



The Network

Your Exams Officer newsletter

Note from the Editor David Sands

Welcome to the first Autumn edition of The Network, our quarterly newsletter for Exams Officers. We want the Network to contain information supplied by you and about you, the exams officer community. I hope that you have enjoyed a well-earned break over the summer and that the August results days ran smoothly for you this year.

Please do get in touch if you would like to contribute to the Network or to let us know what you would like us to include in future editions.



David Sands – Head of Account Services

New Beginnings

Changes to Account Services

This year we are launching a new service for exams officers, and we are confident that you will like the changes we are making. You now have a named contact, your Account Specialist, for all of your administrative enquiries made by letter, email or telephone. If your account specialist does not know the answer to your enquiry, they will find out the answer and get back to you.

The only reason that we are making this change is that you, our customers, have been asking for a named contact for all of your queries, rather than having to contact a number of different people or teams depending on the nature of your enquiries. I am confident that the relationship you develop with your account specialist will be a great source of support and reassurance to you when you contact us with a query.

Look out for a postcard, introducing your account specialist, which you will receive during October.

David Sands.





GCSE Reform

Ofqual have announced that from September 2012 all GCSEs will be linear, meaning that examinations are taken at the end of the course.

This will affect the way that you enter and administer your GCSEs, so to support you through these changes we have put together some useful information and guidance [here](#).

If you have any further queries regarding how these reforms will affect you, contact us at serviceoperations@pearson.com and we will be happy to help.

BTEC Next Generation Firsts

BTEC First Awards in Applications of Science, Art and Design, Business, Engineering, Health and Social Care, Information and Creative Technology, Performing Arts, Principles in Applied Science, Sport are accredited for first teaching September 2012. Certificate and Extended Certificates for Health and Social Care and Information and Creative Technology are also accredited; all other sectors are being reviewed by Ofqual.

BTEC First Award in Travel and Tourism is now accredited for first teaching September 2013. BTEC First Awards in Construction, CPLD, Creative Digital Media, Hospitality and Music are being reviewed by Ofqual.

You will receive Auto Approval on Edexcel Online if you already have active registrations on equivalent QCF subjects.

For the latest news on accreditation and advice on which existing BTEC Level 2 Firsts and next generation BTEC Firsts count toward headline performance table measures for schools in England, see our [online guide](#).



The Exams Officer Q&A

The Network will contain a regular feature where we focus on an exams officer to get to know more about them, how they work and how they spend their spare time. We would love to hear from you if you are interested in being interviewed for this feature. Please email TheNetwork@pearson.com to let us know of your interest and for the chance to receive £25 of Love2Shop vouchers.

In this edition we are pleased to meet our first interviewee: Helen Tozer, exams officer at The Cornwall College Group.



Exams Officer Helen Tozer

The Network: How long have you worked as an exams officer?

Helen: 12 months

The Network: What does a typical day involve?

Helen: Registrations, exam timetabling and booking, tutor and curriculum area manager queries (e.g. registration processes, course fees, AB approval processes, course requirements), processing access arrangements, claiming for qualifications, processing certificates (scanning them onto our certificate viewer system, achieving them on our MIS, logging certs, scanning tutor results lists), processing withdrawals/transfers, managing other exams staff/invigilators, attending meetings (internal and external EO), keeping up to date with policies (e.g. JCQ, awarding bodies, corporate), keeping up to date with exams software needs, ordering exam papers and ensuring postal pick-up. Maintaining excellent working relationships!

The Network: What is your favourite thing about the role?

Helen: It is diverse through the academic year, so it is varied and constantly evolving. There is always something new to learn.

The Network: What is the biggest challenge that exams officers face? Can you think of a specific challenging incident? How was it resolved?

Helen: For me, it is getting to grips with new processes and/or changes in procedure. All the awarding bodies have different paperwork and online systems for registrations, exam booking, claiming, and query processes. These can be known to change so once you have just got used to something, you have to learn how to do it another way. Also, from time to time, incorrect or conflicting information can be given by telephone customer support persons at the awarding bodies – I endeavour to stay on top of correct processes by asking other exams officers, the Department of education centre support officer, or the awarding body regional centre support person. The DoE inevitably changes educational goals posts, so keeping up with policy and regulations can sometimes be a challenge.

The Network: Can you think of any striking moments when giving out results to students?

Helen: Online exam results can often be given immediately - several students shout with relief and happiness when you tell them, especially if it's after a few times of trying. It's great to see them so pleased at their own achievement.

The Network: What would be your 'top tip' to other exams officers?

Helen: Keep up good working relationships, being approachable and open with others makes your job a lot easier.

The Network: If you could have any job in the world (other than exams officer!) what would you do?

Helen: I would be the next David Attenborough.

The Network: Do you have any advice for new Exam Officers?

Helen: Have a constantly evolving to-do list, write everything down, don't be afraid to ask questions from the awarding bodies even if its several times a day. Meet the Department of Education centre support officer as they are a mine of information. Maintain a good relationship with other exams officers in your area, attend EO meetings as they give you info and contact you wouldn't otherwise get. And don't panic! Someone will always know the answer.

The Network: How do you relax?

Helen: Going to the gym, yoga, going out with friends, theatre/film, walking on the coast, and going to bingo!!

The Network: Where would you most like to be right now?

Helen: New Zealand

The Network: What would your super power be?

Helen: Immortality

The Network: Tell us something your colleagues don't know about you?

Helen: I can do the rubik cube in about 4 minutes.

The Network: If you could be the boss of Edexcel for a day what changes would you make?

Helen: Look at the registration and claiming procedure for functional skills, it is confusing. The levels need to be separated for registrations. Searching for results can also be over complicated and time consuming on the website.

