



Exam Contingency Plan

This policy 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 centres5.3](#)]

Causes of potential disruption to the exam process

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

	Criteria for implementation of the plan	Centre Actions
1. Exam officer extended absence at key points in the exam process (cycle)		
Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refer to exams procedures manual / action planner Nominated deputy to share tasks
Entries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 Internal exams database not updated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refer to exams procedures manual / action planner Nominated deputy to share tasks Refer Accreditation checklist and folder
Pre-Exams	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refer to exams procedures manual / action planner Nominated deputy to share tasks

	Criteria for implementation of the plan	Centre Actions
Exam Time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 scripts, equipment and other confidential materials not transported to exam venue 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exams Administrator/Phase Leader to deputise Refer to exams procedures manual / action planner Refer to Exam Day Checklist Publish timetables and checklists Seek advice from awarding body
Results And Post-Results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> access to examination results affecting the distribution of results to candidates the facilitation of the post-results services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refer to exams procedures manual / action planner Nominated deputy to share tasks Seek advice from awarding body

2. Phase Leaders extended absence at key points in the exam cycle

Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 approval for entries not obtained 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refer to exams procedures manual / action planner SLT to nominate deputy
Pre-Exams	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EO to deputise
Exam time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> access arrangement candidate support not arranged for exam rooms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EO to deputise

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

	<p><i>Key tasks not undertaken including:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SLT to nominate deputy to cover tasks
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	Criteria for implementation of the plan	Centre Actions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal assessment marks and candidates' work not provided to meet awarding body submission deadlines 	
4. Invigilators - lack of appropriately trained invigilators or invigilator absence		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Failure to train sufficient invigilators to conduct exams Invigilator shortage on peak exam days Invigilator absence on the day of an exam 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow annual training plan Plan for cover in case of unexpected absence
5. Exam rooms - lack of appropriate rooms or main venues unavailable at short notice		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Source alternative venues at other campuses Arrange transport for candidates Apply alternative site Seek advice from awarding body
6. Failure of IT systems		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MIS system failure at final entry deadline MIS system failure during exams preparation MIS system failure at results release time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seek advice from awarding body
7. Emergency evacuation of the exam room (or centre lock down)		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refer to Emergency Evacuation Policy (Exams) Seek guidance from awarding body(ies) Apply for special consideration for candidates
8. Disruption of teaching time – centre closed for an extended period		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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] Apply for alternative site arrangements
9. Candidates unable to take examinations because of a crisis – centre remains open		
	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]

	Criteria for implementation of the plan	Centre Actions
10. Centre unable to open as normal during the exams period		
	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]
11. Disruption in the distribution of examination papers		
	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]
12. Disruption to the transportation of completed examination scripts		
	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]
13. Assessment evidence is not available to be marked		
	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]
14. Centre unable to distribute results as normal		
	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]

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]