



ALLESTREE WOODLANDS SCHOOL

## EXAM CONTINGENCY PLAN

Reviewed & Updated:  
May / 2023

# Exam contingency plan

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## Purpose of the plan

This plan examines potential risks and issues that could cause disruption to the exams process at the centre. By outlining actions/procedures to be invoked in case of disruption it is intended to mitigate the impact these disruptions have on our exam process.

Alongside internal processes, this plan is informed by scenarios contained in the *Joint contingency plan in the event of widespread disruption to the examination system in England, Wales and Northern Ireland*.

*“It is the responsibility of the head of centre to ensure that his/her centre... has in place a written examination contingency plan/examinations policy which covers all aspects of examination administration. This will allow members of the senior leadership team to have a robust contingency plan in place, minimising risk to examination administration, should the examinations officer be absent at a crucial stage of the examination cycle.*

*(The examination contingency plan/examinations policy should also reinforce procedures in the event of the centre being unavailable for examinations owing to an unforeseen emergency.)*

[JCQ [General regulations for approved centres5.3](#)]

## Causes of potential disruption to the exam process

### 1. Exam officer extended absence at key points in the exam process (cycle)

#### Criteria for implementation of the plan

*Key tasks required in the management and administration of the exam cycle not undertaken including:*

#### *Planning*

- *annual data collection exercise not undertaken to collate information on qualifications and awarding body specifications being delivered*
- *annual exams plan not produced identifying essential key tasks, key dates and deadlines*
- *sufficient invigilators not recruited*

#### *Entries*

- *awarding bodies not being informed of early/estimated entries which prompts release of early information required by teaching staff*
- *candidates not being entered with awarding bodies for external exams/assessment*
- *awarding body entry deadlines missed or late or other penalty fees being incurred*

#### *Pre-exams*

- *invigilators not trained or updated on changes to instructions for conducting exams*
- *exam timetabling, rooming allocation; and invigilation schedules not prepared*
- *candidates not briefed on exam timetables and awarding body information for candidates*
- *exam/assessment materials and candidates' work not stored under required secure conditions*

- *internal assessment marks and samples of candidates' work not submitted to awarding bodies/external moderators*

#### *Exam time*

- *exams/assessments not taken under the conditions prescribed by awarding bodies*
- *required reports/requests not submitted to awarding bodies during exam/assessment periods, for example very late arrival, suspected malpractice, special consideration*
- *candidates' scripts not dispatched as required for marking to awarding bodies*

#### *Results and post-results*

- *access to examination results affecting the distribution of results to candidates*
- *the facilitation of the post-results services*

#### Centre actions

- Assistant Head to liaise with Data Manager over entries.
- Assistant Head, Directors, Data Manager, Exams assistant to liaise over pre-exam administration.
- Senior Lead Invigilators/Exams Assistant to liaise with Line Manager (LBr) regarding exam time issues and results.
- Alternative Options:
  - An Examinations Officer of another school can be requested to provide assistance.
  - SLT should nominate a Deputy to cover a role or task (Leanne Berridge – Assistant Head in charge of examinations).
  - All procedures should be documented.

There are products available via:

- 'The Key Tasks' section of The Exams Office website.
- The Examinations Oracle and Centre Support Service of the Examination Officers Association.
- The Examinations Administration section of the DFE website.
- Examination Board helplines.
- The Exams Office section of the Joint Council for Qualifications website.

## 2. SENCo extended absence at key points in the exam cycle

### Criteria for implementation of the plan

*Key tasks required in the management and administration of the access arrangements process within the exam cycle not undertaken including:*

#### *Planning*

- *candidates not tested/assessed to identify potential access arrangement requirements*
- *centre fails to recognise its duties towards disabled candidates as defined under the terms of the Equality Act 2010*
- *evidence of need and evidence to support normal way of working not collated*

#### *Pre-exams*

- *approval for access arrangements not applied for to the awarding body*
- *centre-delegated arrangements not put in place*
- *modified paper requirements not identified in a timely manner to enable ordering to meet external deadline*
- *staff providing support to access arrangement candidates not allocated and trained*

#### *Exam time*

- *access arrangement candidate support not arranged for exam rooms*

### Centre actions

- SENCo deputy/Designated Lead HTLA responsible for Access Arrangements to liaise with EO over SENCo absence
- SENCo deputy and HLTA to identify any candidates not yet approved by Awarding Bodies and complete as necessary.
- SENCo deputy to ensure all paperwork/documentation is fully prepared and available for inspection by JCQ.
- SENCo deputy to oversee any JCQ inspection of Access Arrangements.

