

News story: Consultation into strengthening teacher-examiner safeguards

Ofqual has today (14 March 2018) set out how it intends to strengthen its regulation of awarding organisations' involvement of teachers in the development of confidential assessment materials. Today's [consultation](#) reflects detailed analysis of existing processes and extensive discussions with awarding organisations, examiners, teachers, students and parents. The new regime, if confirmed, will extend to all regulated qualifications.

The proposals include:

- explicitly setting out in our rules steps awarding organisations must take to help protect the integrity of the assessments to which teachers have contributed; and
- publishing further statutory guidance to help awarding organisations understand the factors and approaches they should consider when deciding how to comply with the rules.

Consistent with these proposals, teachers will continue to be able to write assessments and have access to confidential materials. However, awarding organisations must maintain up to date records of all conflicts of interest relating to teachers who have seen confidential assessment materials. And they must review their safeguards such that they are appropriate and proportionate to:

- effectively mitigate the risks of using teachers in the development of assessment materials, for example by making sure no teacher knows whether or when any assessments they have developed will be used;
- support teachers to do the right thing, through appropriate training and contractual obligations;
- detect malpractice, for example by sampling the work of teachers who have written exam papers to look for any unusual patterns of response.

We are also stressing that the way in which awarding organisations have regard to our guidance will be taken into account when deciding on the nature and scale of any regulatory action should a breach of confidentiality occur.

Timing

The exam boards who deliver GCSEs, AS and A levels and other qualifications used as equivalents, such as the Pre-U have already written the exams for summer 2018. Safeguards for 2018 will, therefore, need to focus on deterring and detecting malpractice and on supporting teachers. These awarding organisations have published a joint statement setting out their intentions for this summer. Subject to the outcome of the consultation, and where necessary, we expect that all awarding organisations will have made

significant progress in terms of the safeguards they employ by summer 2019, and have fully revised their approaches by 2020. This transition period is necessary to avoid introducing an unacceptable degree of risk to the delivery of safe qualifications.

Sally Collier said:

“Almost universally, respondents to our call for evidence emphasised the importance of retaining a strong link between teaching and examining, and the benefit it brings to assessment design. Our rules on confidentiality and malpractice are already demanding. The proposals we have put forward today build on them and provide greater clarity about our expectations and the implications for awarding organisations if information about an assessment is disclosed by a teacher who has been involved in its development. There is no one-size-fits-all solution to the challenge of maintaining confidentiality. However, the events of summer 2017 showed how public confidence in assessments and, in turn, qualifications, can be damaged if confidential information is wrongly used. It is essential that those who take or otherwise rely on qualifications have upmost confidence in the outcomes.”

Background

- In September 2017 we announced we would review:
- the risks and benefits of the long-established practice whereby some teachers who write or contribute to exam papers also teach the qualification; and
- the effectiveness of the safeguards used to reduce the risk of a teacher who has this dual role disclosing or otherwise misusing information about confidential assessments.

We are publishing a suite of research and analysis today that provides context and support to our consultation proposals.

[They include:](#)

- a summary of our call for evidence into the benefits and risks of teachers being involved in the development of qualifications that they teach
- interviews with teacher-examiners about the risks and benefits of their involvement in developing assessment materials
- a review of safeguards used to prevent disclosure of confidential material in countries outside England
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- interviews with students studying for AS/A levels, and parents of secondary school aged children, to understand their views on teacher involvement in writing exams
- research into the sources of, and ways of identifying anomalous responses in test scores.

ENDS

[Press release: Highways England wants to hear your views](#)

The organisation is using the mobile visitor centre for the second year following 2017's successful trial to engage with the public, and will give road users and local residents the chance to speak to staff that will be coming to their area, starting with Essex and Suffolk throughout March.

The minibus facility will open out into a larger exhibition, which will feature displays and presentations about road works in the area and road safety.

Highways England Capital Delivery Team Leader, Aran Nugent, said:

We are aware that the work we do has an impact on our road users, and so Highways England is eager to better engage with drivers and local residents so we can hear their comments, allay their concerns and answer any questions they may come to us with.

This mobile exhibition offers us an excellent opportunity to better get into those communities we will be working alongside, so we can speak with people to explain the work we are doing and the benefits it will bring for them, their town and this region. Last year we had a good response with people coming along to learn about roadworks and share their views, so we hope that interest will continue and grow further in 2018.

