



Exam Contingency Plan 2023/2024

This policy is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current regulations

Reviewed by:

L Kennedy – Examinations Officer

Approved/Reviewed by Governors:

November 2023

Date of next review:

November 2024

Examination Contingency Plan

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Recent Changes to this Policy

This policy was reviewed and ratified by the Governing body on:

The following persons are authorised to approve minor changes between reviews:

Chair of Governing Body Committee:

Since ratification by the Governing Body the following changes have been made-

Date of change:		
Paragraph or page	Previous Wording	New Wording
PG 3 Purpose of the plan	<i>Joint contingency plan in the event of widespread disruption to the examination system in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.</i> <i>Additional links</i>	Exam system contingency plan: England, Wales and Northern Ireland Exam system contingency plan: England, Wales and Northern Ireland - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) Joint Contingency Plan (jcq.org.uk) and JCQ Preparing for disruption to examinations. Written examination contingency plan
PG 3Q	The centre has in place a written contingency (escalation) process should the head of centre, or a member of the senior leadership team with oversight of examination administration, be absent; The centre has in place a member of the senior leadership team who will provide support and guidance to the examinations officer and ensure that the integrity and security of examinations and assessments is maintained throughout an examination series;	The centre has in place a written examination contingency plan which covers all aspects of examination administration. This will allow members of the senior leadership team to act immediately in the event of an emergency or where the head of centre, examinations officer or SENCo is absent at a critical stage of the examination cycle. The examination contingency plan should reinforce procedures in the event of the centre being unavailable for examinations, or on results day, owing to an unforeseen emergency. The potential impact of a cyber-attack should also be considered.
PG 3	National Centre Number Register and other information requirements	New chapter added
PG 3	Examinations officer extended absence at key points in the examination process (cycle)	Examinations officer extended absence at critical stage of the exam cycle
PG 4/5	Teaching staff extended absence at key points in the examination cycle	Teaching staff extended absence at a critical stage in the examination cycle
PG 6	Emergency Evacuation – Additional information added	All staff involved with examinations to be aware of emergency evacuation and lockdown procedures as detailed in the Emergency Evacuation and Lockdown Policy for Exams.

PG 6 – Number 9	Candidates unable to take examinations because of a crisis – centre remains open	Candidates may not be able to take examinations – centre remains open
PG 9	Department for Education	DfE
PG 9	8 - Additional guidelines	Long term resilience planning
PG 10	New page added	Updated information on handling strike action in schools and contingency planning response to RAAC in schools
PG 10	Contingency sessions	Updated for Summer 2024

Purpose of the plan

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

Alongside internal processes, this is informed by scenarios contained in the Exam system contingency plan: England, Wales and Northern Ireland which provides guidance in the publication *What schools and colleges and other centres should do if exams or other assessments are seriously disrupted*.

[Exam system contingency plan: England, Wales and Northern Ireland - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)
[Joint Contingency Plan \(jcq.org.uk\)](http://jcq.org.uk) and JCQ Preparing for disruption to examinations.

This plan complies with JCQ 'General Regulations for Approved Centres' section 5.3 in that: The centre has in place a written examination contingency plan which covers all aspects of examination administration. This will allow members of the senior leadership team to act immediately in the event of an emergency or where the head of centre, examinations officer or SENCo is absent at a critical stage of the examination cycle. The examination contingency plan should reinforce procedures in the event of the centre being unavailable for examinations, or on results day, owing to an unforeseen emergency. The potential impact of a cyber-attack should also be considered.

National Centre Number Register and other information requirements

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The head of centre will also ensure that Selly Park Girls' School as a contingency to enable the prompt handling of urgent issues only, responds to the awarding bodies' request for information regarding the contact details of a senior member of staff (which might include a personal mobile number and/or email address). This will ensure that any urgent matters which might adversely affect candidates which arise outside of term time, and which potentially put qualification awards at risk, can be addressed by awarding bodies with the support of that member of staff. Heads of centre should ensure that this member of staff has the necessary authority to mobilise resources to provide this support, which might include resolving issues within the centre itself.

