

Examiner Working Group Press Release

New Awards to recognise exceptional commitment from A level and GCSE examiners

Exam boards and headteacher associations launch online hub for examiners as part of a series of commitments to attract and retain more teachers into the profession

On Monday 23rd January, the working group of headteachers' associations, Joint Council for Qualifications and major exam boards release the findings of their research into how to attract and retain teachers as A level and GCSE examiners. The group is also announcing two immediate steps:

- Launching **two new award schemes** to recognise exceptional individual examiners, and schools' and colleges' contributions to the profession
- Launching **a new website** for teachers and school leaders interested in learning more about becoming an examiner and sharing best practice

Each summer 34,000 examiners (the majority of whom are practising teachers), set and mark 8 million qualifications for 2 million 15-19 years olds in England, Northern Ireland and Wales. Reforms to qualifications and an expected rise in student numbers means that exam boards will need to continue to recruit and retain high-quality examiners to meet this increasing demand. Current issues around teacher shortages and teacher workloads will also continue to add pressure to the system.

The working group has brought together exam boards with school and college leaders to identify how these challenges can be met and how to best promote the benefits of examining to teachers, schools and colleges. Today they launch a report considering the successes and challenges of the current system, making recommendations for the future.

Schools and colleges represented by the headteachers' associations have committed to do more to support and encourage their teachers to consider examining, for example by:

- Encouraging schools to ensure that they recognise examining as valuable Continuing Professional Development (CPD)
- Encouraging schools and colleges to consider providing practical support for teachers who are examiners
- Encouraging schools to ensure that examiners' expertise is used to greatest effect across a whole subject department or an entire institution

As well as the new Awards scheme and website, the Exam boards represented on the group have committed to:

- Further focus examiner training
- Develop communities of best practice
- Formally recognise the importance of examining and the commitment of those who do it
- Improve the perception of examining as a professional endeavour
- Simplify fee structures for examiners and improve clarity around job titles

It was also recommended that a number of steps can be taken by others in the system:

- The Chartered College of Teaching should seek to become a centre of excellence in assessment
- Providers of Initial Teacher Training should ensure that the importance of assessment is properly recognised in their curricula

Dale Bassett, Chair of the Working Group on Building Examiner Capacity and Culture, said:

“Our current system of exam marking works: results are delivered on time, over 99% of students get the right result, the regulator believes that people can have confidence in the system and it has proved resilient under pressure. But exam boards can always do more to improve and to pre-emptively address the challenges presented by qualification reform.

“The actions set out in this report should serve as the start of a renewed commitment by all to play our part in building the capacity for the future and ensuring that young people continue to receive grades that are a fair and accurate reflection of their work. These solutions will only work if examination bodies, schools and teachers work together to implement them.”

Notes to Editors

The working group comprises of school and college leaders’ associations, ASCL, HMC, NAHT, the major examination boards, AQA, CCEA, City and Guilds, OCR, Pearson and WJEC, and the Joint Council for Qualifications