## 3. Teaching staff extended absence at key points in the exam cycle

### Criteria for implementation of the plan

*Key tasks not undertaken including:*

*Early/estimated entry information not provided to the exams officer on time; resulting in pre-release information not being received*

*Final entry information not provided to the exams officer on time; resulting in candidates not being entered for exams/assessments or being entered late/late or other penalty fees being charged by awarding bodies*

*Non-examination assessment tasks not set/issued/taken by candidates as scheduled*

*Internal assessment marks and candidates' work not provided to meet awarding body submission deadlines*

#### Centre actions

- Assistant Head in charge of exams and EO to liaise with faculty deputies and faculty line management

#### 4. Invigilators - lack of appropriately trained invigilators or invigilator absence

#### Criteria for implementation of the plan

*Failure to recruit and train sufficient invigilators to conduct exams*

*Invigilator shortage on peak exam days*

*Invigilator absence on the day of an exam*

#### Centre actions

- Recruitment and training conducted well in advance of the first exam session. Line Manager/Business Manager/Head Teacher to be informed if recruitment is necessary.
- EO to inform Assistant Head of any last-minute shortfalls and request support from TAs, Cover Supervisors and Support Staff as necessary. TAs all invigilator trained as a backup.
- Staff agencies to be contacted if none of the above is successful. If this option is the only solution, permission to be sought from Head of Centre. Agency invigilation staff to only be used where other invigilators are present.

#### 5. Exam rooms - lack of appropriate rooms or main venues unavailable at short notice

#### Criteria for implementation of the plan

*Exams officer unable to identify sufficient/appropriate rooms during exams timetable planning*

*Insufficient rooms available on peak exam days*

*Main exam venues unavailable due to an unexpected incident at exam time*

#### Centre actions

- EO to inform Leanne Berridge and SLT of the issue. Alternative school space to be considered include: Learning resource area, Sixth Form study rooms, theatre, refectory, atrium.
- EO to work with Cover Manager to identify viable alternatives
- Some classes to be collapsed in order to free up rooms for exam

#### 6. Failure of IT systems

#### Criteria for implementation of the plan

*MIS system failure at final entry deadline*

*MIS system failure during exams preparation*

*MIS system failure at results release time*

#### Centre actions

- EO and IT to liaise with the Examination Boards as to appropriate action and alternative methods of exam administration.
- EO to contact awarding bodies to arrange alternative methods of information exchange
- Head teacher to be informed

### 7. Emergency evacuation of the exam room (or centre lock down)

#### Criteria for implementation of the plan

*Whole centre evacuation (or lock down) during exam time due to serious incident resulting in exam candidates being unable to start, proceed with or complete their exams*

#### Centre actions

- EO to liaise with Head of Centre, SLT, Awarding Bodies to source alternative.

### 8. Disruption of teaching time – centre closed for an extended period

#### Criteria for implementation of the plan

Centre closed or candidates are unable to attend for an extended period during normal teaching or study supported time, interrupting the provision of normal teaching and learning

Centre closed interrupting the of normal teaching and learning

Industrial action closing centres

*The centre to communicate with parents, carers and students about the potential for disruption to teaching time and plans to address this. [Joint Contingency Plan (JCP) scenario 1]*

#### Centre actions

- EO to liaise with Head of Centre, SLT, Awarding Bodies to source alternative.
- Candidates are able to attend and the centre remains open with industrial action.

### 9. Candidates unable to take examinations because of a crisis – centre remains open

#### Criteria for implementation of the plan

Candidates are unable to attend the examination centre to take examinations as normal

*The centre to communicate with relevant awarding organisations at the outset to make them aware of the issue. The centre to communicate with parents, carers and candidates regarding solutions to the issue. [JCP scenario 2]*

#### Centre actions

- Consideration would be given on an individual basis as to why candidates did not attend. Special consideration may be applied for.
- Monitor news agencies on a regular basis to identify potential transportation difficulties.
- Centre to utilise own minibuses to transport candidates to centre.
- Centre to liaise with candidates to identify whether the examinations can be sat at an alternative venue in agreement with the relevant awarding organisations.
- Centres to offer candidates an opportunity to sit any examinations missed at the next available series.
- Centres to apply to awarding bodies for special consideration for candidates where they have met the minimum requirement.
- Latecomers to be permitted to take their examinations as per JCQ regulations.

## 10. Disruption to the transportation of completed examination scripts

### Criteria for implementation of the plan

Delay in normal collection arrangements for completed examination scripts

*The centre to communicate with relevant awarding organisations at the outset to resolve the issue. [JCP scenario 4]*

### Centre actions

- Scripts remain securely stored in the exams storage. EO to liaise with Awarding Bodies.

## 11. Assessment evidence is not available to be marked

### Criteria for implementation of the plan

Large scale damage to or destruction of completed examination scripts/assessment evidence before it can be marked

*It is the responsibility of the head of centre to communicate this immediately to the relevant awarding organisation(s) and subsequently to students and their parents or carers. [JCP scenario 6]*

### Centre actions

- EO to liaise with Awarding Bodies.