Causes of potential disruption to the examination process

1.Examinations officer extended absence at critical stage of the exam 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/assessments.

- 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 to awarding bodies.

Results and post-results:

- Access to examination results affecting the disruption of results to candidates.
- The facilitation of the post-results service.

Centre action:

- Head of centre to appoint a member of staff to take over responsibility should Examination Officers absence affect meeting deadlines.
- Members of staff should shadow Examinations Officer to ensure they are up to date with the examination cycle, responsibility and procedures at each point in time.

2. SENCO extended absence at key points in the examination cycle

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Key tasks required in the management and administration of the access arrangements process within the examination 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:

- Approved 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 room.

Centre actions:

- Head of centre to appoint a member of staff to take over the responsibility, should absence disrupt examination preparation.
- Examinations officer to ensure access arrangements are in place well ahead of deadline where possible.
- Examinations officer to plan arrangements in advance of summer examinations with SENCo.

3. Teaching staff extended absence at a critical stage in the examination cycle

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Key tasks not undertaken including:

- Early/estimated entry information not provided to the examinations officer on time. (Resulting in pre-release information not being received).
- Final entry information not provided to the examinations officer on time. (Resulting in: candidates not being entered for their examinations/assessments, entered late and late or other penalty fees being charged by awarding bodies).
- Non-examination assessment tasks not set/issued/taken by candidates as scheduled.
- Candidates not being informed of centre assessed marks before marks are submitted to the awarding body and therefore not being able to consider appealing internal assessment decisions and requesting a review of the centre's marking.
- Internal assessment marks and candidates' work not provided to meet submission deadlines.

Centre actions:

- Examinations officer is responsible for ensuring deadlines are met for estimated entries, any omissions to be referred to the Head of Centre.
- All members of department staff to be briefed on entry guidelines.
- Head of Centre to ensure that teaching absences are suitably covered in good time with trained professionals.
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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 examinations.
- Invigilator shortage on peak examinations days
- Invigilator absence on the day of an examination

Centre actions:

- Invigilation staffing to be arranged in advance of summer series with 'standby' invigilators included to cover any on the day shortage.
- SLT to be available to invigilate if required
- Head of centre to be informed if agency recruitment is needed.

5. Examinations rooms – lack of appropriate rooms or main venues unavailable at short notice

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Examinations officer is unable to identify sufficient/appropriate rooms during examination timetable planning.
- Insufficient rooms available on peak examinations days.
- Main examination venues unavailable due to an unexpected incident at the examination time.

Centre actions:

- Examinations officer to ensure planning of all rooms is completed by spring term to resolve any rooming issues, timetable clashes etc...
- Identify any venues, spare rooms within school for over spill and access arrangements.
- Liaise with Head of Centre if room shortages are identified.

6. Failure of IT systems (or possible Cyber Attack)

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- MIS system failure at final entry deadline.

- MIS system failure during examination preparation.
- MIS system failure at results release time.

Centre actions:

- IT Manager to be informed, if possible cyber-attack, IT Manager will contact the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC), a government agency that provides advice and support for the public and private sectors on how to avoid computer security threats.
- Inform the Head of centre.
- Examinations officer to contact awarding bodies to arrange an alternative method of exchange.

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

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Invigilators/Examinations officer to escort all candidates out the building.
- Candidates will be told and must remain in examination conditions.
- Examinations officer to contact the awarding body to explain the situation.
- All staff involved with examinations to be aware of emergency evacuation and lockdown procedures as detailed in the Emergency Evacuation and Lockdown Policy for Exams.

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.

