

Exam contingency plan

2021-22

This plan is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current regulations

Approved October 2021	
Date of next review	September 2022

Key staff involved in contingency planning

Role	Name(s)
Head of centre	Anesta McCullagh
Exams officer line manager (Senior Leader)	Nigel Bradford
Exams officer	Crystal Tang
SENCo	Annette Essex
SLT member(s)	Anesta McCullagh, Natalie Hoyle, Nigel Bradford, Jen Vincent, Jo Wilby

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Purpose of the plan

This plan examines potential risks and issues that could cause disruption to the exams process at Engineering UTC Northern Lincolnshire. 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 *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*.

This plan also confirms Engineering UTC Northern Lincolnshire 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.

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

- ▶ Pre-exams: a member of SLT will identify key tasks with reference to the Engineering UTC Exams SOP (see below), with the Data Administrator establishing key dates by contacting exam boards. Data Administrator will liaise with staff at the academy to establish what is required. Member of SLT will ensure that timetables are distributed and will coordinate sending off any internally assessed work. A member of SLT will book rooms and invigilators. If extra invigilators are required, the member of SLT will arrange recruitment and training.
- ▶ During Exams: a member of SLT will identify key tasks with reference to the Engineering UTC Exams SOP (see below). If seating plans have not been produced, the member of SLT produce them with the support of internal staff. During exams, a member of SLT will supervise the invigilators who have been trained with JCQ procedure and will carry out their normal duties as long as they are issued with exam papers, candidates and rooms. The member of SLT will print off the seating plans and ensure that the correct candidates are sent to each room.
- ▶ Post Exams: all Very Late Arrivals, suspected malpractice, special consideration and other queries will be collated by the member of SLT and reported to the exams boards with assistance from support staff.
- ▶ Results will be downloaded by the member of SLT who will work with the Centre Principal to arrange distribution. Post results queries will be managed by the member of SLT and the Principal.
- ▶ **NOTE: it is usual practice for the Data Administrator to support the Exams Officer – therefore, in the case of the absence of the Data Administrator, the Finance Administrator will support.**

Exams Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)

	Exams Officer
Each KPI	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Produce mock examination timetables• Quality control of mock examinations• Print mock papers• Organise rooms for mocks• Distribute papers and answer booklets/paper for mocks
Sept	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review the Exams Policy and SOP• Review all centre policies• Estimated entries/Intention to enter for June series = 10th October• Specification and examination details retrieved from each subject• Ensure Awarding Bodies have correct contact details• Update contact details with National Centre Number Register• Inform Awarding Bodies or any staff who are preparing family members for exams• Access Arrangements for Year 10• DfE checking exercise• Register Voc. Qualifications• Enquiries about Results – 20/9• CATS/NGRT testing, etc.• Begin creating Year 11 exam packs• Create exam ID labels for Year 11• Archive exam registers from last year
Oct	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Check storage cabinet for examination scripts• Provisional exams timetable – teachers to send requests (i.e. BTEC)• Head of Centre to respond to NCNR annual update (by end of October)• Certificate collection letter to students

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collate certificates and create check-lists • Jan entries 21st October •
Nov	Archive coursework – 3 months
Dec	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Register Voc. Qualifications. - check • Recruit and train invigilators <p>Find out deadlines for coursework/ controlled assessment</p>
Jan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality control of Voc. Qualification. Exams • Student feedback on mocks, etc
Feb	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summer entries
Mar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finalise summer exam timetable • Create invigilator plan • Organise rooms for summer exams • Create Year 11 exam packs •
Apr	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Register Voc. Qualifications. - check • Finalise exam timetable • Book SLT to call in students • Ensure that the 'JCQ Information for candidates' document is shared with students • Book invigilators and readers • Create exams lists • Create seating plans (extra time/tiers) <p>Year 11 exam pack, letters and timetables out to parents</p>
May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality control of examinations
Jun	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check arrangements for SLT calling in students • Print and display Mobile Phone and Warning to Candidates posters • Pens, pencils, instructions in exams room • Lay out exam hall for exams, including booklets, ID labels and equipment • Check clocks and note exam start times • Start and finish exams, including gathering papers • Dispatch scripts to the exam boards
Jul and Aug	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit declaration for late arrivals of candidates • Check learners to 'dis-apply' • Send Malpractice reports • Special Considerations – last exam • Data and results • Estimated entries/Intention to enter for Nov/Jan/March series = 21 July • Review exam plan • Invigilator feedback • Results Day admin

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*
- ▶ *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

- ▶ Teachers, Teaching Assistant, Learning Manager, and Assistant Learning Manager to bring candidates to the attention of Exams Officer who will arrange for testing by outside agency (contact details held Learning Manager).
- ▶ Exams Officer will ensure that criteria have been met and apply to Awarding body. Exams Officer will ensure that these arrangements are provided in the exam.

