'.

Series

A group of examinations in the same range, for example GCE, GCSE, with a common closing date for entries. The series is defined with a series year, code and name. Also known as an 'examination series'.

Session

A period in a day in which an examination may take place, ie. am or pm. Each session is usually of not more than three hours' duration.

SEN candidates

Special educational needs candidates. Candidates who have a record of specific learning difficulties and whose learning is assisted by a special educational needs department. Such candidates may need access

arrangements and/or special consideration.

SENCO

Special educational needs coordinator. A designated teacher responsible for the day-to-day operation of the school's special educational needs (SEN) policy. SENCOs manage the learning provision of pupils and candidates with SEN, or those who need the assistance of a special educational needs department.

Special consideration

Consideration given to candidates who have experienced difficulties close to or during examinations. Applications for special consideration must be made to the relevant awarding body within seven days of the last paper in a subject being taken.

Specification

The complete description – including optional and mandatory aspects – of the content, assessment arrangements and performance requirements for a qualification. A subject specification forms the basis of a course leading to an award or certificate. Formerly known as a 'syllabus'.

Specification code

A four-digit code that identifies a specification.

Statement of entry

A printed statement for each individual candidate showing centre information, candidate number and/or UCI, name, gender, date of birth, subject entries and the session of the written papers for an examination series. Should be checked by the candidate.

Statement of results

A summary of all the candidates' results at a centre for an examination series.

Terminal examination

An examination component taken by a candidate on completion of a course that is set and marked externally.

Tier (GCSE)

A level of entry at GCSE that offers a restricted range of grades. Adjacent tiers for a given specification have overlapping grades. Where a specification has tiers there are normally two, one that assesses grades A* to D (higher tier) and one that assesses grades C to G (foundation).

In mathematics there are three tiers: higher tier (grades A* to C), intermediate tier (grades B to E) and foundation tier (grades D to G).

Timetable clash

Term used to describe timetabling two or more examinations in different subjects in the same session. Can often be resolved without reference to the awarding body but an application may be required. (See JCQ Instructions for conducting examinations.)

Transcript

A transcript is a copy of a candidate's script made after the examination has taken place and without the participation of the candidate. Used where a candidate's handwriting is illegible or so difficult to read that it would be beneficial for an examiner to refer to a transcript of the candidate's work for clarification.

UCI

Unique candidate identifier. Unique number allocated to a candidate by a centre that must be supplied when entering for units or certification. A 13-character identifier which can be generated by the CMIS and usually consists of the centre number, a year reference number, the candidate number and an alphabetical check digit, for example 251380019999G.

UCIs are essential for processing candidates' entries if they have transferred from another centre where they have already taken examinations.

UMS

Uniform mark scale. A scale that converts raw modular examination marks into a common (uniform) scale to use in the modular or unitised assessment system. An inter-board agreed scale.

Unit

The smallest part of a qualification for which results can be issued. A unit may comprise separately assessed components.

Unit code

Usually a four-character code identifying a unit entry. Also known as 'entry code' or 'module code'.

Weighting

The contribution that an examination component or other defined part of a scheme of assessment makes to the overall assessment.

WJEC

Welsh Joint Education Committee/Cyd-Bwyllgor Addysg Cymru. An awarding body, regulated by ACCAC in Wales, QCA in England and CCEA in Northern Ireland.