Employees at Selly Park Girls' School to communicate with parents, carers and pupils about the potential for disruption to teaching time and plan to address this. (Joint contingency plan (JCQ scenario 1)

Centre actions

- Head of centre responsible for sourcing alternative facilities and venues.
- Centre to communicate with parents, carers and pupils.
- The centre to communicate with parents, carers and pupils about the potential disruption to teaching time and plans to address the issues.
- Procedures in place for staff to work from home, contact students, set work.
- Procedures in place for students to be able to access work at home.

9. Candidates may not be able to take examinations – centre remains open

Criteria for implementation of plan

- Candidates are unable to attend the examination centre to take examinations as normal.
Employees at Selly Park Girls' School to communicate with relevant awarding organisations at the outset to make them aware of the issue. They will also communicate with parents, carers and candidates regarding solutions to the issue. (JCQ scenario 2)

Centre actions

- Remain open for Examinations wherever possible.
- Alternative venues in agreement with the awarding bodies.
- Communicate with awarding bodies, parents, carers and pupils.

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

Criteria for implementation of the plan:

- Centre unable to open as normal for scheduled examinations.
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 possible. (JCQ scenario 5)

Centre actions:

- Source alternative venue for examinations.
- Apply for special consideration.
- Inform awarding bodies immediately.

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. (JCQ scenario 3).

Centre actions:

- Examinations officer to communicate with awarding bodies to arrange alternative delivery of papers.

12. Disruption in 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 the relevant awarding organisation at the outset to resolve the issue. (JCQ scenario 4)

Centre actions

- Examinations officer to communicate with awarding bodies to resolve any such issue.

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 pupils and their parents or carers. (JCQ scenario 6)

Centre actions:

- Head of centre to communicate immediately with awarding bodies, parents, carers and pupils.

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 service.

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

Centre actions:

- Examinations officer and Head of centre to advise parents, carers and pupils of the delay as soon as possible.
- Examinations officer to contact awarding body to discuss alternative options.

Further guidance to inform and implement contingency planning

Ofqual

Selly Park Girls' School should consider the following steps, if examinations or other assessments are seriously disrupted

1. Contingency planning

Selly Park Girls' School prepares for a possible disruption to examinations and other assessments as part of our emergency planning and makes sure that all staff are aware of these plans.

2. Disruption to assessments or examinations

In the absence of any instructions from the relevant awarding organisation, the school should assume that any examination or timetabled assessment will/should take place if it is possible to do so. In this case this may mean having to locate alternative premises.

If the examination or assessment cannot take place, or if a pupil misses an examination or loses their assessment due to an emergency or other event outside the control of the school, we will discuss an alternative arrangement with our awarding organisation.

3. The school should consider the following steps

3.1 Examination planning

- Review our contingency plan well in advance of each examination series.
- Ensure that copies of question papers are received and stored under secure conditions.

3.2 In the event of disruption

- Contact the relevant awarding organisation and follow their instructions.
- Take advice or follow instructions from relevant local or national agencies in deciding whether the school is able to open.
- Identify whether the examination can be sat at an alternative venue, in agreement with the relevant awarding organisation.
- Where accommodation is limited, prioritise pupils whose progression will be severely delayed if they do not take their examinations when planned.
- Communicate with parents, cares and pupils regarding any changes to the examination timetable.
- Advise pupils, where appropriate, to sit examinations in the next available series.

3.3 After the examination

- Consider whether pupils may be eligible for special consideration.
- Ensure that scripts are stored under secure conditions.
- Return scripts are stored under secure conditions.
- Return scripts to awarding organisations in line with their instructions. Never make alternative arrangements for the transportation of completed examinations scripts, unless told to do so by the awarding organisation.

4. The awarding organisation should take the following steps

4.1 Examination planning

- Establish, maintain and at all times comply with an up to date written contingency plan. Ensure that the arrangements that are in place with the schools enable them to deliver and award qualifications in accordance with its conditions.

