



GUISELEY SCHOOL

Exam Contingency Plan

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Governors' Committee:	Curriculum Standards and Effectiveness
Responsible Officer:	Deputy Headteacher – Curriculum

Role	Name(s)
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Senior leader(s)	Stephen Vasey, Director Exams & Assessments, R Wood Deputy Head Teacher, Kirsty Cook Assistant Head Teacher, C McGirr Assistant Head, R Probert Assistant Head H Ogden Director 6 th Form
Exams officer	Ray Allen
SENCo (or equivalent role)	Kim Ratcliffe

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Purpose of the plan

This plan examines potential risks and issues that could cause disruption to the examination and assessment process at Guiseley School. By outlining actions/procedures to be invoked in case of disruption it is intended to mitigate the impact these disruptions have on our processes.

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 document *What schools and colleges and other centres should do if exams or other assessments are seriously disrupted*, the **JCQ Joint Contingency Plan** for the Examination System in England, Wales and Northern Ireland and the JCQ document **Preparing for disruption to examinations**.

This plan also confirms Guiseley School compliance with JCQ's **General Regulations for Approved Centres** (GR 5.3) that the centre has in place for inspection that must be reviewed and updated annually by a member of the senior leadership team and communicated within the centre:

- a contingency plan which covers all aspects of examination/assessment administration and delivery

Contingency arrangements

In accordance with the regulations (GR 3.17-19), Guiseley School **must** have an up to date written contingency plan.

The contingency plan **must** cover all aspects of examination/assessment administration and delivery. Senior leaders **must** have robust contingency arrangements in place that will minimise the risk to examination/assessment administration and delivery and any adverse impact on candidates.

The plan must cover the following scenarios:

- the head of centre, relevant senior leader(s) with oversight of examination and assessment administration, SENCo (or equivalent role), examinations officer or any other key staff essential to the examination process being absent at a critical stage of the examination cycle
- the potential impact of other events such as flooding which could lead to all or parts of the centre becoming unavailable
- potential issues with the centre's IT systems

As part of the contingency plan the centre **must** identify an alternative site or alternative sites which can be used if examinations cannot be conducted at the registered address. Larger centres may require more than one potential alternative site or different sites for different year groups.

Guiseley School **must** have at least one senior member of staff (senior designated contact) who is available to manage emergency requests from awarding bodies that are results related during the summer holidays. However, a number of contacts can be provided to reduce the risk of this falling on one individual throughout the summer holidays.

Guiseley School **must** ensure where candidates' work is produced electronically it is backed-up and should consider the contingency of candidates' work being backed-up on two separate devices, including one off-site back-up via the Cloud. Appropriate security arrangements must be implemented which protect candidates' work in the event of IT system corruption and cyber-attacks.

National Centre Number Register and other information requirements

In accordance with the regulations (GR 5.3), the head of centre will ensure that Guiseley School completes the National Centre Number Register annual update by the end of October every year (even if there are no changes to centre details) which includes providing senior designated contact details (this might include a personal mobile number and/or email address). These must be the contact details of someone who can be reached in an emergency if the centre is closed over the summer and who can mobilise resources to respond to the issue.

Head of centre/senior leader(s) with oversight of examination and assessment administration absence at a critical stage of the exam cycle

In the absence of the Head of Centre, Mr Vasey Deputy Headteacher and Director of Examinations & Assessment will assume responsibility and deal with any issues that arise and possible causes of disruption to the exam process

