



Exam Contingency Plan

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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

- Academy Data Lead to appoint a suitable Acting Examinations Officer as soon as possible.
- Academy Data Lead and/or Acting Examinations Officer to liaise with Oasis Academy John Williams (Collette Hornsby; Examinations Officer) regarding examination entries procedures if required.
- Academy Data Lead and Acting Examinations Officer to liaise with Deputy Principal regarding JCQ and Examination Board protocol during exam time.
- Academy Data Lead to oversee results and liaise with Acting Examinations Officer and HODs regarding post results.
- Examinations Officer to ensure exam cycle procedures are up to date at all times.

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

- Examinations Officer to liaise with Deputy SENCo and SEN Admin Lead

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 (including controlled assessments and coursework) 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

- Examinations Officer to liaise with relevant Year Group Deputy Principal, cover and handover to be arranged internally

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

- Examinations Officer to liaise with Principal and Assessment Lead to provide extra training for all current staff internally, or appoint external invigilator cover where necessary

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

- Examinations Officer to follow JCQ and Examination Board protocol and procedures regarding alternative venue (see JCQ Alternative Site Form and Guidance Notes)

Alternative Site(s) Details:

- Alternative venue to be accessed (Oasis Academy South Bank)

6. Cyber Attack

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Where a cyber-attack may compromise any aspect of delivery

Centre actions

The centre will ensure there are procedures in place to maintain the security of user accounts by:

- Providing training for authorised staff on the importance of creating strong unique passwords and keeping all account details secret
- Providing training for staff on awareness of all types of social engineering/ phishing attempts
- Enabling additional security settings wherever possible
- Updating any passwords that may have been exposed
- Setting up secure account recovery options
- Reviewing and managing connected applications
- Monitoring accounts and regularly reviewing account access, including removing access when no longer required
- Ensuring authorised members of staff securely access awarding bodies' online systems in line with awarding body regulations regarding cyber security and the JCQ document *Guidance for centres on cyber security*
- Authorised staff will have access, where necessary, to a device which complies with awarding bodies' multi-factor authentication (MFA) requirements.
- Reporting any actual or suspected compromise of an awarding body's online systems immediately to the relevant awarding body

Oasis will achieve and maintain accreditation to the Cyber Security Essentials Security Standard (<https://iasme.co.uk/cyber-essentials>).

This policy has been produced in alignment with this standard. Changes to the configuration of the IT system which will cause Oasis to be in breach of this standard will not be permitted.

Oasis has also adopted the principle of least privilege. Technical controls limit users access rights to only what is strictly required to perform their role. Access to applications, systems, networks and processes that are not required to perform their role will not be available.

7. Failure of IT systems

Criteria for implementation of the plan

IT system corruption affecting candidates' work

MIS system failure at final entry deadline

MIS system failure during exams preparation

MIS system failure at results release time

Centre actions

- Examinations Officer and IT Site Manager to liaise with Examination Boards as to appropriate action
- Examinations Officer ensures that candidate work is printed out as soon as the official exam is finished
- Examinations Officer and IT Department ensures that candidate work is on exam accounts that candidates do not have access to
- Examinations Officer and IT Department ensures that candidate work is backed up onto a separate device and encrypted. E.g. encrypted USB drives or external hard drives that are stored in the secure room
- Examinations Officer role is based on permissions on Bromcom
- Examinations Officer and IT Department ensure that antivirus software is regularly updated. The current software the centre uses is Microsoft Defender
- The centre ensures that there is restricted control and limited members of staff who can access the papers, the hard drives and the USB drives

8. 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

- Examinations Officer to follow JCQ and Examination Board protocol and procedures
- Examinations Officer to apply for Special Consideration as applicable
- Refer to Emergency Evacuation Policy

9. 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

Centre actions

- The Centre to communicate with parents, carers and students about the potential for disruption to teaching time and plans to address this
- Consultation with Head of Centre
- Examination Officer to liaise with Examination Boards as applicable

10. 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 because of a crisis

Centre actions

- Examinations Officer to follow JCQ and Examination Board protocol and procedures regarding alternative venue (see section 5)
- The Centre to communicate with parents, carers and candidates regarding solutions to the issue.
- Centre will consider moving the starting time of the examination for all candidates (see section 6.2 of the JCQ document *Instructions for conducting examinations*)
- Be aware of the rules for very late arrivals (see section 21 of the JCQ document *Instructions for conducting examinations*)
- Wherever possible, it is always in the best interest for candidates to sit the examination. However, special consideration is an option where a candidate is unable to sit the examination (see Chapter 4 of the JCQ document *A guide to the special consideration process*)
- The relevant awarding body should be contacted if additional support or guidance in the event of disruption to examinations is required

11. 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*)

Centre actions

- Centre must inform each Examination Board with which examinations are due to be taken as soon as is possible
- The relevant awarding body should be contacted if additional support or guidance in the event of disruption to examinations is required
- Whether it is safe for a centre to open lies with the head of centre who is responsible for taking advice or following instructions from relevant local or national agencies
- Special consideration is an option if all other avenues have been exhausted and candidates meet the published criteria

Alternative Site(s) Details:

- Alternative venue to be accessed (Oasis Academy South Bank)

12. 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

Centre actions

- 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)

13. Delay in collection arrangements for completed examination papers

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Delay in normal collection arrangements for completed examination scripts/assessment evidence

Centre actions

- Examinations Officer to liaise with Examination Board to organise alternative delivery of papers
- Where possible, scripts to be downloaded from Awarding Body and printed on site (day of exam only)
- Scripts to remain securely stored or Examinations Office to transport scripts to the Post Office for collection by Parcelforce

14. Disruption to the transportation of completed examination scripts

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Delay in normal collection arrangements for completed examination scripts

Centre actions

- Examinations Officer to liaise with relevant Examination Boards at the outset to resolve the issue.

15. 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

Centre actions

- It is the responsibility of the Head of Centre to communicate this immediately to the relevant Examination Boards and subsequently to students and their parents or carers

16. 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

Centre actions

- Examinations Officer to contact Examination Boards regarding alternative options

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-england-wales-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]