4.2 In the event of disruption

- Take all reasonable steps to mitigate any negative effect, in relation to its qualifications, arising from any disruption.
- Provide effective guidance to any of its centres responsible for delivering qualifications on its behalf.

- Ensure that where an assessment is required to be completed under specified conditions, pupils 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 a negative effect on pupils, 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 examination

- Consider any requests for special consideration for affected pupils. Such as: those who may have lost their internally assessed work or whose performance in assessments or examinations could have been affected by the disruption.

5. If any pupils miss an examination or are disadvantaged by the disruption

If some of the pupils 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 consideration
- FAB's guidance on special consideration [FAB Guide - The Application of Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration in Vocational Qualifications - Federation of Awarding Bodies](#)

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 [DfE](#) in England, the [DfE](#) 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 examinations and assessments, including exam timetables. The centre will follow government guidance at the time of the disruption.

The governments' view across England, Wales and Northern Ireland is education should continue in 2022/23 with schools remaining open and that examinations and assessments will go ahead in both autumn 2022 and summer 2023.

8. Long term resilience planning

In September 2023, Ofqual and the DfE published [joint consultation decisions on long-term resilience arrangements](#). As in 2023, Ofqual has provided [guidance on collecting evidence of](#)

student performance to ensure resilience in the qualifications system for students entering GCSEs, AS and A levels, the Advanced Extension Award and Project qualifications. For VTQs and other qualifications used alongside or instead of GCSEs, AS and A levels, awarding organisations will provide guidance where needed and will contact schools and colleges with more information.

9. Disruption due to industrial action

The DfE has updated its guidance on [handling strike action in schools](#) in England in light of the industrial action in 2023. The guidance recommends schools should prioritise the running of examinations and assessments on any strike days, and should review their contingency plans to make this happen. Schools, colleges and other exam centres must speak to the relevant awarding organisations if they are expecting any disruption that might affect the sitting of exams and assessments.

10. RAAC in schools

The DfE has also issued [guidance for education settings with confirmed reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete \(RAAC\)](#) in their buildings. It includes the need for contingencies for possible disruption to examinations and links to the existing emergency planning guidance.

Ofqual guidance: ***What School and Colleges and other centres should do if exams or other assessments are seriously disrupted. Updated 5 October 2023***

[What schools, colleges and other centres should do if exams or other assessments are seriously disrupted - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\).](#)

JCQ

(GR 15.1) The qualification regulators, JCQ and government departments responsible for education have prepared and agreed information for schools in the event of examinations being seriously disrupted. This jointly agreed information will ensure consistency of response in the event of major disruption to the examinations systems affecting significant numbers of candidates. <https://www.jcq.org.uk/preparing-for-disruption-to-examinations/>

Further information may be found at : <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/exam-system-contingency-plan-england-wales-and-northern-ireland>

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.

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.

Contingency sessions confirmed by the JCQ for Summer 2024.

The designated contingency sessions for Summer 2024 are:

Thursday 6th June – PM

Thurs Wednesday 28th June – PM

Wednesday 26th June – All day

In the event of national disruption to a day of examinations in **summer 2024**, 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 last 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.

Useful Websites.

GOV.UK

[What schools, colleges and other centres should do if exams or other assessments are seriously disrupted - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Emergency planning and response: Severe weather; Exam disruption

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

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 – Now Protect UK

Procedures for handling bomb threats [ProtectUK | Home](#)

JCQ Guidance

General Regulations for Approved Centres <http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations>

Guidance on *Alternative Site* arrangements and *Transferred Candidate* arrangements [Alternative site guidance notes 2023 / 24 - JCQ Joint Council for Qualifications](#)

Accessed through secure login to the Centre Admin Portal (CAP) or through the JCQ training site <https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/cap/>

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>



Joint Contingency Plan

**for the Examination System in England,
Wales and
Northern Ireland**

This plan is jointly owned by:

AQA, CCEA, City & Guilds, JCQ, NCFE, OCR, Pearson, WJEC and UC

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Aims of the Joint Contingency Plan

The Joint Contingency Plan is aimed at centres – schools and colleges – and is designed to ensure a consistent and effective response in the event of major disruption to the examination system affecting significant numbers of candidate across several awarding organisations.