## 12. Centre unable to distribute results as normal

### Criteria for implementation of the plan

Centre is unable to access or manage the distribution of results to candidates, or to facilitate post-results services

*Centres to contact awarding organisations about alternative options. [JCP scenario 11]*

### Centre actions

- SLT/EO to find an alternative venue and contact students to inform them of new arrangements. Head of Sixth Form to be informed should GCE results be affected.



### 13. Disruption to public transport preventing students reaching the Examination centre

#### Criteria for implementation of the plan

Candidates unable to take examinations due to planned lack of public transport. • Candidates unable to take examinations due to sudden disruption to public transport. • Candidates arrive late due to public transport problems.

#### Centre actions

- SLT/EO to instruct our minibus to collect students.
- Monitor news agencies on a regular basis to identify any potential transportation difficulties. • Centre to utilise own bus facilities to transport candidates to centre.
- Centre to liaise with candidates to identify whether the examination can be sat at an alternative venue in agreement with the relevant awarding organisations.
- Centres to offer candidates an opportunity to sit any examinations missed at the next available series.
- Centres to apply to awarding organisations for special consideration for candidates where they have met the minimum requirements.
- Latecomers to be permitted to take their examinations providing they are within the JCQ regulations

**Causes 8-14** – all scenarios, criteria and specific communications have been taken directly from the *Joint contingency plan in the event of widespread disruption to the examination system in England, Wales and Northern Ireland*.

## Further guidance to inform procedures and implement contingency planning

### Ofqual

#### What schools and colleges and other centres should do if exams or other assessments are seriously disrupted

##### 1. Contingency planning

You should prepare for possible disruption to exams and other assessments and make sure staff are aware of these plans.

When drafting contingency plans, you should consider the following guidance:

##### 1.1 Covid specific guidance:

- [Guidance for schools Covid-19](#) from the Department for Education in England (subject to frequent updates as the situation changes)
- [Public health guidance to support autumn exams](#) from the Department for Education

##### 1.2 General contingency guidance

- [Emergency planning and response](#) from the Department for Education in England
- [Opening and closing local-authority-maintained schools](#) from the Department for Education in England
- [Procedures for handling bomb threats](#) from the National Counter Terrorism Security Office.

##### 2. Disruption to assessments or exams

In the absence of any instruction from the relevant awarding organisation, you should make sure that any exam or timetabled assessment takes place if it is possible to hold it. This may mean relocating to alternative premises.

You should discuss alternative arrangements with your awarding organisation if:

- the exam or assessment cannot take place
- a student misses an exam or loses their assessment due to an emergency, or other event, outside of the student's control

See also:

- [JCQ Joint Contingency Plan for the Examination System in England, Wales and Northern Ireland](#)

##### 3. Steps you should take

##### 3.1 Exam planning

Review contingency plans well in advance of each exam or assessment series. Consider how, if the contingency plan is invoked, you will comply with the awarding organisation's requirements.

##### 3.2 In the event of disruption

1. Contact the relevant awarding organisation and follow its instructions.
2. Take advice, or follow instructions, from relevant local or national agencies in deciding whether your centre is able to open.
3. Identify whether the exam or timetabled assessment can be sat at an alternative venue, in agreement with the relevant awarding organisation, ensuring the secure transportation of questions papers or assessment materials to the alternative venue.
4. Where accommodation is limited, prioritise students whose progression will be severely delayed if they do not take their exam or timetabled assessment when planned.
5. In the event of an evacuation during an examination please refer to JCQ's [Centre emergency evacuation procedure](#).
6. Communicate with parents, carers and students any changes to the exam or assessment timetable or to the venue.
7. Communicate with any external assessors or relevant third parties regarding any changes to the exam or assessment timetable.

##### 3.3 After the exam

1. Consider whether any students' ability to take the assessment or demonstrate their level of attainment has been materially affected and, if so, apply for special consideration.
2. Advise students, where appropriate, of the opportunities to take their exam or assessment at a later date.
3. Ensure that scripts are stored under secure conditions.

4. Return scripts to awarding organisations in line with their instructions. Never make alternative arrangements for the transportation of completed exam scripts, unless told to do so by the awarding organisation.

#### **4. Steps the awarding organisation should take**

##### **4.1 Exam planning**

1. Establish and maintain, and at all times comply with, an up-to-date, written contingency plan.
2. Ensure that the arrangements in place with centres and other third parties enable them to deliver and award qualifications in accordance with their conditions of recognition.

##### **4.2 In the event of disruption**

- Take all reasonable steps to mitigate any adverse effect, in relation to their qualifications, arising from any disruption.
- Provide effective guidance to any of their centres delivering qualifications.
- Ensure that where an assessment must be completed under specified conditions, students complete the assessment under those conditions (other than where any reasonable adjustments or special considerations require alternative conditions).
- Promptly notify the relevant regulators about any event which could have an adverse effect on students, standards or public confidence.
- Coordinate its communications with the relevant regulators where the disruption has an impact on multiple centres or a wide range of learners.

