The main exam boards are actively recruiting examiners for GCSE and AS/A2 Business Studies and Economics, whilst on-line marking is creating great debate in the media. So what are the key issues that you should know about becoming an Examiner?

latte investigates.

The official line
Each examination board publishes advice online about how to become an examiner. Here are a few key FAQs.

Why become an Examiner?
→ gain valuable insights into what Examiners are looking for from students
→ networking opportunities with other professionals
→ opportunity to feedback on the examination content and processes
→ great for the CV
→ earn extra money

Who can become an Examiner?
AQA ask that Examiners have more than three terms of recent and relevant teaching experience.
OCR prefer Examiners and Moderators to have 2-3 years of recent, relevant teaching experience. If potential Examiners have relevant subject-specific knowledge they too may be considered.
Edexcel are advertising for PGCE and NQTs as well as experienced Examiners.

What does an Examiner actually do?
Candidates’ examination scripts are sent directly to the Examiner’s home, or they are provided electronically if the scripts are to be marked online. Scripts are marked against a defined mark scheme formulated by a Principal Examiner. Scripts must not be marked in public places.

What time commitment is required of an Examiner?
Markers will usually be required to attend a one-day standardisation event soon after the examination date. They then have about three weeks to mark the allocated scripts. An average allocation (300-400 papers) should take between 40 and 50 hours to mark.
How much does an Examiner get paid?

**Edexcel** - In the case of both traditional and on-screen marking, fees are per script or item and are determined by the size of the paper. Examiners can expect to earn between £750 and £1000 per examination series. A standardisation meeting fee is also paid, plus expenses for travel and accommodation.

**AQA** – A fee of about £3.50 per script is quoted, plus a fee and travel expenses for attending the standardisation meeting. Moderators are paid per portfolio. Examples of earnings up to £2,000 are given on the AQA web site.

**OCR** – Teacher marking about 400 scripts will earn approximately £1000.

What support is given?

**OCR** - New Examiners will be given a one-day training course. Team Leaders work very closely with Examiners, monitoring and advising throughout the marking process.

**AQA** – New Examiners will be given a one-day training course. Team Leaders offer guidance at every stage of the marking/moderation process. AQA staff will help with any administrative issues.

**Edexcel** – Examiners receive one day of training and support materials. Team Leaders support examiners throughout the examining process.

Further Information

For general advice on becoming an examiner for any of the examination boards visit

[www.examinerrecruitment.org](http://www.examinerrecruitment.org)

**AQA** - Contact examine@aqa.org.uk or telephone 00 44 (0)1483 556056

**Edexcel** - E-mail aarecruitment@edexcel.org.uk

**OCR** - Contact examiner.recruitment@ocr.org.uk

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### Edexcel is recruiting Examiners for

**GCE Business Studies and Economics**

Join Edexcel, where education and technology come together.

This year over two million Edexcel qualifications have been gained by students, the highest total to date. We could not have achieved this without the 11,000-plus examiners and moderators who helped Edexcel deliver one of the most positive set of results yet, and we would like teachers to continue to play their part in making next year’s results even more successful.

Joining Edexcel’s Assessment Associate community offers an excellent opportunity to gain greater insight into the assessment of candidates as well as forming part of your continuous professional development. Whether you are marking traditionally or on-screen, our detailed standardisation programme ensures you are fully trained, as well as providing you with expert support throughout the marking period. If you are a current or newly qualified teacher, or PGCE student, this will enable you to enhance your expertise within the classroom and will assist you in preparing your students for their exams. We also depend upon the wealth of experience that recently retired teachers can provide and whichever stage of your teaching career you are at we are interested in hearing from you.

To find out more about our current vacancies and how to apply, as well as details regarding fees and benefits, please visit: [www.edexcel.org.uk/aa-recruitment](http://www.edexcel.org.uk/aa-recruitment)

Closing Date: 14th November 2007
Reference: LGCE2008
The voice of experience

latte surveyed Business Studies and Economics teachers who also act as Examiners. Their observations and remarks paint a picture of the benefits and rewards, together with the challenges and issues that examiners face.

AS & A2 Business – on-line marking

When I first became an examiner I attended an excellent all-day training session with the Principal Examiner. He went through how questions were set; what we could accept as answers; what benefit of doubt we could give and the levels of response marking structure. I attend the compulsory standardisation meeting every year before we mark each exam and that is excellent, as we are able to share professional views and opinions about what is acceptable as an answer.

Previously I have been sent between 325 - 450 exam papers from home & abroad each summer, and had just over 3 weeks to mark them. When the papers came directly to my house, I also had to factor in waiting for couriers or taking papers to the post office, and the time spent calling in 100 marks at a go. Most years I would allocate around 80+ hours over 3 weeks.

