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65k. Exam Contingency Plan

Date adopted: November 2025
Next review: November 2026

See EOTAS policy control document (held by the Business Manager) for status, notes and actions pertaining to this policy



Exam Contingency Plan

| Version | Status | Date | Title of Reviewer | Purpose/Outcome |
|---------|---------|----------------|-------------------|---|
| 1.0 | Adopted | September 2023 | Headteacher | Adoption of Exam Contingency Plan |
| 2.0 | Amended | 18.11.2024 | | Date of review amended no further changes made P5 updated to include invigilator training contingency |
| 3.0 | Amended | 10.11.2025 | | |



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Purpose of the plan

This plan examines potential risks and issues that could disrupt the exam 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 guides 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

Exam officer extended absence including 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 include:

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*
- *Invigilator training delivery is absence of the EO*

Entries

- *awarding bodies not being informed of early/estimated entries which prompts the 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
- Line Manager for the Exams Officer is aware of key dates and deadlines by EO sharing their calendar which will enable Business Manager to adhere to deadlines

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*
- *The 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 the normal way of working not collated*

Pre-exams

- *approval for access arrangements not applied to the awarding body*
- *centre-delegated arrangements not put in place*
- *modified paper requirements not identified promptly 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

- Exams Officer 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

Teaching staff extended absence at key points in the exam cycle

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Key tasks not undertaken include but are not limited to:

Early/estimated entry information was 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 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 Centre and or Head of College will provide the Exams Officer with estimated/final entries.
- The Head of Service will direct an appropriate member of staff to provide the Exams Officer with coursework marks and samples.
- Head of Centre may recruit temporary Teachers to provide support
- Head of Centre can support the Exams Officer and Heads of College in gathering marks or final entries

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 use the 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
- The HR Lead will support the Exams Officer and the Head of Centre in any necessary recruitment for Invigilators



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 exam timetable planning

Insufficient rooms available on peak exam days

Main exam venues were unavailable due to an unexpected incident at exam time

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- Alternative venues to be sourced, such as the local church hall and Ferndale Primary School which would mitigate the need for alternative transport arrangements to be made.
- Current alternative centres to be scoped for capacity

Alternative venue details:

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

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

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
- Promptly reporting any incidents to the relevant awarding body/bodies which might compromise any aspect of assessment delivery such as a cyber-attack

- 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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Failure of IT systems

Criteria for implementation of the plan

MIS system failure at the final entry deadline

MIS system failure during exam preparation

Power outage immediately before or during an on-screen test

MIS system failure at results release time

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- The Exams Officer or other designated individual 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 an extension to the deadline
- Results can be downloaded directly from the Awarding body's websites and from another location

Emergency evacuation of the exam room (or centre lockdown)

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Whole centre evacuation (or lockdown) 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

- BST 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]*
- The Exams Officer communicates with relevant awarding bodies at the outset to make them aware of the issue.



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 Exams Officer communicates with relevant awarding bodies at the outset to make them aware of the issue.

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 Exams Officer communicates with relevant awarding bodies at the outset to make them aware of the issue.
- BST 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

The centre is 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 possible. *[JCP scenario 5]*
- Apply for special considerations for all students who meet the minimum requirements.
- **Implement contingency using the alternative site within EOTAS or alternative sites as agreed by external companies, notify candidates by text**

Alternative venue details to date:

STC

YJS

Riverside, Oakfield or Fernbrook

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

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 Exams Officer to communicate with relevant awarding bodies at the outset to resolve the issue. *[JCP scenario 4]*



- For any examinations where centres make their collection arrangements, centres should investigate alternative options that comply with the requirements detailed in the JCQ publication *Instructions for conducting examinations*.
- The Exams Officer to ensure secure storage of completed examination scripts until collection.

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 Centre 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 the affected assessment in a subsequent assessment series.

The 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

The 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

- The Exams Officer to contact awarding organisations about alternative options. [JCP scenario 11]
- Distribution of results:
 - The Head of Centre and Exams Officer to make arrangements to access 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

