

Standing Joint Committee for AQA

Standing Joint Committees provide a formal feedback mechanism for awarding organisations, reporting comments and concerns about exam papers/exam administration etc.

Each awarding organisation has a SJC. They are run by current and former teachers and many members have examining/awarding experience. The SJC is completely separate and independent from the awarding organisation that it represents.

Each year we produce a form on which teachers submit questions, queries and concerns. We ask for details such as your name, school, awarding organisation and specification. Most forms are available on Union websites, or if in difficulty a form can be requested via sjcommentform@btinternet.com and the whole process can be completed electronically.

When the forms are returned we:

- separate them into administration/subject comments
- put all comments together by level, subject and then paper or assessed component
- deal with administrative problems in a separate section as well as including them with the appropriate subject.

In this way, we ensure subject comments are ordered by paper and question number. All comments are treated as anonymous and we never give any personal details to the awarding organisations.

Next, a collator (usually a teacher with subject experience) puts the various comments together in a 'house style', subject by subject. Awarding organisations provide copies of the exam paper so we can link the comments to the correct paper and specification.

The collated comments are then sent to the awarding organisation. AQA comments, for example, are dealt with in early August and submitted to the awarding organisation towards the end of August. AQA admin responses are always available for discussion at the September SJC meeting. Subject responses take a little longer and when completed, are posted on e-AQA, AQA's secure extranet service.

Those of us involved in SJC firmly believe that we are doing a worthwhile and essential job for all teachers. If you would like to be involved as a collator or as an SJC member, please e-mail: Kevin Hewison at kevinhewison@btopenworld.com or contact your union representative.