In the last financial year (2017/18), Highways England spent £61.4 million on essential maintenance across the East, including £3.5 million on new noise barriers on the M40 in Buckinghamshire, £3.1 million for a new roundabout with Harwich Road and the A120 near Wix, and a £3.5 million repair to the accident damaged Saddlebow Interchange on the A47 near King's Lynn.

This essential maintenance work is in addition to the longer term investment work, including new dual carriageways on several sections of the A47, widening the A12 in Essex, the £1.5 billion Cambridge to Huntingdon A14 upgrade, and the £4.4 – £6.2 billion Lower Thames Crossing.

Now drivers will be able to speak to Highways England staff about this whole range of road works that are happening soon and further in the future, with £34.4 million committed to maintaining the East's roads over the next year.

In the next financial year (2018/19), Highways England's maintenance work will include £2.75 million on resurfacing the A14 between Newmarket and Bury St Edmunds, £2.5 million on bridge repairs on the M1, A14 and A1, £2.25

million on resurfacing the A12, and a further £2.24 million on replacing digital message signs on the same road. Our work in the next year will include laying enough tarmac to fill 20 football pitches, enough white lining to fill an Olympic swimming pool, and enough cats' eyes to reflect enough light collectively to be seen from space.

In March, the exhibition is set to visit:

- Boreham House on Thursday 15 and the town's Springfield Sainsbury's on Friday 16
- Chelmsford city centre (outside Barclays) on Monday 19 and Tuesday 20
- Lion Walk, Colchester town centre on Wednesday 21, Thursday 22
- Braintree Freeport on Friday 23
- Great Bromley Village Hall on Monday 26
- Bricklayer's Arms, Little Bentley on Tuesday 27
- Bypass Nurseries, Capel St Mary, on Wednesday 28
- Ipswich County Council (Russell Road) on Thursday 29

The exhibition will then head to Hertfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Bedfordshire in April, before covering the A47 with Norfolk and Peterborough in May.

These dates may be subject to change, and interested visitors are asked to stay up to date with the latest information by following @HighwaysEast on Twitter.

Members of the public are invited to attend the mobile visitor centre to speak with Highways England staff, which will include traffic officers at some of the exhibitions.

General enquiries

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

Media enquiries

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.

[Press release: Change of Her Majesty's Ambassador to Iran](#)

Change of Her Majesty's Ambassador to Iran – GOV.UK

Rob Macaire has been appointed Her Majesty's Ambassador to Iran in succession to Nicholas Hopton.



Mr Rob Macaire CMG has been appointed Her Majesty's Ambassador to the Islamic Republic of Iran in succession to Mr Nicholas Hopton who will be transferring to another Diplomatic Service appointment. Mr Macaire will take up his appointment in April 2018.

Commenting on the appointment, Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson said:

Iran has an important role to play in the Middle East region, but it is essential that it does so in a constructive way – something I made clear during my visit to Tehran in December last year. The Iran deal, signed in 2015, was a huge diplomatic success. The product of years of patient and persistent diplomacy that extinguished the threat of a nuclear-armed Iran.

In that vein, I am pleased that Rob will be applying his wealth of international experience to leading the government's engagement in Tehran. We face challenges – including the ongoing cases of British dual-nationals detained in Iran – and areas for potential collaboration. I look forward to working with him across these areas.

Mr Macaire said:

I am honoured to be appointed the new British Ambassador to Iran. The UK's continued engagement with Iran is vital to our goal of making the Middle East region a safer and more stable place. I look forward to working with the Government of Iran and with international partners to preserve the nuclear deal and deepen our bilateral relationship, through constructive engagement on human rights, trade, and seeking political solutions to the conflicts in Yemen, Syria and elsewhere.

CURRICULUM VITAE

Full name: Robert Macaire CMG

Married to: Alice Macaire

Children: Two

2016 – present Language Training

2011 – 2016 BG Group plc. Director of Government/Public Affairs and Political Risk

2008 – 2011 Nairobi, British High Commissioner

2006 – 2008 FCO, Director, Consular Services

2004 – 2006 New Delhi, Political Counsellor

2002 – 2004 FCO, Head, Counter Terrorism Policy Department

1998 – 2002 Washington, First Secretary, Middle East and Counter-terrorism

1998 FCO, Head of Sierra Leone Unit, Africa Directorate

1997 –1998 FCO, Head of Southern Africa Section, Africa Directorate

1996 – 1997 FCO, Head of MEPP Section, Near East and North Africa Department

1995 – 1996 FCO, Head of Levant Section, Near East and North Africa Department

1991 – 1995 Bucharest, Second Secretary (Know How Fund)

1990 FCO, Falkland Islands Department

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Thank you for your feedback