**The Association of Electoral Administrators**

AEA Qualifications

**Certificate in Electoral Administration**

Candidate Information Pack

**October 2023**

**Introduction**

We offer the UK’s only professional qualification in electoral administration. A sound career platform, it is regarded as essential for most electoral administrator posts.

Delivering personal development and professional benefits, we offer a progressive qualification route from Foundation Course to Certificate to Diploma.

Our qualification also offers advantages to employers through staff improvement and raises standards and professionalism across the UK electoral community.

**Qualification format and rules**

The current qualification rules are available on [the qualifications page of our website](https://www.aea-elections.co.uk/training-qualifications/qualifications/).

Candidates must be AEA members when they register and remain so throughout the qualification process.

In **England and Wales**, to apply to register for the Certificate you must:

* be able to demonstrate three year’s relevant experience in both modules of the Certificate; or
* have completed all modules of the AEA Foundation Course; or
* have started the AEA Foundation Course and be booked to complete all modules within a year of the registration date; or
* be booked to attend an AEA Foundation Course that will be delivered before 31 December following your registration.

In **Scotland**, you must either:

* be able to demonstrate three years’ relevant experience in either electoral registration or elections administration; or
* enclose a letter with your application making a case to be exempted from the requirement above. This must be endorsed by your employer.

You must normally complete the Certificate within two years of the annual registration date.

You may not apply to register for the Diploma unless you have previously been awarded the Certificate. There is no time limit between being awarded the Certificate and registering for the Diploma.

**Registration and fee**

The annual deadline for applications is **1 September**.

The application to register is available [on the qualifications page of our website](https://www.aea-elections.co.uk/training-qualifications/qualifications/).

The total fee is **£1,650**, which includes:

* initial registration
* submission of four assignments
* sitting of two examination papers.

The fee is subject to VAT. The full scale of fees is set out at Appendix B.

**Certificate induction course**

An online Certificate induction course will be held in September 2024 on Microsoft Teams.

We will send you further details once we confirm your registration. All candidates are strongly advised to attend the induction, but if you are unable to do so, course notes will be provided.

**Certificate syllabus**

In **England and Wales**, the syllabus comprises two modules:

Module C1 To provide an understanding and appreciation of the processes involved in electoral registration.

You will be required to demonstrate:

* A clear understanding of the legal and administrative frameworks governing the registration of electors, and
* An ability to translate that knowledge into the workplace in terms of the necessary administrative processes for the proper conduct of electoral registration.

Module C2 To provide an understanding and appreciation of the processes involved in the administration of all types of elections.

You will be required to demonstrate:

* A clear understanding of the legal and administrative frameworks governing the conduct of elections, and
* An ability to translate that knowledge into the workplace in terms of undertaking the necessary administrative processes for elections leading up to, including and beyond the election itself.

In **Scotland**, you will cover whichever part of the syllabus above relates to your substantive role (either as module SC1 or SC2). You will also take a separate module on Scottish Public and Electoral Administration – this will provide an understanding and appreciation of the role and nature of devolved powers, the processes involved in the administration of specialist types of elections and the overview of both branches of electoral administration in Scotland.

You will also be required to demonstrate clear understanding of the legal and administrative frameworks governing the Scottish Parliament, the powers available to it and the conduct for Community Councils and National Park Boards. You must also demonstrate an understanding and knowledge of the processes for both electoral registration and the conduct of elections within Scotland.

The current syllabus is available on [the qualifications page of our website](https://www.aea-elections.co.uk/training-qualifications/qualifications/).

**Assignments**

A programme of four work-based assignments will be issued following the annual registration date. They must be submitted in strict numerical order by 31 December, 31 March, 30 June and 30 September in the year after you register.

You must pass all four assignments. They are assessed against a marking scheme approved by the Examining Board. The pass mark for each assignment is 45 marks.

Any assignment deemed to have failed may be resubmitted once, within two months of a failure notification.

Examples of previously set assignment topics are provided at Appendix A for information.

**Written assessments**

Assessment days are held at regional centres in January and July each year. You may choose which assessment day and which centre to attend.

In **England and Wales**, you will take:

(a) A two hour written examination consisting of five questions from module C1, of which three must be answered. This session will start at 10.30am.

(b) A two hour written examination consisting of five questions from module C2, of which three must be answered. This session will start at 1.30pm.

In Scotland, you will take:

(a) A two hour written examination of consisting of five questions from either module SC1 or module SC2, as appropriate, of which three must be answered. This session will start at 10.30am.

(b) A two hour written examination consisting of five questions from module SC3, of which three must be answered. This session will start at 1.30pm.

Assessments are marked using an agreed marking scheme. The pass mark for each part of the assessment is 34 marks (45%).

If you fail part of the assessment, you may re-sit the appropriate part(s) a maximum of two attempts.

**Award of Certificate**

Once you have achieved four passes for assignments and passes for both parts of the written assessment, you will be awarded the Certificate in Electoral Administration.

You will be entitled to use the designatory letters AEA (Cert) or AEA (Cert-Scotland) for as long as you remain an AEA member.

**Assignments**

Candidates are required to complete four work-based assignments. These must be submitted on a quarterly basis by no later than 31 December, 31 March, 30 June and 30 September.

The following are examples of previously set topics.

**Electoral Registration**

1. An elector registered in the ERO’s area may make an objection at any time to a person’s registration either before or after the person has been added to the register. Outline the objections process the Electoral Registration Officer must follow. Suggest ways in which the current process might be improved.

2. Outline the statutory procedures that a person must follow in order to successfully be accepted by the ERO as an "anonymous elector". What practical approaches could be adopted to raise awareness and encourage those persons “at risk” to register to vote. Suggest any further changes to the legislation that might improve the process.

3. What matters should an Electoral Registration Officer consider in determining applications to register at a second address? How could the current situation be improved?

**Elections Administration**

1. The verification and counting of ballot papers at combined polls is a complex and lengthy process, which has often created difficulties for many Returning Officers. Consider the whole process from the receipt of ballot boxes up to the point of declaration of results. Identify the potential challenges and suggest how the process could be conducted in order to achieve timely and accurate results.

2. It is generally recognised as good practice to offer prospective candidates an informal check of their nomination papers before they formally submit them. Identify what a valid nomination should contain. Outline the potential issues and solutions that an informal check might throw up, and identify the risks that might be introduced to the process by offering such informal checks.

3. Postal voting is now a major part of the election process and, as a consequence, many Returning Officers outsource not just the printing but also the despatch of postal ballot packs. Identify the risks this can present and identify what measures can be put in place to ensure that the process is carried out both efficiently and as required by law.

**Certificate**

**Basic fee £1,650**

* *Registration £563.36*
* *Assignments (each) £163.65*
* *Examinations (each paper) £216.02*

**Additional fees (as necessary)**

Assignment re-submission(s) £163.65

Examination re-sits (each paper) £216.02

Assignment extension £73.10

Late application for registration £73.10

Appeal against failure £122.19

Basic feedback on assignment £41.46

**Note: all fees are subject to VAT.**