Possible causes of disruption to the exam process

1. Exam officer extended absence at a critical stage of the exam cycle

Criteria for implementation of the plan

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

Planning

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

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*
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Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- SLT to nominate a 'deputy' to cover the role & tasks. This maybe an Exams Assistant or extra support could be called on from the Lead Invigilator.
- Extra hours should be allocated to the 'deputy' to ensure that important pre-exams preparation tasks and entry deadlines are met.
- Exams Officer 'shadowed' by SLT Line Manager (Steve Vasey) throughout the academic year; and kept informed of potential planning & procedural interruptions & issues that will impact the examination process in school.
- Exams Officer to ensure that the school exam policies comply with JCQ ICE & requirements.
- Exams Officer to prepare internal/external exam timetables and meet with SLT-LM to agree external invigilator recruitment & training needs in advance of the main exam season.
- SLT to be aware that duplicate Exams Office keys are kept with Ray Allen Exams Officer, Head of Centre, & Site Manager.
- The Exams Officer to ensure that Key Holders are trained in the secure handling of exams paperwork as required by JCQ.
- Where there are insufficient exam papers due to late entries; the exam paper may be securely photocopied. Two members of the Invigilation team/EO must be present when photocopying exam papers.
- Exam papers maybe opened within 90 minutes of the awarding body published starting time for the examination in order to make them up into more appropriately sized sets for different rooms. However, it is strongly recommended that non-interactive electronic PDF versions of exam papers is accessed via the awarding bodies secure extranet site is used for this purpose for the avoidance of human error.
- To avoid potential breaches of security care must be taken to ensure the correct question paper packets are opened. *A "second pair of eyes"- a member of centre staff who can be an invigilator must check the day, date, time, subject, unit/component and tier of entry, immediately BEFORE a Question Paper is opened. This check must be recorded.*
- Exams Office to ensure all erratum notices are clearly identified with the exam papers; and the Lead Invigilator is aware of the erratum notice when opening the exam papers in the exam room.

Where the exam erratum notice has not been communicated to the candidates and this is noted during the exam. Stop the exam and inform the candidates; apply to the exam board for special consideration. If the exam has concluded apply for special consideration.

2. SENCo (or equivalent role) extended absence at a critical stage of 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

- *Mona Foster Assistant SENCO will deputise in the absence of Kim Ratcliffe Lead SENCO*
- *Stephen Kelly HLTA is appointed qualified assessor to test candidates in place of the Lead SENCO.*
- *SLT to be aware of JCQ timetable for approval and/or submission for approval of candidate access arrangements so allowing sufficient time to implement above.*
- *Martha Prosho Student Support Officer to arrange student support during all exams; with the Exams Office*

3. Teaching staff (or other key staff essential to the examination process) extended absence at a critical stage of 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 (including controlled assessments and coursework) 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

- *Heads of Curriculum responsible for omitted entries, coursework/assessment marks in the absence of a member of the teaching staff.*
- *Exam entries must be made on time to meet deadlines and avoid late fees. Amendments can be made at a later date to confirm final entries.*
- *Heads of Curriculum to be aware of the external exams/assessment schedules & work to the exam board deadlines for candidate coursework and mark submissions*

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 check availability of external invigilators in advance of main exam season.
- Refer to SLT-LM where recruitment & training of further external invigilators is required.
- Refer to SLT-LM where invigilator numbers fall below JCQ minimum thresholds.
- Check availability of other invigilators who have indicated availability for the session.
- Check with the Cover Manager for freed staff who have not been used for the period(s) concerned.
- Some support staff have attended training so could invigilate in an emergency.
- Consider possibility of amalgamating any access arrangement rooms to release an invigilator.
- Call upon SLT to invigilate exam.

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 to identify appropriate rooms in advance of the exam season; and book these rooms via MIS notifying room changes to teaching staff affected.
- Exams Officer will organise rooming in advance of examination windows to ensure sufficient time is available to identify appropriate rooms and plan appropriately.
- Exams Officer agrees & prepares the external/internal exam/assessment timetable/calendar and shares this with SLT; Site Management & wider school community in advance of the exam seasons.
- In the event of emergency; SLT in conjunction with the Exams Officer will review the free room calendar. Consider all factors involved and move to an appropriate alternative venue.
- If all students are in the exam at any one time; then the rooms used by that Year group in that period should be free and can be booked for exams.
- No free rooms; refer to SLT for guidance.
- In the event of a room not being available at very short notice (or insufficient rooming available) support staff and invigilators will be used to ensure the security of the examination is not compromised whilst alternative rooming is sourced. (candidates will be suitably isolated as required).
- Seek advice from awarding organisations and JCQ Inspection Service, request timetable adjustment if required and operate exams on split timings.
- In the event that the exam rooms are unavailable use other building on the Campus site closing the school to other students if necessary.

