



# EXAM CONTINGENCY PLAN

## 2023/24

This plan is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current regulations

Approved/reviewed by	
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## Purpose of the plan

This plan examines potential risks and issues that could cause disruption to the exams process at Education other than at school. 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 the Ofqual (and Northern Ireland Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment) **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* and the **JCQ Joint Contingency Plan** for the Examination System in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

This plan also confirms Education other than at school's compliance with JCQ's **General Regulations for Approved Centres** (section 5.3) 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 staff absence. 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.

## Operating across more than one centre

As the head of service (EOTAS) and/or exams officer operates across more than one centre, the head of centre will ensure there is suitable support in place, so they can meet their obligations in relation to the recruitment, selection and training of staff across the centres for which they are responsible. The arrangements covered in this contingency plan relate to the following centres:

- Education other than at school Fernbrook College
- Education other than at school Riverside College
- Education other than at school Oakfield College

## Education other than at school Possible causes of disruption to the exam process

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

#### Criteria for implementation of the plan

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

#### *Planning*

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

#### *Entries*

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

#### *Pre-exams*

- *invigilators not trained or updated on changes to instructions for conducting exams*
- *exam timetabling, rooming allocation; and invigilation schedules not prepared*
- *candidates not briefed on exam timetables and awarding body information for candidates*
- *confidential 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 to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- *The Business Manager is also fully trained in all aspects of exam administration*
- *The Business Manager would be fully supported by the Head of Service.*
- *The Business Manager could request support from other Exam Officers throughout the Swindon network.*

### **2. ALS lead/SENCo extended absence at key points in the exam cycle**

#### Criteria for implementation of the plan

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

#### *Planning*

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

#### *Pre-exams*

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

#### *Exam time*

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

#### Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- *SENCo Assistant can identify candidates not yet approved by Awarding Bodies*
- *Exams Officer to organise staff to support Access Arrangements and to invigilate exams*
- *Obtain help from other staff trained in testing for Access Arrangements*
- *External assessor is normally used to assess Access Arrangements so this would continue with the support of SEND admin*

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

#### Criteria for implementation of the plan

*Key tasks not undertaken including:*

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

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

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

*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 awarding body submission deadlines*

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- Head of Service will provide Exams Officer with estimated/final entries.
- Head of Service will provide Exams Officer with coursework marks and samples
- Head of Service may recruit temporary Teachers to provide support
- Head of Centre's can support Exams Officer and Head of Service in gathering marks or final entries

#### **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 to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- EOTAS only uses staff to Invigilate, therefore staff may be utilised from other Centres
- Invigilation training is offered to all staff including Administration support, pastoral and Behaviour support so staff can be utilised in the event of staff absence during exam season

#### **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 to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- Alternative venues to be sourced and currently in use

Alternative venue details:

Swindon Tuition Centre who know the students taught off site can host exams and EOTAS have fully trained their staff to invigilate.

Youth Justice Service have been used as an emergency alternative site for summer 2023 series due to candidate parole conditions

#### **6. Cyber-attack**

Criteria for implementation of the plan

*Where a cyber-attack may compromise any aspect of delivery*

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- Promptly reporting any incidents to the relevant awarding body/bodies which might compromise any aspect of assessment delivery such as a cyber-attack
- IT team run checks on Exam Laptops throughout the year to ensure they are compliant and reliable for exam season
- Where candidates produce work electronically, ensuring their work is backed-up regularly and stored securely on the centre's IT system / Ensuring protection of the candidates' work from corruption and considering the risks and implications of any cyber-attack
- Following and regularly reviewing National Cyber Security Centre advice for support in cyber security preparedness and mitigation work / Using the NCSC's free Web Check and Mail Check services to help protect from cyber-attacks

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- Where candidates produce work electronically, ensuring their work is backed-up regularly and stored securely on the centre's IT system / Ensuring protection of the candidates' work from corruption and considering the risks and implications of any cyber-attack
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## 7. Failure of IT systems

### Criteria for implementation of the plan

*MIS system failure at final entry deadline*

*MIS system failure during exams preparation*

*Power outage immediately prior to or during an on-screen test*

*MIS system failure at results release time*

### Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- The Centre to communicate with relevant awarding bodies at the outset to resolve the issue.
- IT support called to support urgent retrieval of the systems
- Awarding bodies contacted to request extension to deadline
- Results can be downloaded direct from Awarding bodies websites and from another location

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

### Criteria for implementation of the plan

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

### Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- 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]

## 9. Disruption of teaching time in the weeks before an exam – 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 actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- The centre to communicate with relevant awarding bodies at the outset to make them aware of the issue.

## 10. Candidates at risk of being unable to take examinations - centre remains open

### Criteria for implementation of the plan

*Candidates at risk of being unable to attend the examination centre to take examinations as normal*

### Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- The centre to communicate with relevant awarding bodies at the outset to make them aware of the issue.
- The centre to communicate with parents, carers and candidates regarding solutions to the issue. [Joint Contingency Plan (JCP) scenario 2]
- Potential to use alternative sites and communicate this to parents/carers and students

**11. Centre at risk of being unable to open as normal during the examination period**  
(Including in the event of the centre being unavailable for examinations owing to an unforeseen emergency)

Criteria for implementation of the plan

*Centre at risk of being unable to open as normal for scheduled examinations **including flooding of premises***

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- Open for examinations only if this is a possibility (snow days etc.)
- Use alternative venues in agreement with the exam boards. These can be other Centre's or public buildings
- A Centre which is unable to open as normal for examinations must inform each awarding body with which examinations are due to be taken as soon as is possible. [JCP scenario 5]
- Apply for special considerations for all students who meet the minimum requirements.
- **Implement contingency using alternative site within EOTAS or alternative sites as agreed by external companies, notify candidates by text**

Alternative venue details:

STC

YJS

Riverside, Oakfield or Fernbrook

**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 to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- The Centre to communicate with awarding bodies to organise alternative delivery of papers. [JCP scenario 3]
- Printing papers from Centre Services online the day of the exams in the secure room
- Arrange with Exam board to hold exam on different date due to mitigating circumstances

**13. Disruption to transporting completed examination scripts**

Criteria for implementation of the plan

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

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- The Centre to communicate with relevant awarding bodies at the outset to resolve the issue. [JCP scenario 4]
- For any examinations where centres make their own collection arrangements, centres should investigate alternative options that comply with the requirements detailed in the JCQ publication *Instructions for conducting examinations*.
- Centres to ensure secure storage of completed examination scripts until collection.

**14. 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*

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- It is the responsibility of the Head of Service to communicate this immediately to the relevant awarding body and subsequently to students and their parents or carers. [JCP scenario 6]
- 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.

**15. Centre unable to distribute results as normal or facilitate post results services**

(Including in the event of the centre being unavailable on results day owing to an unforeseen emergency)

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 to mitigate the impact of the disruption

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

Alternative venue details:

As we have alternative sites for learning results could be hosted at one venue if alternative premises were needed