The volume of work has changed this year, as I now mark on-line. This is the first time I have been involved in online marking as an expert examiner (ie marking the “harder questions”). It takes some getting used to, and has both advantages and disadvantages.

Definite plus points include: Not having piles of scripts in the house; no chasing up late centres; adding up the total marks; double checking marks; calling in marks to someone in India on a very bad phone line at inconvenient times; organising couriers or taking the scripts to the post office - all this admin is now out of your hands.

Negative points: you never see an entire script so you cannot tell if a candidate has been developing their answers over the course of the paper.

In reality, online marking removes any subjectivity about the candidates as you are only seeing one question at a time - a student could lose 1 or 2 marks if they didn’t write much for that particular question. It was probably less demanding marking this way, paid less, but also less stressful.

The non-financial rewards from examining are great. I have really got to grips with the levels of response marking for a-level, which is completely different to GCSE & vocational assessments. I also pass on to my own students the importance of “a mark a minute” and completing/attempting all the questions. We do loads of exam practice answers now - I use an egg timer so the AS’s know just how long 2 minutes/ 6 minutes/ 9 minutes are, and what they can write in that time.

I think it has improved my teaching in that it gives me authority amongst my own students to speak on how gain the highest marks, but it won’t in itself help me gain a pay rise/new job/promotion.

Training and ongoing support

Q Were you offered training by the awarding body in how to mark the papers?

A All examiners attend a standardisation training day prior to marking. 30% felt that this was not enough to equip them for the more subjective areas of marking. 70% felt that coupled with the ongoing support from Chief Examiners and Team Leaders, they received adequate training.

"Once marking commenced I sent papers to be checked to ensure that my marking was up to scratch."

"When I first started, a number of years ago now, there was simply one day’s training. Switching exam boards later didn’t involve me in any extra training."

"The board have now moved to online marking and the training on this was noticeably less good."

Volume of work

Q Approximately how many exam papers or assignments are you asked to mark at each sitting?

A The average number of scripts is 250 per subject, with team leaders and experienced markers receiving up to 400 scripts and “backreading” 200-250 scripts from their team.
“I only marked a 100 scripts but I could have marked more.”
“Approx 750 1 hour scripts. I resigned as I had been lead to believe that my workload would be half that.”

Time commitment
Q. Approximately how much time do you commit to marking at each sitting?
A. The time commitment varies significantly between respondents, depending on the course and their examiner status. Most examiners spend 2-3 hours per day for a three week period, with senior examiners committing as much as 200 hours per sitting, averaging 8 minutes per script.

Challenges and Problems
Please describe the main challenges or problems that you experience as an examiner.
- “Illegible scripts, ambiguous answers and the time it takes out of your life as you juggle the day job”
- “Boredom and repetition of marking the same answers.”
- “Maintaining standards when some mark schemes are less than clear.”
- “The lack of subject officers with real subject knowledge and teaching experience”
- “The Post!”

Online marking
Q. Have you had any experience of the move towards online marking?
A. Under 30% of respondents had experience of online marking in Business Studies and Economics. Of these, only 40% reported a positive experience. There have been many teething troubles, the most widely reported being technology breakdowns, inadequate network support and the discomfort of being tied to a screen.
- “It is easier and quicker than paper marking.”
- “Good for consistency since each examiner marks a single question rather than the whole paper, but I find it monotonous to concentrate on a single question.”
- “No training was provided and the standardisation meeting took place using live scripts with no use of IT.”
- “It works for very short answers but is very difficult for extended prose, as you can’t annotate the script & keep track of marks.” I had to keep returning to the different pages to see if I had missed anything, you could only see one page at time so for essay questions this was a problem”

Non-financial rewards from examining
Q. What positive feedback can you offer from your marking experience?
A. The most overwhelming response to this question is that marking gives teachers an invaluable insight into exam technique, best practice teaching and curriculum testing.
- “It’s been excellent from the standpoint of CPD, my career development and giving advice & feedback to my own classes and colleagues.”
- “You learn what skills students struggle with (expressing complex ideas, using data effectively, not using stimulus materials) and can target support to your students. You also learn that there are a few tweaks that students can make to their exam technique to really boost their marks.”
- “Excellent when introducing assessment for learning into lessons”
- “Great insight into how marks are awarded.”
- “You can ‘steal’ good practice from other centres, e.g. on exam technique or the teaching of areas beyond the syllabus.”
- “I don’t know how anyone can teach the syllabus without seeing, in practice, how it is marked.”

Financial rewards
Q. Overall, is the remuneration from examining worth the level of work involved?
A. All respondents said that the money was not the reason they took up marking and that the rate of pay is very low for the time commitment.

As 86% of respondents answered that they would be applying to be an examiner again in 2008, the conclusion must be that the rewards outweigh the challenges and that business studies and economics teachers can benefit greatly from becoming an examiner.