

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1) I will be marking on ePEN for the first time. Where can I find more information about this?

If you are an examiner marking on ePEN for the first time this series, you may find this presentation a useful introduction. Click [here](http://www1.edexcel.org.uk/epen/onscreen-marking.pps) (<http://www1.edexcel.org.uk/epen/onscreen-marking.pps>) to view.

2) Is ePEN easy to use?

Edexcel places great importance on understanding the way in which technological advances affect the work of our Assessment Associates. With this in mind, the 2006 and 2007 Edexcel Examiner Surveys focused heavily on attitudes to and experiences with the ePEN system. Results across both years revealed the following:

- “confident about using ePEN” - 97% of examiners questioned agreed or strongly agreed
- “received enough information to know how to use ePEN” - 91% agreed or strongly agreed
- “enough access to support when using ePEN” - 84% agreed or strongly agreed
- “I enjoy using ePEN” - 81% agreed or strongly agreed
- “marking with ePEN is easy” - 86.1% agreed or strongly agreed.

Although there will invariably be individuals for whom more traditional methods are preferable, we are confident that the majority of examiners are comfortable with, and will often prefer, using the ePEN system.

3) What is an *item*?

Items are approximately equivalent to individual candidate responses to questions on a traditional script. Your contract will have detailed how many items you have been allocated to mark. The term ‘items’ does not refer to whole scripts. For example, where a question is divided into three parts (a, b and c), this might entail three individual items. The number of items that you are allocated is calculated so as to be equivalent (in terms of time and effort) to a standard allocation of scripts on traditional units.

4) What activities does my contractual fee cover?

The figure stated next to ‘base payment for completed marking’ refers to your fees for the total number of items that you are allocated. It is not for a certain number of whole scripts. Furthermore this total allocation will be split across all items to which you are assigned. This allocation across items will be available on the ePEN dashboard once a proportion of scripts have been scanned. In order to be eligible for the contractual bonus, you must complete the allocation of each item by the contract completion date.

5) How was my contractual allocation calculated and is it the same as the other Examiners on my paper?

The overall allocation for each contract is calculated depending on the number of markers, entries and items. The number of allocated items is calculated so that every marker has an equal share of the initial workload. The system is able to control the number of items that each marker has access to, and the amount made available for each question is capped to ensure an even balance. A proportion of the available marking is held back in a bonus pool, in other words, is not assigned to a marker from the offset. These items become available to mark once you have finished your contractual allocation or at the contract completion date.

6) What do I get paid for additional marking beyond my contractual allocation?

The pay for any additional marking that you may complete is calculated based upon the individual item rate. The calculation of individual item rates takes place part way through the session and takes into consideration the standard allocation, the overall fee rate for that paper and the amount of time taken to mark each item. For any items completed above your initial allocation you will be paid the individual item rate plus 20%.

Please note that in order to receive payment at the additional item rate you will have to complete your contractual allocation for that particular paper. Each paper you are contracted for should be viewed as being autonomous. If you are contracted for two papers, A and B, you will have to complete your allocation for A in order to start earning the higher rate for that paper, and then complete your allocation for B in order to start earning the higher rate for this paper in addition.

7) My contractual allocation for this session is different to that in the previous session, yet the money is the same. Why?

The total number of items allocated is dependent upon certain variables, such as the layout of the question paper and the make up of individual items. We are confident that although the number of items may change from series to series, the time and effort required to mark your allocation, as well as the fees payable thereof, will be comparable to that of previous sessions.

8) How do you assess the suitability of specialist (graduate) markers?

Edexcel employs a strict recruitment process for all Assessment Associates recruited across all qualifications. In order to qualify as suitable, a potential specialist (graduate) marker must pass a stringent initial assessment, including an English test and an interview. They are also subject to the same rigorous monitoring throughout the marking process that any other examiner or moderator would be. As is the case with other AAs, it is unavoidable that there will always be examiners or markers who consequently do not meet the required standard. Any examiners or markers giving repeated cause for concern will be asked to stop marking, as is the standard procedure.

The policy of employing specialist (graduate) markers has been in effect for five series and we are constantly reviewing the manner in which items are categorised within this system. All item categorisations are made by the relevant Qualifications, Delivery and Awards Manager in liaison with the senior examining team. These categorisations then undergo further checks by an internal team to ensure their suitability. Our experiences may also dictate the designation of items for future series.

9) Why are the fees for online standardisation versus a traditional standardisation meeting different?

In the past, a full day meeting has involved great inconvenience for examiners, including travelling time and potentially nights away from home - the higher fee therefore reflected the fact that the examiner left home early in the morning and often returned home late into the evening. At the standardisation meeting a full day might be spent standardising all the items on the paper, even though markers may be marking only a proportion of the items on the paper. The Online Standardisation system is more convenient for markers and only requires preparation for the items that a marker will actually be marking. Each marker can work at their own pace, which is likely to be faster than the pace of a large meeting, so the process is quicker too. The fee reflects this convenience.

Glossary of Terms

Items	The term 'items' does not refer to whole scripts. Items are approximately equivalent to individual candidate responses to questions on a traditional script.
Type 1	This term refers to items that are classified as those that must be marked by an Examiner. On the ePEN dashboard, these are referred to as expert items.
Type 2	This term refers to items that are classified as those that can be marked by a Specialist Marker. On the ePEN dashboard, these are referred to as graduate items.
Contractual Allocation	The total number of individual items you have been contracted to mark. This allocation is further broken down on the ePEN dashboard to show your allocation for each of the items to which

	you have been assigned.
Base Pay	This contractual fee is the base rate paid for the completion of marking of all of the items assigned to you as part of your contractual allocation.
Bonus Pay	This contractual fee is paid where the contractual allocation across all items to which you are assigned is completed prior to or on the marking completion date.