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

- ▶ Exams Officer will alert Principal, who will allocate another teacher to provide this information. Exam Officer will liaise with the relevant awarding body and act upon advice received.

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

- ▶ Exams Officer to calculate invigilating needs in good time in order to recruit and train new invigilators in readiness.
- ▶ Senior invigilator(s) trained to lead examinations.
- ▶ Members of permanent support staff trained as invigilators, just in case.

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

- ▶ Exams officer will organise rooming for examinations before Easter holidays ensuring sufficient time is available to identify appropriate rooms and plan appropriately
- ▶ Alternative venues in school to be made available for exams

6. Failure of IT systems

Criteria for implementation of the plan

MIS system failure at final entry deadline

MIS system failure during exams preparation

MIS system failure at results release time

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- ▶ The exams officer, in consultation with SLT, will make entries direct to the awarding bodies, and will also arrange alternative method of data exchange.
- ▶ Results also accessed directly from awarding bodies.
- ▶ During system failure, the exams officer will liaise with the awarding bodies to minimise disruption and costs

7. 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

- ▶ SLT to manage all such incidents and priority to be given to exam cohorts

8. 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 will contact the relevant awarding bodies to discuss alternative.

- ▶ Centre continue to prepare students via online teaching and learning
- ▶ Centre may advise candidates to sit examinations in alternative series

9. 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

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- ▶ The exams officer will contact the relevant awarding bodies to discuss alternative arrangements and liaise with SLT to take appropriate action
- ▶ The centre to communicate with parents, carers and candidates regarding solutions to the issue

10. Centre unable to open as normal during the exams period (including in the event of the centre being unavailable for examinations owing to an unforeseen emergency)

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Centre unable to open as normal for scheduled examinations

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- ▶ The exams officer will contact the awarding bodies to notify them of any such difficulties and put in place suitable alternative arrangements. In the meantime, examination scripts will be kept in secure storage

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

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- ▶ Contact the Awarding Body for their direct instructions.
- ▶ Ensure careful tracking of papers against the centre's exam timetable throughout the season

12. 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 to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- ▶ Keep papers locked in secure and padlocked cabinet within the examination secure room (5 lever mortice) in strong room and contact Awarding Body for advice or take them to the Post Office for collection with appropriate paperwork, depending of the nature of the problem.
- ▶ Ensure tracking documentation is kept on every dispatch from the centre as per the JCQ guidance through Instructions for Conducting Examinations 2017-18

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

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- ▶ Contain and lock up all evidence. Collect witness statements and other evidence. Contact Awarding Body immediately for advice.

14. Centre unable to distribute results as normal (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

- ▶ Contact Awarding Bodies, if necessary
- ▶ Arrange to use facilities of a local primary College

Further guidance to inform procedures and implement contingency planning

Ofqual

What schools and colleges and other centres should do if exams or other assessments are seriously disrupted

1. Contingency planning

When drafting contingency plans, you should consider the following guidance:

1.1 Covid specific guidance:

- [Guidance for schools Covid-19](#) from the Department for Education in England (subject to frequent updates as the situation changes)
- [Responsibility for autumn GCSE, AS and A level exam series](#) from the Department for Education in England
- [Action for FE Colleges](#) from the Department for Education in England
- [Public health guidance to support autumn exams](#) from the Department for Education
- [Education and childcare: coronavirus](#) from Welsh Government
- [Covid-19 - guidance for school and educational settings](#) from Department of Education in Northern Ireland

1.2 General contingency guidance

- [Emergency planning and response](#) from the Department for Education in England
- [Opening and closing local-authority-maintained schools](#) from the Department for Education in England
- [Exceptional closure days](#) from the Department of Education in Northern Ireland
- [Checklist - exceptional closure of schools](#) from the Department of Education in Northern Ireland
- [School closures](#) from NI Direct
- [Opening schools in extremely bad weather](#) - guidance for schools from the Welsh Government
- [Procedures for handling bomb threats](#) from the National Counter Terrorism Security Office.