Alternative venue details:

- In the event of a whole Campus closure alternative accommodation will be arranged at St_Marys Catholic Voluntary Academy, Bradford Road, Leeds, LS29 6AE.
- Reciprocal accommodation arrangements to be included in the St Mary's exams policy document 25/26. This is confirmed for the current academic year on 13/01/2026 by e-mail with Mr M Flanagan Deputy Head Teacher St Marys School, Menston.

Communicate with candidates (and where appropriate, parents/carers) any changes to the exam or assessment timetable or venue

6. Cyber security

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Where any incidents might compromise any aspect of assessment delivery, such as a cyber-attack

(Where there is disruption to teaching time and students miss teaching and learning, it remains the responsibility of centres to prepare students, as usual, for examinations. ☒ in the case of modular courses, centres may advise candidates to sit examinations in an alternative series. ☒ centres should have plans in place to facilitate alternative methods of learning.)

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

(This will include the required arrangements for cyber security)

(GR 3.21) Ensure there are procedures in place to maintain the security of user accounts by:

- a) ensuring that all members of centre staff who access awarding bodies' online systems undertake annual cyber security training...

... The training must include:

- the importance of creating strong, unique passwords for all accounts;
- keeping all account details strictly confidential;
- the critical role of Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA) in protecting against unauthorised access;
- how to properly set up and use MFA for both centre and awarding bodies' systems;
- an awareness of all types of social engineering/phishing attempts;...
- the importance of staff quickly reporting any suspicious activity, events, incidents and encouraging a safe and supportive reporting culture.

Certificates of completed staff cyber training must be downloaded and held on file for inspection. The NCSC training resource provides a certificate of completion of cyber training.

- b) developing and maintaining a comprehensive cyber security policy for the centre. The National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) provides resources to assist centres in creating such policies;
- c) implementing and enforcing robust security measures, including:
- mandatory MFA for all accounts and systems containing exam-related information, including those that interface between awarding body and centre systems, to enhance security and protect sensitive data;
 - regularly reviewing and updating security settings to align with current best practices;
- d) updating any passwords that may have been exposed
- e) setting up secure account recovery options
- f) reviewing and managing connected applications
- g) monitoring accounts and regularly reviewing account access, including removing access when no longer required
- h) 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' MFA requirements.
- i) reporting any actual or suspected compromise of an awarding body's online systems immediately to the relevant awarding body

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

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

- (This will include the security arrangements put in place which protect candidates' work)
(GR 3.19) Ensure where candidates' work is produced electronically that it is backed-up and should consider the contingency of candidates' work being backed-up on two separate devices, including one off-site back-up via the Cloud... Implement appropriate security arrangements which protect candidates' work in the event of IT system corruption and cyber-attacks.
- Exam entries should be made well in advance of the deadline to avoid any issues.
- In the event of an IT failure contact the relevant exam board to explain (they may give an extension, but get a name and/or get it in writing!)
- Check with the Andrew Mathieson IT Network Manager where updates and/or network issues are likely to impact upon work in the exams office.
- Check in advance that IT Network is aware of exam results days to ensure smooth running of downloads & any possible issues that would delay release of results to candidates

8. 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

- SLT implement the school lockdown policy around school. The Exams Officer communicates with SLT-LM.
- In the event of an evacuation; the Exams Officer/Invigilator will follow JCQ ICE Section 18: Emergencies.
- SLT to assist in maintaining the security of the exam; may allocate a separate area for candidates.
- Exam Officer to ensure Invigilators are aware of the lockdown/emergency policy.
- SLT will advise when the time is appropriate to return to the exam room and resume the exam.
- Exams Officer will notify the exam board of the circumstances. This may take the form an immediate request for guidance and/or submitting special consideration to mitigate those circumstances

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

- (Where there is disruption to teaching time and students miss teaching and learning, it remains the responsibility of centres to prepare students, as usual, for examination ☐ in the case of modular courses, centres may advise candidates to sit examinations in an alternative series ☐ centres should have plans in place to facilitate alternative methods of learning)
- In the event of disruption to teaching and learning, the school will support and maintain student teaching and learning online via established MS Teams lesson delivery.

