

NOTICE TO CENTRES

FAO: Headteacher, Examinations Officer, Applied/Vocational Subject Coordinator,
Teachers in charge of GCE in Applied Subjects [OCR]

Date: January 2006

To facilitate communication it is permissible for this Notice to be duplicated as required for internal distribution within Centres.

Dear Colleague,

GCE in Applied Subjects for first examination in 2006 Moderation of Internally Assessed Units by an Accreditation procedure

As you may already be aware following a JCQ Notice to Centres despatched last summer, OCR will be introducing an accreditation procedure for the moderation of internally assessed units for the new suite of GCE in Applied Subjects. Coming into effect from this January session onwards, this procedure will give Centres the opportunity to gain accreditation for designated Programme Leaders by demonstrating that the marking of internally assessed units is accurate and consistent.

This procedure provides a number of key advantages for Centres:

- Centres where a member of staff has been accredited for a particular specification will not be required to submit work for moderation following the formal submission of marks [unless they are selected to submit samples as part of OCR's quality assurance procedure].
- Programme Leaders and subject teachers will be able to further demonstrate professional competence by gaining accredited status.
- Where work would normally need to be exhibited for moderation purposes [eg Art & Design], gaining accreditation will absolve Centres of the requirement formally to display the work. This would allow teachers to focus on exhibitions for specifications where moderation is still required and put on their own displays of Applied GCE work unconfined by moderation requirements.
- There is the potential to reduce Centre costs, both financial and in terms of time, of submitting bulky portfolio samples to OCR-appointed external moderators.
- Accredited Centres will retain full access to coursework consultancy or network meeting support.

OCR's accreditation procedure will have a number of key features:

- Accreditation will be offered for both AS and A2 internally assessed units, with AS eligibility being available from January 2006 and A2 from the January 2007 session.
- Accreditation will be available across all of OCR's specifications in GCE in Applied subject areas.
- The lifespan of accreditation, once achieved, will be for the remainder of that academic year and the two subsequent years.
- Eligible Centres will be offered the opportunity of 'opting in' but will not face compulsion to do so.

- Accreditation eligibility is achieved through demonstrating marking competence at each level through participation in normal moderation sessions. The minimum entry requirement to be eligible for accreditation at each level is two internally assessed units with 5 or more candidates submitting marks. For all such units, and any other units submitted for moderation at the same time and at the same level, the Centre must achieve the appropriate accuracy by not having marks adjusted by the external moderator.
- It should be noted that in each session a number of accredited Centres will be randomly selected for formal moderation as part of OCR's quality assurance procedures. Accredited Centres should expect to be sampled at least once in every three-year cycle in each specification and at each level for which they are accredited.

The Role and Responsibilities of Centres

Should the Head of Centre accept the offer, accreditation will be granted to a named Programme Leader who will be responsible for internal standardisation for a particular specification and who must confirm that work has been accurately marked to the assessment criteria laid down in the specification documentation and exemplar material. It is assumed that the Programme Leader will be personally involved in the assessment of candidates' work in the appropriate specification.

It is expected that Programme Leaders would be released by Heads of Centre to attend any specific INSET regarding this role offered by OCR and would be willing to access on-line training packages, if provided.

Heads of Centre must agree to confirm at the start of each academic year that the Programme Leader is still in post and retains the same responsibilities with respect to that particular specification. Should these circumstances change at any point, the Head of Centre must undertake to inform OCR as soon as possible. This will necessitate the Centre seeking re-accreditation at the next moderation session by submitting unit samples in the normal way.

It is the Centre's continuing responsibility, whether accredited or not, to submit internally standardised marks to OCR by the published deadline for each examination session – 10 January and 15 May respectively.

What next?

No further action on the part of Centres is required at this point. Eligibility for accreditation in each relevant OCR specification will be automatically assessed by the Board and accreditation will be offered if the key requirements outlined above are met.

Further information will be available through a variety of channels including specification-specific INSET, OCR's website and e-communities, and relevant OCR general publications to Centres.

If you wish to comment on or require further clarification regarding this exciting opportunity, phone OCR's Customer Contact Centre on 01223 553998 or e-mail general.qualifications@ocr.org.uk in the first instance.