##### **4.3 After the exam**

Consider any requests for special consideration for affected students. For example, those who may have lost their internally assessed work or whose performance in assessments or exams could have been affected by the disruption.

#### **5. If any students miss an exam or are disadvantaged by the disruption**

If some of the students have been adversely affected by the disruption, you should ask the awarding organisation about applying for special consideration.

Decisions about special consideration, when it is or is not appropriate, is for each awarding organisation to make. Their decisions might be different for different qualifications and for different subjects.

See also:

- [JCQ's guidance on special considerations](#)

#### **6. Wider communications**

The regulators, [Ofqual](#) in England, [Qualifications Wales](#) in Wales and [CCEA](#) in Northern Ireland, will share timely and accurate information, as required, with awarding organisations, government departments and other stakeholders.

The [Department for Education](#) in England, the [Department of Education](#) in Northern Ireland and the [Welsh Government](#) will inform the relevant government ministers as soon as it becomes apparent that there will be significant local or national disruption; and ensure that they are kept updated until the matter is resolved.

Awarding organisations will alert the [Universities and Colleges Admissions Service](#) (UCAS) and the [Central Applications Office](#) (CAO) about any impact of the disruption on their deadlines and liaise regarding student progression to further and higher education.

Awarding organisations will alert relevant professional bodies or employer groups if the impact of disruption particularly affects them.

#### **7. Widespread national disruption to the taking of examinations / assessments**

In the event of widespread sustained national disruption, the government departments will communicate with regulators, awarding organisations and centres prior to a public announcement. Regulators will provide advice to government departments on implications for exam timetables.

As education is devolved, in the event of any widespread sustained national disruption to examinations or assessments, national government departments will communicate with regulators, awarding organisations and centres prior to a public announcement. Regulators will provide advice to government departments on implications for exam timetables.

## JCQ

15.5 The awarding bodies will designate a 'contingency day' plus 2 half days for examinations, summer 2023. This is consistent with the qualification regulators' document Exam system contingency plan: England, Wales and Northern Ireland: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/exam-system-contingency-plan-england-wales-and-northern-ireland>

The designation of a 'contingency day' within the common examination timetable is in the event of national or significant local disruption to examinations. It is part of the awarding bodies' standard contingency planning for examinations.

In the event of national disruption to a day of examinations in summer 2023, the awarding bodies will liaise with the qualification regulators and government departments to agree the most appropriate option for managing the impact. As a last resort the affected examinations will be rescheduled. Although every effort would be taken to keep the impact to a minimum, it is possible that there could be more than one timetable date affected following the disruption, up to and including the contingency day. Centres will be alerted if it is agreed to reschedule the examinations and the affected candidates will be expected to make themselves available in such circumstances. The decision regarding the rescheduling of examinations will always rest with the awarding body. The centre must conduct the examination on the scheduled date unless instructed to do otherwise by the awarding body.

Where candidates choose not to be available for the rescheduled examination(s) for reasons other than those traditionally covered by special consideration, they will not be eligible for enhanced grading arrangements. Centres must therefore ensure candidates and parents are aware of this contingency arrangement so that they may take it into account when making their plans for the summer. However, the awarding bodies will not insist upon candidates being available throughout the entire timetable period as a matter of course.

JCQ Joint Contingency Plan [www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/other-documents](http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/other-documents)

General Regulations for Approved Centres [www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations](http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations)

Guidance notes on alternative site arrangements [www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/online-forms](http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/online-forms)

Guidance notes for transferred candidates [www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/online-forms](http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/online-forms)

Instructions for Conducting Examinations [www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/ice---instructions-for-conducting-examinations](http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/ice---instructions-for-conducting-examinations)

A guide to the special consideration process [www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/regulations-and-guidance](http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/regulations-and-guidance)

## GOV.UK

Emergency planning and response: Severe weather; Exam disruption [www.gov.uk/guidance/emergencies-and-severe-weather-schools-and-early-years-settings](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/emergencies-and-severe-weather-schools-and-early-years-settings)

Opening and closing local-authority-maintained schools [www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-organisation-maintained-schools](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-organisation-maintained-schools)

Dispatch of exam scripts guide: Ensuring the service runs smoothly; Contingency planning <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dispatch-of-exam-scripts-yellow-label-service>

## National Counter Terrorism Security Office

Procedures for handling bomb threats [www.gov.uk/government/publications/bomb-threats-guidance/procedures-for-handling-bomb-threats](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/bomb-threats-guidance/procedures-for-handling-bomb-threats)

## Contacts

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