10. Candidates may not be able to take examinations - centre remains open

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Candidates may not be able to attend the examination centre to take examinations as normal because of a crisis

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- (Centres' contingency plans should focus on options that enable candidates to take their examinations)
 - ☐ 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 25-26](#) 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
- Exams Office downloads timetable base data from exam board information verified with Heads of Curriculum.
- Exams Office secures exam papers on arrival in school. EO has list of all exams being sat in the exam season with paper reference numbers and dates. Checked jointly by EO & Invigilator and filed securely in chronological order. Any errors or omissions are immediately communicated to the exam board.
- Emergency papers can be requested from the exam boards and downloaded under secure password.
- Exams Office provides detailed accurate timetable information to Candidates in advance of the exam.
- Attendance is checked when Candidates arrive for their exams and any not present are contacted by SLT. In some cases Candidates can be collected from home.
- Centre to liaise with candidates to identify whether the examination can be sat at an alternative venue in agreement with the relevant awarding organisation.
- Centre to offer candidates an opportunity to sit any exams missed at the next available series.

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- Exams Office secures exam papers on arrival in school. EO has list of all exams being sat in the exam season with paper reference numbers and dates. Checked jointly by EO & Invigilator and filed securely in chronological order. Any errors or omissions are immediately communicated to the exam board.
- Emergency papers can be requested from the exam boards and downloaded under secure password.
- Exams Office provides detailed accurate timetable information to Candidates in advance of the exam.
- Attendance is checked when Candidates arrive for their exams and any not present are contacted by SLT. In some cases Candidates can be collected from home.
- Centre to liaise with candidates to identify whether the examination can be sat at an alternative venue in agreement with the relevant awarding organisation.
- Centre to offer candidates an opportunity to sit any exams missed at the next available series.

Centre to apply to awarding organisations for special consideration for candidate where they have met the minimum requirements. Candidates are only eligible for special consideration if they have been fully prepared and have covered the whole course but are affected by adverse circumstances beyond their control.

11. Centre may not be able to open for examinations

(Including in the event of the centre being unavailable for examinations owing to an unforeseen emergency)

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Centre may not be able to open as normal for scheduled examinations

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- (Centres' contingency plans must focus on enabling candidates to take their examinations if the centre is at risk of not being able to open as normal)
(This could include implementing alternative arrangements for the conducting of examinations and notifying the JCQ Centre Inspection Service of an alternative site arrangement by submitting the JCQ Alternative Site form online, using the Centre Admin Portal (CAP).)
☑ The decision on 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 ☑ The relevant awarding body should be contacted if additional support or guidance in the event of disruption to examinations is required
- Centre to open for exams and exam candidates only if possible.
- SLT to consider staffing of exams; in the absence of the Exams Officer; staff with knowledge of exam rules & regulations together with locally based invigilators can be used at short notice.
- Centre to use alternative venues in agreement with the relevant awarding organisations e.g. share facilities with other centres or use another public building if possible.
- Centre may offer candidates an opportunity to sit any exams missed at the next available series.
- Centre to apply to awarding organisations for special consideration for candidates.

- Alternative venue details: St_Marys Catholic Voluntary Academy, Bradford Road, Leeds, LS29 6AE

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

- (☒ 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 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

- Centre to ensure secure storage of completed examination papers until collection. All exam scripts must be stored securely in the Exams Office.
- Where examinations are part of the national 'yellow label' service or where awarding bodies arrange collections, centres should contact the relevant awarding bodies for advice and instructions
- For examinations where centres make their own collection arrangements, they should investigate alternative options that comply with the JCQ document *Instructions for conducting examinations*
- Centres to ensure secure storage of completed examination scripts until as close to the collection time as possible.