2. Disruption to assessments or exams

In the absence of any instruction from the relevant awarding organisation, you should make sure that any exam or timetabled assessment takes place if it is possible to hold it. This may mean relocating to alternative premises.

You should discuss alternative arrangements with your awarding organisation if:

- the exam or assessment cannot take place
- a student misses an exam or loses their assessment due to an emergency, or other event, outside of the student's control

See also:

- [JCQ Joint Contingency Plan for the Examination System in England, Wales and Northern Ireland](#)

3. Steps you should take

3.1 Exam planning

Review contingency plans well in advance of each exam or assessment series. Consider how, if the contingency plan is invoked, you will comply with the awarding organisation's requirements.

3.2 In the event of disruption

1. Contact the relevant awarding organisation and follow its instructions.
2. Take advice, or follow instructions, from relevant local or national agencies in deciding whether your centre is able to open.
3. Identify whether the exam or timetabled assessment can be sat at an alternative venue, in agreement with the relevant awarding organisation, ensuring the secure transportation of questions papers or assessment materials to the alternative venue.
4. Where accommodation is limited, prioritise students whose progression will be severely delayed if they do not take their exam or timetabled assessment when planned.
5. In the event of an evacuation during an examination please refer to JCQ's [Centre emergency evacuation procedure](#).
6. Communicate with parents, carers and students any changes to the exam or assessment timetable or to the venue.
7. Communicate with any external assessors or relevant third parties regarding any changes to the exam or assessment timetable.

3.3 After the exam

1. Consider whether any students' ability to take the assessment or demonstrate their level of attainment has been materially affected and, if so, apply for special consideration.
2. Advise students, where appropriate, of the opportunities to take their exam or assessment at a later date.
3. Ensure that scripts are stored under secure conditions.
4. Return scripts to awarding organisations in line with their instructions. Never make alternative arrangements for the transportation of completed exam scripts, unless told to do so by the awarding organisation.

4. Steps the awarding organisation should take

4.1 Exam planning

1. Establish and maintain, and at all times comply with, an up-to-date, written contingency plan.
2. Ensure that the arrangements in place with centres and other third parties enable them to deliver and award qualifications in accordance with their conditions of recognition.

4.2 In the event of disruption

- Take all reasonable steps to mitigate any adverse effect, in relation to their qualifications, arising from any disruption.
- Provide effective guidance to any of their centres delivering qualifications.
- Ensure that where an assessment must be completed under specified conditions, students 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 an adverse effect on students, 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 exam

Consider any requests for special consideration for affected students. For example, those who may have lost their internally assessed work or whose performance in assessments or exams could have been affected by the disruption.

5. If any students miss an exam or are disadvantaged by the disruption

If some of the students 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 considerations](#)

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 [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.

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

The governments' view across England, Wales and Northern Ireland is education should continue in 2020/21 with schools remaining open and that examinations and assessments will go ahead in both autumn 2020 and summer 2021.

As education is devolved, in the event of any widespread sustained national disruption to examinations or assessments, national 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 exam timetables.

We will update this page as necessary should national disruption occur with any further relevant links.

(Ofqual guidance extract above taken directly from the Exam system contingency plan: England, Wales and Northern Ireland - What schools and colleges and other centres should do if exams or other assessments are seriously disrupted (updated 01 October 2020) <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/exam-system-contingency-plan-england-wales-and-northern-ireland/what-schools-and-colleges-should-do-if-exams-or-other-assessments-are-seriously-disrupted>)

Exam day procedure (if Exam Officer does not arrive on exam day)

1. Exam day preparation

Member of SLT to ensure weekly exam pack is available in all exam rooms. Weekly exam pack will contain timetable, access arrangement list, invigilator timetable and seating plan.

Rooms and Invigilators (a ratio of at least 1:30 and 1:15 for onscreen exams, plus one for dealing with student issues, such as illness or comfort breaks) will be filled in on form on front of files, as well as which readers, if applicable. In a big exam, there may be some students that are being held under supervision until a room is free to house them. A copy of these 'exam packs' are required in each exam room.

The seating plan must be followed by placing a candidate identification card on the relevant desk. The cards will include centre number and candidate number information. Access arrangement cards will include seat and room number which will minimise disruption to those with access arrangements or special considerations.

The 'exam packs' are important as it is JCQ regulations that a yellow instruction book (ICE 2021-2022) is taken to the main exam room. The 'exam packs' contain these along with other essentials, such as a white board to write the times date, etc. of the exam (this is another JCQ reg.). They should also be stocked with spare equipment and a laminated card that should be read to the student/s at the beginning of the exam.