All awarding organisations are required to have their own well-established contingency plans in place to respond to such disruptions, and these have been implemented already on numerous occasions.

This Joint Contingency Plan takes into account these processes and procedures and is designed to complement them, not replace them.

The plan will be implemented in the event of major disruption to the system, such as widespread illness, travel disruption, bad weather or power failures. Any actions taken will be subject to the advice of the official agencies dealing with the specific circumstances being faced, for example the police, Environment Agency or Health Protection Agency and will be coordinated, as appropriate, with the Department for Education and qualification regulators Ofqual, Qualifications Wales and CCEA Accreditation.

Implementing the plan will safeguard the interests of candidates while maintaining the integrity of the examination system and safeguarding qualification standards.

The contingencies applied will be selected based on the context of the disruption and have been implemented on several occasions in response to localised issues. They would be applied on a larger scale in response to any widespread disruption at a national level.

The priority when implementing contingencies will be to maintain three principles:

- delivering assessments to published timetables**
- delivering results to published timetables**
- complying with regulatory requirements in relation to assessment, marking and standards.**

If the usual contingencies are no longer sufficient to maintain these outcomes, an identified Crisis Management Team consisting of representatives of all organisations involved will be convened by JCQ to agree the additional actions required.

Communications

The scale of the exams, qualifications and testing system in England, Wales and Northern Ireland is huge, involving more than a million learners each year and thousands of centres. It is vital that a system of this size has robust and coordinated contingency plans in place to deal with any major disruption that may affect candidates.

In the event of major disruption, each awarding organisation must notify the regulator of anything that impacts their individual ability to operate. Communication is a key factor in ensuring an effective and consistent response across the agencies involved. This includes communications between the organisations involved in the response and communications to stakeholders such as centres, candidates, parents or carers and the public.

At the first indication of such an event, awarding organisations are required to notify the regulators.

The regulators, Ofqual in England, Qualifications Wales in Wales and CCEA Accreditation 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.

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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.

The organisations involved in this Joint Contingency Plan are committed to:

- sharing timely and accurate information as required to meet the aims of the plan
- communicating with stakeholders so they are aware of disruption to the exams, the contingency measures being implemented, and any actions required of them as a result
- ensuring that any messages to the public are clear and accurate.

1. Disruption of teaching time in the weeks before an exam – centres are closed for an extended period

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- centres are 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.

Recommended actions:

Where there is disruption to teaching time and students miss teaching and learning, it remains the responsibility of centres to prepare students, as usual, for examinations.

in the case of modular courses, centres may advise candidates to sit examinations in an alternative series.

centres should have plans in place to facilitate alternative methods of learning.

Guidance on emergency planning, with advice on severe weather is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/exam-system-contingency-planengland-wales-and-northern-ireland/what-schools-and-colleges-should-do-ifexams-or-other-assessments-are-seriously-disrupted>

2. Disruption in the distribution of examination papers

Criteria for implementation of the plan

disruption to the distribution of examination papers to centres in advance of examinations.

Recommended actions:

awarding organisations to source alternative couriers for delivery of hardcopies.

awarding organisations to change the timing of the distribution to earlier or later than originally scheduled

awarding organisations to provide centres with electronic access to examination papers via a secure external network. Centres would need to ensure that copies are received, made and stored under secure conditions and should have plans in place to facilitate such an action. Awarding organisations would provide guidance on the conduct of examinations in such circumstances.

as a last resort, and in close collaboration with centres and regulators, awarding organisations to consider scheduling of the examination on an alternative date

3. Candidates unable to take examinations because of a crisis - centres remain open

Criteria for implementation of the plan

candidates are unable to attend examination centres to take examinations as normal.