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

- Notify the Awarding body immediately.
- Awarding bodies to generate candidate marks for affected assessments based on appropriate evidence of candidate achievement as defined by the Awarding body.
- where marks cannot be generated by awarding organisations candidates may need to retake affected assessment in a subsequent assessment series.
- Candidates may retake the affected assessment at a subsequent assessment window.

- In event that the completed examination scripts/assessment evidence does not reach the awarding organisation. Exam board contacts the centre with details of the missing script/assessment. Check exams office record of despatch Parcelforce/Royal Mail for parcel reference. If evidence of posting required by exam board
- exams office record of despatch Parcelforce/Royal Mail for parcel reference. If evidence of posting required by exam board

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

- Centre to notify Awarding Bodies.
- Centre to arrange to access its results at an alternative site, in agreement with the relevant awarding organisation.
- Centre to arrange to coordinate access to post results services from an alternative site
- Centre to share facilities with other centres if this is possible, in agreement with the relevant awarding organisation.
- Centre to arrange to make post results requests at an alternative location
- Centre to contact the relevant awarding organisation if electronic post results requests are not possible).
- Alternative venue details: St_Marys Catholic Voluntary Academy, Bradford Road, Leeds, LS29 6AE

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16. Exam paper(s) compromised

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Centre becomes aware that exam papers have been compromised.

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- Centre to notify Awarding Body immediately.
- Always ensure that the Exams Secure Office remains locked at all times.
- Always ensure Exams Secure Office cabinets are locked and barred at all times.
- Always secure exam board paper in the Exams Secure Office and ensure that unused exam board paper remains under the control of the exams office at all times.

17. Results Day

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Impacts upon Candidate destinations at KS4 & KS5 Results

No result received for Candidate

Inaccurate headline figures and Candidate results

Results are unavailable to Candidates on time

Enquiries About Results cannot be submitted

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- Check exam papers to attendance lists accurately before despatching to exam boards.
- Ensure accurate copies of all exam attendance list; seating plans and invigilation arrangements are held on record until completion of the JCQ Post Results: EAR process has been completed.
- Exams Officer to check A2C in advance of Results Day. Arrive early on Results Day to commence download of results using the A2C (EDI) download of results.
- Exams Officer to check exam entries; ensuring cash in award codes are entered accurately to avoid errors when downloading result data to SIMS.
- Follow Post Results EAR & Appeals procedures; and ensure Candidates/Parent are aware of the procedures and sign the relevant permissions as soon as possible Post Results.
- Follow Post Results EAR & Appeals procedures; and ensure Candidates/Parent are aware of the procedures and sign the relevant permissions as soon as possible Post Results.

Further guidance to inform procedures and implement contingency planning

DfE

Meeting digital and technology standards in schools and colleges

Cyber security standards for schools and colleges

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

This document was updated in October 2023 to include Ofqual's final decisions on long-term resilience arrangements, and the Department for Education (DfE)'s guidance for education settings with confirmed reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete (RAAC),

In addition to this guidance, you will need to be aware of your specific responsibilities for local and national school preparations and contingencies. You should also follow advice from relevant public health bodies.

Contingency planning

Awarding organisations are required to establish, maintain and comply with an up-to-date detailed written contingency plan, to mitigate any incident they have identified may occur. This includes having communication plans for external parties ([Ofqual General Condition of Recognition A6](#)). Schools and colleges should also be prepared for possible disruption to exams and assessments and make sure staff are aware of these plans.

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

You may also wish to see the [JCQ's notice to centres on exam contingency plans](#) and [JCQ's notice on preparing for disruption to examinations](#) in England, Wales and Northern Ireland for qualifications within its scope.

Steps you should take

Exam planning

Review your 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.

Schools, colleges and other exam centres must speak to the relevant awarding organisations as soon as possible if they are expecting any disruption that might affect the sitting of exams and assessments.

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 students, parents and carers any changes to the exam or assessment timetable or to the venue.
7. Communicate with any external assessors, invigilators or relevant third parties regarding any changes to the exam or assessment timetable.

