

News Release

Number 516
Date 30th May 2003

Stewart House
32 Russell Square
London WC1B 5DN

New web-based service to modernise exam system

Media Affairs Office
Telephone 020 7758 5508
Fax 020 7758 6995
www.edexcel.org.uk

Awarding body Edexcel has launched a pioneering web-based service designed to upgrade the administration of major examinations. Called "Edexcel Online" the new, free service is aimed at easing the burden of exam officers, who face the increasingly complex responsibility for dealing with exam entries and student record tracking in schools, colleges and other centres.

John Kerr, Edexcel's chief executive, said: "We are very excited by this development. First of all it will transform and modernise our entry service, but it also has enormous potential for the future, when digital storage of student records, progress, portfolios and learning pathways can be held and updated."

Inaccurate entry information and late entries, along with so-called pirate entries – exam scripts submitted for students not on the exam board's records – are a significant problem for awarding bodies, particularly in the high pressure summer exam series, when some 40 million marks are awarded – which means 40 million marks held on the system against student names. Last year Edexcel alone had to deal with about half a million late entries and forty thousand pirate entries. This summer would appear to see little improvement.

The new system may go some way to eliminate these errors by making it easier and more transparent for exams officers and the board to monitor changes to student entries. Having signed on and received a password, an exam officer may use the service to securely access and view key data stored on Edexcel's own internal records. Initially, this includes existing submitted entries, entry transactions, students' results records, certification status and confirmation of receipt of entry forms and EDI files.

The qualification scope at first covers GCEs, GCSEs, GNVQs and VCEs, but will be extended to cover the rest of Edexcel's qualifications range including BTECs, NVQs and Key Skills, later in the year. All centres will be able to use Edexcel Online for the 2003 summer exam series.

According to John Kerr, the online initiative will make a major contribution towards facilitating the exam officers' tasks and help run the exam system more effectively by reducing the opportunity for error.

"We have worked closely with exams officers to see what they wanted and have piloted this slowly to ensure we get it right. This will seriously empower the exam officers, so that they can control and eventually manipulate the information they are submitting. This will eliminate a

source of major irritation between centres and us which is the continual exchange of complex information, often leading to misunderstandings," he explained.

In the near future Edexcel intends to enhance and expand the service to include online entry and amendment functions, the tracking of Enquiries About Results and the eligibility of students. The service will become more interactive, including providing automatic email notifications of key events, and facilities to report coursework outcomes.

Ends.

Edexcel is the leading provider of academic and vocational qualifications, formed as a result of the merger between BTEC and London Examinations. Qualifications include GNVQs, NVQs, GCSE, A/S and A levels, and the Higher Nationals and other BTEC qualifications.

For further media information contact Stevie Pattison-Dick, Media Affairs Manager on 020 7758 5508 or 07721 020271 or stevie.pattison-dick@edexcel.org.uk or Michael Turner, Media and Public Affairs Officer, on 020 7758 5509 or michael.turner@edexcel.org.uk