



## Cross board messaging on the Practical Endorsement for GCE sciences

### The 2019 to 2021 Practical Endorsement Monitoring Process

The third cycle of monitoring visits for the Practical Endorsement will start in the autumn term in 2019, and run until the summer term of 2021.

In this cycle, centres should expect to be monitored, at least, for the science subject that has yet to be monitored. There will be some exceptions to this, as follows:

- (a) Large centres (those centres that have more than 140 entries at A level for biology **or** chemistry **or** physics) will continue to be monitored for all three subjects
- (b) Centres where there have been concerns about the delivery or assessment of the practical endorsement, or are in maladministration, should also expect a monitoring visit for each science
- (c) For centres that offer one or two science A levels only, the monitoring visit will be to whichever science falls next in the cycle. **Centres in this position should alert their AO.**
- (d) Some centres where there have been concerns about the delivery or assessment of the practical endorsement may already have received visits in all sciences. In these cases, AOs will arrange for first visit to be in the science subject next in the cycle.

The awarding organisations (AOs) will jointly plan monitoring visits for the next cycle using information about centre entries for A levels in biology, chemistry and physics from the summer 2019 series. **It is the responsibility of a centre that is new, or is switching exam boards, or that only offers one or two science A levels to let AOs know, so that an appropriate visit can be scheduled.**

The first contact with a centre will be from the AO appropriate to the science subject selected for a visit. This will be the AO which that centre used for candidate entries in summer 2019. This contact will typically be to the Exams Officer (or other nominated school contact). **If the centre no longer offers this subject, or is in the process of changing AO in this subject, or offers the subject for an exam route for which the practical endorsement does not apply (e.g. International A level) the centre must inform the AO as soon as possible. This will allow time for a new subject allocation to be made, without running the risk of a late visit taking place.**

### New centres

Any centre that has started to deliver any of the sciences, including geology, at GCE A level and will enter candidates for the first time in June 2020 or June 2021 must notify the AO with whom they intend to make entries as soon as they start teaching. This allows the AO to schedule a monitoring visit before the first cohort sits their exams. Contact details are as follows:

AQA	<a href="mailto:MonitoringReports2019@aqa.org.uk">MonitoringReports2019@aqa.org.uk</a>
Pearson Edexcel	<a href="mailto:GCE.Sciences@pearson.com">GCE.Sciences@pearson.com</a>
Eduqas	<a href="mailto:science@eduqas.co.uk">science@eduqas.co.uk</a>
OCR	<a href="mailto:Science@OCR.org.uk">Science@OCR.org.uk</a>

Although AOs work hard try to ensure that new centres receive the appropriate visit, **centres who present late for monitoring may not have a visit in time to award the Endorsement.**

## Switching exam boards

AOs use information from entry data from summer 2019 to allocate centres to a Monitor from the appropriate AO. If your centre has switched AO in a science subject, you should notify your old and new AOs when the switch to teaching the new specification takes place. Do check, when your monitor makes contact, that they are for the correct AO for the specification you are now following. If you are in the process of switching AOs, and teach different AO specifications in Year 12 and Year 13, your monitoring visit would usually involve your out-going AO and your final Year 13 cohort.

## Training

It is still a requirement that Lead Teachers for each subject should have undertaken the training provided by their AO. This training is free of charge and may be accessed as follows:

AQA	<a href="#">AQA Lead teacher online training</a>
Pearson (Edexcel)	Send your name and centre number to <a href="mailto:alevelscienceupdates@pearson.com">alevelscienceupdates@pearson.com</a> Instructions are sent by auto-reply (NB this mail box is not monitored)
Eduqas	<a href="https://varndean.adobeconnect.com/pr3ueleeqis5/?pro">https://varndean.adobeconnect.com/pr3ueleeqis5/?pro</a> <a href="#">to=true</a>
OCR	<a href="http://practicalendorsement.ocr.org.uk/">http://practicalendorsement.ocr.org.uk/</a>

Lead Teachers are expected to cascade this training throughout each department. Many of the on-line resources detailed above are accessible to all teachers, so may also be used as departmental CPD. Lead Teachers continuing in post do not have to repeat the training, but will want to ensure that any staff who are new to their centre are fully aware of the requirements of the Practical Endorsement.

## Standardisation within centres

It is expected that there is communication and training within centres, so that the outcomes for learners are consistent, across teaching sets. This is in line with the Centre Declaration Form that your Head Teacher will sign and submit at the end of the course. Whilst the opportunity for standardisation is not the same as with internally-marked non-examined assessments, there should be dialogue and the possibility for observations of other staff to ensure the comparability of outcomes. The common requirements of the Practical Endorsement allow centres to assure that the criteria for the Common Practical Assessment Criteria (CPAC) are being implemented and recorded in all situations, including those where A levels from different AOs are being delivered by one centre.

## Candidate and centre records

Candidate practical work (e.g. lab books) records relating to CPAC assessment are required to be available in centres during a monitoring visit so that a full contemporaneous record can be viewed. There is no further requirement for centres to retain candidate work, especially as candidates may wish to have access to these for revision. Similarly, there is no requirement for centre records of CPAC assessment to be retained once decisions have been communicated to AOs in May each year.

