

Centre Exams Manager (CEM)

Purpose of the Centre Exams Manager (CEM) role

The CEM is the main contact point between a centre and Cambridge English for all aspects of running exams, and with special emphasis on exam administration and security.

Their role is to:

- ensure a high standard of exam administration, customer service and compliance with regulations
- make sure staff are appropriately trained and that the centre has enough staff
- keep up to date with exam regulations and share information with colleagues
- ensure the centre's compliance with the terms of its centre agreement
- in some centres, the role may also include marketing

The CEM role can be busy and challenging, particularly in larger centres and during peak sessions. We recommend appointing someone who is highly organised and can stay calm when busy and when unexpected issues arise.

Selecting your CEM

When choosing your CEM, make sure they can meet the following requirements:

- complete professional and financial integrity, including compliance with national requirements for financial transactions
- knowledge and experience of Cambridge English exams or of running exams for other boards
- ability to deal effectively with unexpected situations and find suitable solutions
- ability to comply with regulations and maintain high standards
- great customer service skills and a focus on putting the customer at the heart of the business
- ability to communicate in English at a minimum B2 level of the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR).

We promote a policy of equality of opportunity. Within the requirements of local legislation, the role of CEM is open to any suitably qualified applicant who meets the requirements above and any residency requirements of the country where the centre is based.

You are responsible for carrying out reference checks and any other necessary checks (such as residency checks).

Time commitments

The time commitments of the role can vary depending on the number of entries and venue a centre has. In many cases, particularly at peak times of the year, it is a full time role that cannot be combined with other responsibilities.

Larger centres will have a team of exams staff with one key person nominated as the CME – all centre must have one named CEM.

At smaller centre with a lower level of entries the CEM can combine the role with other work, although around exam time they will need to focus on the delivery of the exams.

Key responsibilities of the role

Before the exam day:

- submit all entries by the deadline
- check materials when they are received and make sure they are stored securely
- distribute materials securely to venues
- prepare the exams team: invigilators, supervisors, Speaking Examiners, Team Leaders, etc. – make sure that they know where they need to be and at what time, and make sure they are trained. Plan some back-ups in case of last minute illness or cancellations
- arrange suitable venues
- check listening equipment to be sure it is fit for purpose
- contact candidates or schools with all the information they will need for their exam, including details of where the exam

room will be, what time they need to be there, what to bring with them, your mobile phone policy, etc.

On the exam day:

- be available to help with any last minute issues – this could mean being at a venue, or being available by phone to resolve any problems

After the exam day:

- return materials to us securely within the deadlines
- ensure candidate results and certificates are distributed promptly, that candidates are kept informed and that any queries are dealt with quickly

Ongoing:

- set up and maintain a network of Speaking Examiners (SE) and Team Leaders (TL) following the requirements given on the Support site. We recommend having a written contract with any SEs or TLs who are not part of your permanent staff, so that expectations on both sides are clear. Make sure you pay them promptly if they are paid separately for this work.
- make sure invoices from Cambridge are paid within the deadlines
- give update training once a year to all invigilators and supervisors
- read all communications from Cambridge English and take action where needed, and share the information with colleagues at your centre
- register your preparation centres and provide them with great customer service

Impact of the CEM role

It is essential that you appoint someone suitable as CEM as this role is key to making the exams a success. Successful exam sessions lead to satisfied customers, fewer complaints, fewer issues to resolve, and can help build the centre's reputation.

IF the CEM does not have the time, resources or skills for the role, it can lead to unhappy candidates, loss of reputation and, in some extreme cases, loss of your approval as a centre.

When choosing a CEM, make sure the person is given the time, budget and staffing needed to do the role successfully.

Challenges of the CEM role

The challenges can vary depending on the size of your centre, but they can include:

- managing teams of invigilators and supervisors across multiple locations on the same day
- dealing with complaints
- last minute issues with venues
- last minute issues with exam materials, listening equipment, etc.

Knowledge, experience and skills

Qualifications

- No specific qualifications are required. However, we recommend that you ask for administrative or business qualifications, and to decide which level of qualification you require (university level, for example)
- English language level – we require a minimum B2 level of the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR). We don't ask for a qualification, but for non-native English speakers we strongly recommend that you do.

Experience and skills

- strong organisational skills
- experience of meeting fixed deadlines
- people skills – both for dealing with colleagues and members of staff and for dealing with preparation centres and candidates
- customer service skills and empathy for the customer
- confidence using IT systems – for example, confident with accessing information online and using online processing systems
- team/people management skills
- experience of taking responsibility and good at problem solving
- open to collaborating closely with Cambridge English
- budget experience may be useful
- some experience of running exams is useful
- some knowledge of our exams is also useful.

Employment and remuneration of Centre Exams Managers

The centre is wholly responsible for the employment relationship and contract with the CEM and is also wholly responsible for all CEM costs and remuneration.

The formal/contractual employment of the person with the role of CEM is entirely between the centre and the individual involved.

If the CEM ceases to be employed by the centre, the centre must appoint a new CEM. The centre approval remains with the centre and the CEM cannot take this approval with them. In effect they would not be able to run the centre separately from the Authorised Centre.

Changing the Centre Exams Manager

Complete a *Change of Details Request* form on the Support site immediately if there is a new CEM. This means we can ensure that all updates and messages are sent to the correct contact.

Appointing a named CEM is a requirement under your centre agreement – please see your agreement for details of any consequences of not notifying us of a change of CEM. This can include suspending the centre's approval until we are satisfied that a CEM is in place.

If a CEM does not reply to communications promptly from Cambridge English or any Cambridge English representative, we reserve the right to suspend the centre's approval.

We also reserve the right to decline the change of CEM, or to terminate the approval of a centre (for example in cases of a change of ownership).

You must ensure that any change of CEM does not disadvantage candidates.

Training and support

We provide an induction and training programme for new CEMs – see the Support site for more information.