You cannot open the packets of exam question papers until 8am or 12:30pm; this must be done under supervision of another member of staff. Once open they must be guarded stringently. On the front of the exam paper it will say what special equipment is required. Put all equipment on the desks ready.

Every exam room must display the following posters as a minimum and also at least one clock.

	OUTSIDE EXAM ROOM
MUST	Warning to candidates
	No Mobile phones
ADVISED	Seating plan on hall door
	Silence Exams in Progress

If rooms other than the hall are being used, it is essential to make sure that the seats are set out as per the seating plan (alter either to get them to match – seats must be 1.25 meters from the centre of one to the next) and any relevant teaching aids are covered or removed.

Keys are kept by the Exams Officer and spare keys with the Head of Centre. Question papers are kept in the filing cabinets, with answer papers for each board laid out on the counter. In general, the cabinet is filled first from the top in date order. There is a timetable on inside of door where exams are highlighted as papers arrive. As the papers cannot be left unattended it is best to have more than one person go to fetch them. Before you leave the strong room, check the packets as to whether answer papers are included - if not, choose the correct ones from the counter as per exam board.

Put out the exam papers according to the seating plan, making sure that the foundation and higher levels are noted. Mark up the large white board with the date, centre number, and all the paper numbers and start and finish times. Some students are entitled to extra time; this should be marked on the seating plan. Send invigilators in small rooms off with their 'exam packs', extra equipment and papers.

Things needed on exam day

- **POSTERS** - 2 x warning + No Phones + silence + centre no.
- **BOARD** showing times
- **CLOCKS** with batteries
- **SEATING PLAN** marked with extra time and highlighted tiers
- **INVIGILATORS** booked and written on seating plan
- **STUDENT I.D. LABELS** on desk per seating plan
- **BOX** with pens, pencils, yellow Instruction Booklet.
- **SENIOR LEADER** booked to call in students as per seating plan
- **REGISTER** kept in exam packs, which also has other notes and parcel labels
- **QUESTION PAPERS** - keep safe and don't open too early
- **ANSWER PAPERS** - if separate ones required
- **EQUIPMENT** as listed on front of exam paper
- **LATE CANDIDATE INSTRUCTIONS** on orange slip

Getting Started

A member of SLT or the subject leader (no member of teaching staff for the exam should enter the hall) of the exam should line up candidates outside the hall. They will need a copy of seating plan and will call out their names, one line at a time. Invigilators wait in hall.

There should be silence in the room at all times. As soon as the last candidate is in, start to read the laminated instructions to candidates, or the suggested reading from the official yellow instructions book, or play the recording on the laptop. Invigilators will collect phones. Remember to get candidates to write names on front of answer sheets and read instructions on the front of the paper.

Note the exact start time of the exam. If any students are missing, advise the Learning Manager, who might be able to ring to discover their whereabouts. Also, mark the seating plan 'absent'. Write anything else that needs to be noted on the seating plan.

If any student needs to leave the room, you must make sure that they are accompanied and that you are not left short of invigilators (1:30)

If any student arrives late, mark the seating plan, check they have no phone, explain that their paper might or might not be accepted - give them full time, if feasible.

Finishing

At end of exam, announce 'stop writing and remain seated'. You can give 5 minutes warning, if all finish at same time, but don't have to. Collect answer papers. Candidates can collect phones from Student Reception. Send off candidates as quietly as possible, one column at a time.

(Teaching staff/head of department or faculty may collect papers 24 hours after the examination has finished.)

Complete the attendance registers and pack, with the answer scripts, into correct bags (kept in the Exams Office). Use labels from exam packs.

Ask invigilators to make a note of hours.

Give parcel to Principal's PA and complete the log. Parcel Force should have been booked to come and collect (Parcel Force 0870 240 0913).

Further guidance to inform procedures and implement contingency planning

Ofqual

What schools and colleges and other centres should do if exams or other assessments are seriously disrupted

1. Contingency planning

You should prepare for possible disruption to exams and other assessments as part of your emergency planning and make sure your staff are aware of these plans.

When drafting contingency plans, you should consider the following guidance...

2. Disruption to assessments or exams

In the absence of any instruction from the relevant awarding organisation, you should make sure that any exam or timetabled assessment takes place if it is possible to hold it. This may mean relocating to alternative premises.