Resit candidates will often carry forward a result but centres may want to retain a record of the CPAC tracking spreadsheet in case of re-sit.

## **Consortium arrangements**

Centres are advised that consortium arrangements only apply where teaching and assessment for the Practical Endorsement is shared between centres for a subject i.e. students from more than one centre are taught together and assessed together by staff at only one centre in the group.

A consortium arrangement does not exist if centres simply share common resources, but teaching and assessment takes place at each site. For example, federations or Academy Trusts frequently have shared resources and training, but students are taught and assessed separately at each school in the group. Centres will be asked to provide evidence of a consortium arrangement when a Monitor first contacts the centre. For this purpose, centres need to state clearly how the consortium works e.g. in all subjects or just one.

Where a consortium arrangement exists, the Monitoring Visit will take place at the centre where the teaching and assessment takes place, in order to quality assure the assessment decisions made by teachers. Only one centre in the consortium will be visited per subject, to avoid a number of identical monitoring experiences (same students/teachers/subject).

Consortium arrangements need to be active. A consortium arrangement does not exist if, for example, a private tuition college makes an arrangement on paper, but students do not actually engage in practical work at the host centre.

## **Informal consortium arrangements**

As well as consortium arrangements, which tend to cover centres in the same locality, there are some examples where students registered at one centre are sent to a different host centre, often some distance away, to undertake practical work through an intensive course. Such arrangements form a type of consortium and the same guidance as given in the previous paragraph applies.

Centres who wish to take advantage of this sort of consortium are advised that AOs will require these arrangements to be actively in use, and not simply of a theoretical nature.

## **Tutorial colleges, private entries and home schooling**

Provision of the Practical Endorsement and associated practical activities is a regulatory requirement. Any centre which offers A level tuition must provide opportunities for learners to demonstrate their practical competency through a minimum of twelve practical activities (to fulfil the requirements of the Practical Endorsement). This will be confirmed through a monitoring visit, which will also confirm that the centre is assessing learners correctly against the CPAC. Centres who do not make this provision are in breach of the regulations for the reformed GCE Advanced level science qualifications. This breach is subject to a series of sanctions from the Regulator such as those for malpractice or maladministration, which will be instigated by the AO conducting monitoring of the centre, and communicated with all other AOs.

The exception to the situation above is that a tutorial college may accept candidates who are resitting the A level, as long as these candidates already have a certificated result for the Practical Endorsement from an earlier attempt. In this situation, the candidate may carry-forward the result of the Practical Endorsement. Note that there is a separate entry code for candidates who are re-sitting under these circumstances.

Private candidates (who may be home schooled, self-taught or receiving private tuition) can be entered for examinations at a centre even if they are not enrolled as a learner there. As the Practical Endorsement is an essential part of the course, a centre accepting a private candidate should be in a position to offer private candidates the opportunity to complete the Practical Endorsement, even if the candidate may not accept this offer. Nevertheless the centre must have practical provision available

and must have passed a monitoring visit. Private candidates should note that host centres may levy an additional charge for access to the Practical Endorsement.

### **Resit candidates**

Resit candidates, who have already met the requirements for the practical endorsement and have a certificated result for this component, may carry this result forward. These candidates do not need to repeat practical activities, even if they did not gain a Pass originally, but may choose to do so, alongside the teaching and learning in a subject, to increase their knowledge and understanding for the written examinations.

Some students may have completed, and been assessed on, the practical components of the specification but subsequently withdrawn from the external assessments in the May/June examination window. These candidates will not, therefore, have a certificated result for the practical endorsement to carry forward. If they wish to complete the specification at a later date, they would need to be entered as first-time candidate for the endorsement. Further practical work and assessment of CPAC competency may be necessary to ensure that these candidates demonstrate a routine and consistent pass standard in all areas of Appendix 5c.

JCQ maintain a national record of candidates who have been certificated for the practical endorsement, which may be accessed by an AO to assure that a candidate is eligible for the carry forward of their practical endorsement result. This will include candidates who achieve an unclassified U grade in the exam and who will not have the outcome of the practical endorsement certificated.

### **Geology**

The reformed geology specifications, for teaching from September 2017, have finished their first cycle of visits. For the second cycle, from September 2019 to May 2021, all centres offering geology will be monitored for the Geology Practical Endorsement by the AO whose specification they follow.

Monitoring visits will follow the same process as that for biology, chemistry and physics. Centres will receive a visit from the AO with whom they made entries in the May / June 2019 examination series.

If you have already changed, or are in the process of changing exam board, then please let you AO know that they can plan appropriate monitoring visits. Details are:

Eduqas	<a href="mailto:geology@edugas.co.uk">geology@edugas.co.uk</a>
OCR	<a href="mailto:Science@OCR.org.uk">Science@OCR.org.uk</a>

Should a centre fail a monitoring visit for geology, the monitoring AO will notify the other AOs for information, but this will not result in any additional monitoring visits for biology, chemistry or physics.