

Document Control

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Exam Contingency Procedure

This plan is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current regulations

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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 centres](#) 5.3]

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 and trained*

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

- *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

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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*
- *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

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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 assessments tasks not set/not taken by candidates as scheduled

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

Centre actions

-

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

- Liaise with internal departments within the centre to redeploy available members of staff
- Employ agency invigilators
- Continue to advertise and interview suitable candidates for invigilator roles

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

- Use alternative venues in agreement with relevant awarding organisations (e.g. share facilities with other centres or use public buildings if possible)

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

MIS system failure at final entry deadline

- *Use of IT equipment from other academy trust schools including mirror of backend equipment at our secondary datacenter.*
- *Restore MIS System using "live" backup system*
- *Use of same MIS system at another school within academy trust*

MIS system failure during exams preparation

- *Use of IT equipment from other academy trust schools including mirror of backend equipment at our secondary datacenter.*
- *Restore MIS System using "live" backup system*
- *Use of same MIS system at another school within academy trust*

MIS system failure at results release time

- *Use of IT equipment from other academy trust schools including mirror of backend equipment at our secondary datacenter.*
- *Restore MIS System using "live" backup system*
- *Use of same MIS system at another school within academy trust*

7. Emergency evacuation of the exam room

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Whole centre evacuation during exam time due to serious incident resulting in exam candidates being unable to return to exam rooms to start, proceed with or complete their exams

Centre actions

- Use alternative venues in agreement with relevant awarding organisations (e.g. share facilities with other centres or use public buildings if possible)
- Apply to awarding organisations for special consideration for candidates where they have met the minimum requirements
- Offer candidates an opportunity to sit any examinations missed at the next available series, if possible

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

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

- Use alternative venue to minimise the impact the loss of teaching and learning

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

Centre actions

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]

- Liaise with candidates to identify whether the examination can be sat at an alternative venue in agreement with the relevant awarding organisations
- Offer candidates an opportunity to sit any examinations missed at the next available series
- Apply to awarding organisations for special consideration where they have met the minimum requirements (candidates are only eligible for special consideration if they have been fully prepared and have covered the whole course but are affected by adverse circumstances beyond their control. If a candidate chooses not to sit an examination for other reasons they should be aware that special consideration rules will not apply.

10. Centre unable to open as normal during the exams period

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Centre unable to open as normal for scheduled examinations (including *centre being unavailable for examinations owing to an unforeseen emergency*)

A centre which is unable to open as normal for examinations must inform each awarding organisation with which examinations are due to be taken as soon as is possible. [JCP scenario 5]

Centre actions

- Open for examinations and examination candidates only, if possible.
- Use alternative venues in agreement with relevant awarding organisations (e.g. share facilities with other centres or use public buildings if possible)
- Apply to awarding organisations for special consideration for candidates where they have met the minimum requirements
- Offer candidates an opportunity to sit any examinations missed at the next available series, if possible

11. Disruption in the distribution of examination papers

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Disruption to the distribution of examination papers to the centre in advance of examinations

The centre to communicate with awarding organisations to organise alternative delivery of papers. [JCP scenario 3]

Centre actions

- Immediate contact with the awarding organisations and arrangements made to receive exam papers electronically and systems in place to allow for confidential photocopying of the master copy if delivery of papers is not possible by the usual postal method

12. 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

- Seek advice from the awarding organisation
- Ensure secure storage of scripts until collection

13. 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

- Awarding organisations are contacted immediately and guidance sought
- Students, parents and carers are informed of the situation
- Candidate retake the assessment that has been affected at a subsequent assessment window, if possible

14. 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

- Make arrangements to access results at an alternative site
- Share facilities with other schools and colleges if possible

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 and implement contingency planning

GOV.UK

Emergency planning and response Severe weather Exam disruption

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/emergencies-and-severe-weather-schools-and-early-years-settings>

Teaching time lost due to severe weather conditions

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/teaching-time-lost-due-to-severe-weather-conditions>

Dispatch of exam scripts: yellow label service

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>

Statutory guidance on school closures

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-organisation-maintained-schools>

Ofqual

Joint contingency plan in the event of widespread disruption to the examination system in England, Wales and Northern Ireland

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/exam-system-contingency-plan-england-wales-and-northern-ireland/joint-contingency-plan-in-the-event-of-widespread-disruption-to-the-examination-system-in-england-wales-and-northern-ireland>

JCQ

General regulations for approved centres <http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations>

Guidance on alternative site arrangements <http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/forms>

Instructions for conducting examinations

<http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/ice---instructions-for-conducting-examinations>

A guide to the special consideration process

<http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/regulations-and-guidance>

Contingency planning

The qualifications regulators, awarding bodies and government departments responsible for education have prepared and agreed a Joint contingency plan for the examinations system in case of wide scale disruption as a result of a flu pandemic, adverse weather conditions or other event.

The joint contingency plan is designed to ensure consistency of response in the event of major disruption to the examinations system affecting significant numbers of candidates.

In addition, awarding bodies have their own well-established contingency plans in place to respond to disruptions. It is important that exams officers who are facing disruption liaise directly with the relevant awarding body/bodies.

Centres should prepare plans for any disruption to examinations as part of their general emergency planning. It is important to ensure that relevant centre staff are familiar with the plan. Consideration should be given as to how these arrangements will be communicated to candidates, parents and staff should disruption to examinations occur.

In the event that the head of centre decides the centre cannot be opened for scheduled examinations, the relevant awarding body must be informed as soon as possible. Awarding bodies will be able to offer advice regarding the alternative arrangements for conducting examinations that may be available and the options for candidates who have not been able to take scheduled examinations.

The Joint contingency plan for the examination system in England, Wales and Northern Ireland may be downloaded from the Ofqual website:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/exam-system-contingency-plan-englandwales-and-northern-ireland>

[Taken directly from JCQ *Instructions for conducting examinations* <http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/ice---instructions-for-conducting-examinations>, page iii]