Recommended actions:

centres to invoke centre contingency plan. **This must focus on options that enable candidates to take their examinations.**

Information on what schools and colleges and other centres should do if exams or other assessments are seriously disrupted can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/exam-system-contingency-planengland-wales-and-northern-ireland/what-schools-and-colleges-should-do-ifexams-or-other-assessments-are-seriously-disrupted>

Awarding organisations will ensure that any applications for special considerations as a result of disruption will be reviewed across awarding organisations to ensure consistency of decision making

4. Centres are unable to open as normal during the examination period

Criteria for implementation of the plan

centres unable to open as normal for scheduled examinations.

Recommended actions:

centres to invoke centre contingency plan, which must **focus on options that enable candidates to take their examinations**. As part of their general planning for emergencies, centres should cover the impact on examinations. The responsibility for deciding whether it is safe for a centre to open lies with the head of centre. The head is responsible for taking advice or following instructions from relevant local or national agencies in deciding whether their centres is able to open.

Information on what schools and colleges and other centres should do if exams or other assessments are seriously disrupted can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/exam-system-contingency-planengland-wales-and-northern-ireland/what-schools-and-colleges-should-do-ifexams-or-other-assessments-are-seriously-disrupted>

Awarding organisations will ensure that any applications for special considerations as a result of disruption will be reviewed across awarding organisations to ensure consistency of decision making

5. Disruption to transporting completed examination papers

Criteria for implementation of the plan

delay in normal collection arrangements for completed examination scripts/assessment evidence.

Recommended actions:

where examinations are part of the national 'yellow label' service or where awarding organisations arrange collections, centres should seek advice from awarding organisations and should not make their own arrangements for transportation unless told to do so by the awarding organisation.

- for any examinations where centres make their own arrangements for transportation, centres should investigate alternative dispatch options that comply with the requirements detailed in the JCQ Instructions for Conducting Examinations.
- centres to ensure secure storage of completed examination papers until collection.

6. 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
- completed examination scripts/assessment evidence does not reach awarding organisations

Recommended actions

- awarding organisations to generate candidate marks for affected assessments based on other appropriate evidence of candidate achievement as defined by the awarding organisations
- where marks cannot be generated by awarding organisations candidates may need to retake affected assessment in a subsequent assessment series.

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7. Disruption to the scanning process – where completed examination papers are being scanned in preparation for onscreen marking

Criteria for implementation of plan

- scanning process disrupted beyond acceptable levels resulting in a risk to the delivery of results by scheduled dates.

Recommended actions:

- awarding organisations to implement their existing contingency plans for disruption to on-screen marking process
- awarding organisations to revert to alternatives form of marking
- prioritisation of scanning to be based on results dates.

8. Markers unable to mark examination papers according to marking schedules

Criteria for implementation of plan

markers are unable to mark examination papers resulting in a risk to the delivery of results by scheduled dates.

Recommended actions:

- awarding organisations to re-allocate scripts to available markers
- awarding organisations to recruit, train or re-standardise qualified additional markers
- awarding organisations to consider the proportion of marking required to be completed for grade boundary setting
- prioritisation of marking to be based on results dates.

9. Difficulty in meeting results schedule

Criteria for implementation of plan

significant inability to meet schedule for publication of results.

Recommended actions:

- awarding organisations must notify the regulators of any such instance
- awarding organisations to establish priorities for results processing
- awarding organisations to implement existing contingency plans for disruption to the results processing schedule
- awarding organisations to assess level of disruption and consider options for issuing results in alternative format(s)
- awarding organisations and regulators liaise with relevant organisations (ie UCAS, CAO) regarding process of candidate progression to further and higher education.