The Network: You're right we have received feedback on the claiming process for Functional Skills especially for the Speaking and Listening unit which I can say we have now solved with the Speaking and Listening bulk claim tool on Edexcel Online. We would be happy to talk through any further issues you may have with the registration process as you have mentioned. We will be in touch!

Thank you very much for your time and for being our first interviewee for The Network. Vouchers are on the way!

Don't forget to submit your interest to get your voice heard by dropping us an email at TheNetwork@pearson.com Interviewees will receive £25 of Love2Shop vouchers!

Did you know?

In all we have to mark student answers to over 2 million exam questions in just 10 weeks!





Free Exams Officer Training Events for Autumn 2012

The Exams Officer face-to-face training events are well under way and have been going very well. These free training events will tell you all you need to know about administering your Edexcel Academic and BTEC qualifications and are also great opportunities to network with other exams officers.

If you offer any of our BTEC qualifications we still have two BTEC training events left which you can attend in Bristol or Coventry on the 15th and 16th October 2012.

We also deliver these free training events online. For more information on how to book on the BTEC face-to-face events or the online training click [here](#).

If you were not able to make any Autumn 2012 training events not to worry you we will be offering them again in Spring 2013.

Here is some of the feedback we have already received from the Exams Officer training events we have held this autumn..

“Informative, friendly staff and useful information”

“Excellent materials, layouts and supportiveness.”

“Very clear and easy to follow”

“Good pace and very structured”

Exams Officer Communities



Our online Exams Officer Communities are a great place to network with other exams officers, share ideas and start discussions about things that are important to you.

The forums enable you to speak to like-minded people about current issues in the exams officer world and there are plenty of useful resources available, too.

If you want to get involved, sign in [here](#) and get posting!



BTEC specialist and short course qualifications | Managing Examinations (L4)

Professional development and training for exams officers

Register now with the Examination Officers' Association for one of our BTEC courses designed with you in mind!

There are three levels to choose from, each designed to equip you with all of the skills you need for the administration and management of examinations.

- Level 2: Administering Exams (Introduction)
- Level 3: Administering Examinations (Advanced)
- Level 4: Examinations Management (Professional)



Did you know?

Edexcel trains and standardises about **25,000** examiners, moderators, verifiers and markers every year.



Tell us what you think...

We want this page to be a platform for you to share your thoughts on matters that you want to talk about. It will be like a wall where you can post your thoughts, ideas and experiences. Send us a few lines about whatever is on your mind. Even better, send us a joke, a quote, a poem or tell us an amusing story about your experience as an exams officer.

Just send in your contribution by clicking on your preferred topic below and we will publish the most interesting and inspiring in our next edition.

Here are a few ideas to get you thinking...

- What is the most challenging aspect of the Exams Officer role?
- How important is it that students in schools are able to take vocational courses?
- What do you think about the latest GCSE reforms?
- Do you think students have it easier or harder in this day and age?
- What is the funniest thing that has happened to you in your career?
- Tell us how your Results day went...
- Tell us a joke, a quote a poem...

Meet your Account Specialists

Following David Sands's introduction to the changes happening in Customer Services, The Network thought it would be very fitting to dedicate a section to introducing one of our Account Specialists. If you haven't already, you'll soon be receiving a postcard introducing your Account Specialist – your named contact in Edexcel. The Network will interview an Account Specialist every issue to give you the chance to get to know some of the people helping with all of your queries.



Zoe Coffey,
Account Specialist
based in Manchester

The Network: Hi Zoe, how are you?

Zoe: Fantastic, thank you for asking! I've just had some post- results training to help deal with any queries my centres may have, so feeling very knowledgeable.

The Network: Firstly tell us a bit about yourself and your career at Edexcel?

Zoe: I started with Edexcel in February 2009 as a Customer Service Specialist, mainly answering questions about GCSE and GCE. Over the years I've had training on all the other qualifications we offer, and now I'm an Account Specialist mostly for London- based centres. I've recently returned from my maternity leave, and it's been great to have a break from my motherly duties! I'd say I'm more confident now, I think once you've had a baby you feel like you can do anything.

The Network: What are your thoughts on the new Account Specialist Role?

Zoe: It's a much more satisfying role, with the opportunity to really get stuck in with customer queries. I'm looking forward to visiting my centres too, and not just for the tea and biscuits, honest!

The Network: Are you enjoying developing relationships with a group of centres, rather than dealing with queries from 'anywhere'?

Zoe: Yes, definitely. Although I've never really been phased by all those leftfield queries coming in from anyone and everyone. Ask me anything!

The Network: What's the best thing about working at Edexcel / Pearson?

Zoe: Great colleagues. There have been lots of changes and I like the fact that everyone is just getting their head down and getting on with it, and taking responsibility for looking after our centres.

The Network: Favourite Olympic event?

Zoe: Argh it's so hard to choose! To watch, it's gymnastics, and to do would be badminton and swimming.

The Network: Boris Johnson or Michael Johnson?

Zoe: Do you really have to ask? Michael Johnson, that voice, the cardigans!!! Swoon!

Did you know?

We write 22,000 different exam questions and set over 700 different papers- it takes up to 18 months to write each paper!

Tell us what you see...

We have asked for your thoughts and now we asking for what you see. In each quarterly edition we will publish a single word for you to reflect on. We want you to submit photos that you feel could be associated with this word and in doing so create a visual representation of the world of exam officers.



All you have to do is reflect on the given word and submit a photo that you feel best represents the word. Send the photo as an attachment to TheNetwork@pearson.com plus a sentence or two about what inspired you to take your photo. We will be awarding a £25 Love2shop voucher for the winning entry, as judged by our panel. The deadline for entries is 15th November 2012.

This edition's word is...

QUALIFIED

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The E.O. Super-Duo