You should discuss alternative arrangements with your awarding organisation if:

- the exam or assessment cannot take place
- a student misses an exam or loses their assessment due to an emergency, or other event, outside of the student's control

3. Steps you should take

3.1 Exam planning

Review contingency plans well in advance of each exam or assessment series. Consider how, if the contingency plan is invoked, you will comply with the awarding organisation's requirements.

3.2 In the event of disruption

1. Contact the relevant awarding organisation and follow its instructions.
2. Take advice, or follow instructions, from relevant local or national agencies in deciding whether your centre is able to open.
3. Identify whether the exam or timetabled assessment can be sat at an alternative venue, in agreement with the relevant awarding organisation, ensuring the secure transportation of questions papers or assessment materials to the alternative venue.
4. Where accommodation is limited, prioritise students whose progression will be severely delayed if they do not take their exam or timetabled assessment when planned.
5. In the event of an evacuation during an examination please refer to JCQ's '[Centre emergency evacuation procedure](#)'.
6. Communicate with parents, carers and students any changes to the exam or assessment timetable or to the venue.
7. Communicate with any external assessors or relevant third parties regarding any changes to the exam or assessment timetable.

3.3 After the exam

1. Consider whether any students' ability to take the assessment or demonstrate their level of attainment has been materially affected and, if so, apply for special consideration.
2. Advise students, where appropriate, of the opportunities to take their exam or assessment at a later date.
3. Ensure that scripts are stored under secure conditions.

4. Return scripts to awarding organisations in line with their instructions. Never make alternative arrangements for the transportation of completed exam scripts, unless told to do so by the awarding organisation.

4. Steps the awarding organisation should take

4.1 Exam planning

Establish and maintain, and at all times comply with, an up-to-date, written contingency plan.

Ensure that the arrangements in place with centres and other third parties enable them to deliver and award qualifications in accordance with their conditions of recognition.

4.2 In the event of disruption

1. Take all reasonable steps to mitigate any adverse effect, in relation to their qualifications, arising from any disruption.
2. Provide effective guidance to any of their centres delivering qualifications.
3. Ensure that where an assessment must be completed under specified conditions, students complete the assessment under those conditions (other than where any reasonable adjustments or special considerations require alternative conditions).
4. Promptly notify the relevant regulators about any event which could have an adverse effect on students, standards or public confidence.
5. Coordinate its communications with the relevant regulators where the disruption has an impact on multiple centres or a wide range of learners.

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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 considerations](#)
- [FAB's guidance on special considerations](#)

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 [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.

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

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 exam timetables.

[Ofqual guidance extract taken directly from the *Exam system contingency plan: England, Wales and Northern Ireland - What schools and colleges and other centres should do if exams or other assessments are seriously disrupted*, (updated 23 January 2018) <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/exam-system-contingency-plan-england-wales-and-northern-ireland/what-schools-and-colleges-should-do-if-exams-or-other-assessments-are-seriously-disrupted>]

JCQ

15.1 The qualification regulators, awarding bodies and government departments responsible for education have prepared and agreed information for schools and colleges 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 system affecting significant numbers of candidates.

Further information may be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/exam-system-contingency-plan-england-wales-and-northern-ireland/what-schools-and-colleges-should-do-if-exams-or-other-assessments-are-seriously-disrupted>

15.2 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.

15.3 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.

15.4 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.

15.5 The awarding bodies will designate a 'contingency day' for examinations, summer 2022. This is consistent with the qualification regulators' document Exam system contingency plan: England, Wales and Northern Ireland:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/exam-system-contingency-plan-england-wales-and-northern-ireland>

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.

In the event of national disruption to a day of examinations in summer 2022, 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 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. However, the awarding bodies will not insist upon candidates being available throughout the entire timetable period as a matter of course.

[JCQ guidance taken directly from JCQ *Instructions for Conducting Examinations 2021-22* <http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/ice---instructions-for-conducting-examinations>, section 15, Contingency planning]

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

Guidance on *Alternative Site* arrangements and *Transferred Candidate* arrangements

Accessed through secure login to the Centre Admin Portal (CAP) or through the JCQ training site

<http://jqc.training.jcq.org.uk/CAP/Home/Training>

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>

GOV.UK

Emergency planning and response: Severe weather; Exam disruption; Coronavirus (COVID-19)

www.gov.uk/guidance/emergencies-and-severe-weather-schools-and-early-years-settings

Opening and closing 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>