10. Awarding organisations unable to issue results as planned

Criteria for implementation of plan

- awarding organisations unable to distribute electronic results due to failure of systems facilitating results delivery
- awarding organisations unable to distribute hard copy results

Recommended actions:

Where results are due to be issued electronically:

- awarding organisations to implement existing contingency plans for disruption to the issuing of results
- awarding organisations transmit results via alternative electronic formats

- awarding organisations issue hardcopy results.

Where results are due to be issued in hardcopy:

- awarding organisations to facilitate communication of results via secure web-based platforms.

11. Centres are unable to distribute results as normal or facilitate post results services

Criteria for implementation of plan

- centres are unable to access or manage the distribution of results to candidates, or to facilitate post results services.

Recommended actions:

Distribution of results:

- centre to make arrangements to access its results at an alternative site, in agreement with the relevant awarding organisation

- centres to make arrangements to coordinate access to post results services from an alternative site

- centres to share facilities with other centres if this is possible, in agreement with the relevant awarding organisation.

Facilitation of post results services:

- centre to make arrangements to make post results requests at an alternative location

- centres to contact the relevant awarding organisation if electronic post results requests are not possible

- awarding organisations to review the post results deadlines

Summary of responsibilities in the event of disruption to examinations

- JCQ is responsible for coordinating across awarding organisations, including convening the crisis management team
- Regulators (Ofqual in England, Qualifications Wales in Wales and CCEA Accreditation in Northern Ireland) are responsible for sharing timely and accurate information, as required with awarding organisations, government departments and other stakeholders

Awarding organisations are responsible for:	Examination centres are responsible for:
	Preparing plans for any disruption to exams as part of centres' general emergency planning
Ensuring centres receive examination materials for scheduled examinations	Preparing candidates for examinations
	Ensuring examinations and assessments are taken under the conditions prescribed by awarding organisations
	Ensuring, where relevant, that assessment materials and candidate work are stored under secure conditions
	Deciding whether the centre can open for examinations as scheduled and informing relevant awarding organisations if the centre is unable to open
Advising centres on possible alternative examination arrangements and declining/approving proposals for alternative examination arrangements	Exploring the opportunities for alternative arrangements if the centre cannot open for examinations and agreeing such arrangements with the awarding organisations
Evaluating and declining/approving requests for special consideration	Judging whether candidates meet the requirements for special consideration as a result of any disruption and submitting these requests to the relevant awarding organisations
	Assessing and liaising with awarding organisations in the event of disruption to the transportation of papers
Marking, moderating and grading candidate work	
Issuing results to centres on scheduled dates	The distribution of examination results to candidates

Useful information

Owners of this plan
AQA www.aqa.org.uk/ CCEA www.ccea.org.uk City & Guilds www.cityandguilds.com NCFE www.ncfe.org.uk OCR www.ocr.org.uk/ Pearson www.qualifications.pearson.com WJEC www.wjec.co.uk/ UCAS www.ucas.ac.uk/ JCQ www.jcq.org.uk
Regulators
CCEA www.ccea.org.uk/regulation Ofqual www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofqual Qualifications Wales www.qualificationswales.org
Government
DfE www.education.gov.uk/ DENI www.deni.gov.uk/ Welsh Government https://gov.wales/.uk

Useful documents	
Ofqual three country guidance on what schools and colleges and other centres should do if exams or other assessments are seriously disrupted	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/exam-systemcontingency-plan-england-wales-and-northern-ireland/what-schools-andcolleges-should-do-if-exams-or-other-assessments-are-seriouslydisrupted
JCQ access arrangements, reasonable adjustments and special consideration	www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-specialconsideration/regulations-and-guidance
JCQ instructions for conducting examinations	www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/ice---instructions-for-conductingexaminations
DfE guidance on dealing with disruption to teaching and learning	http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/adminandfinance/emergencyplanning/a00694_25/advice-on-severe-weather
DENI guidance on dealing with	www.deni.gov.uk/exceptional_closures_checklist.pdf

disruption to teaching and learning	
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