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 to the relevant awarding organisation 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.

Steps the awarding organisation should take

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.

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 are able to 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.

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.

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, depending on their specific policies.

See also [JCQ's guidance on special consideration](#)

Wider communications

The regulators, [Ofqual](#) in England, [Qualifications Wales](#) in Wales and [CCEA Regulation](#) in Northern Ireland, will share timely and accurate information, as required, with awarding organisations, government departments and other stakeholders.

The [DfE 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.

Widespread national disruption to the taking of examinations or assessments

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 examinations and assessments, including exam timetables.

In September 2023, Ofqual and the DfE published [joint consultation decisions on long-term resilience arrangements](#). As in 2023, Ofqual has provided [guidance on collecting evidence of student performance to ensure resilience in the qualifications system](#) for students entering GCSEs, AS and A levels, the Advanced Extension Award and Project qualifications. For VTQs and other qualifications used alongside or instead of GCSEs, AS and A levels, awarding organisations will provide guidance where needed and will contact schools and colleges with more information.

In December 2022, Qualifications Wales published [guidance for contingency assessment arrangements](#) for GCSEs, AS and A levels and Skills Challenge Certificates in the event that a national decision is made to cancel exams. This guidance is still relevant for the current academic year.

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

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

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

General contingency guidance

- [emergency planning and response for education, childcare and children's social care settings](#) from the DfE in England
- [handling strike action in schools](#) from the DfE in England
- [school organisation: local-authority-maintained schools](#) from the DfE in England
- [reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete: guidance for education settings with confirmed RAAC](#) from the DfE in England
- [exceptional closure days: Northern Ireland](#) from the Department of Education in Northern Ireland
- [checklist - exceptional closure of schools](#) from the Department of Education in Northern Ireland
- [school terms and school closures](#) from NI Direct
- [opening schools, childcare and play settings in extreme bad weather and extreme hot weather](#) - guidance for schools from the Welsh Government
- [emergency planning and response guidance for education and childcare settings](#)- guidance for schools and education settings from the Welsh Government
- [protective security and preparedness for education settings](#) from the DfE
- [police guidance](#) from National Counter Terrorism Security Office and partners on preparing for threats
- [cyber security guidance for schools and colleges](#) from the National Cyber Security Centre

(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** (last updated 7 May 2024)

<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. CONTINGENCY PLANNING

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>

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 or bodies.

15.3 All centres must have a written examination contingency plan which covers all aspects of examination administration. This will allow members of the senior leadership team to act immediately in the event of an emergency or where the head of centre, examinations officer or SENCo is absent at a critical stage of the examination cycle. The examination contingency plan should reinforce procedures in the event of the centre being unavailable for examinations owing to an unforeseen emergency.

All relevant centre staff must be familiar with the examination contingency 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 If the head of centre decides the centre cannot be opened for scheduled examinations, the centre's contingency plan must be invoked, utilising the centre's alternative site(s) and the relevant awarding bodies 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 'contingency sessions' for examinations, summer 2026. This is consistent with the qualification regulators' document *Exam system contingency plan: England, Wales and Northern Ireland*.

15.6 The designation of 'contingency sessions' within the common examination timetable is for use in the event of national or significant local disruption to examinations. It is part of the awarding bodies' standard contingency planning for examinations.

15.7 In the event of national disruption to a day of examinations in summer 2026, the awarding bodies will liaise with the qualification regulators and government departments to agree the most appropriate option for managing the impact. As a last resort, the affected examinations will be rescheduled. Although every effort would be taken to keep the impact to a minimum, it is possible that there could be more than one timetable date affected following the disruption, up to and including the last contingency day. Centres will be alerted if it is agreed to reschedule the examinations and the affected candidates will be expected to make themselves available in such circumstances. The decision regarding the rescheduling of examinations will always rest with the awarding body. The centre must conduct the examination on the scheduled date unless instructed to do otherwise by the awarding body.

15.8 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. Centres **must**, therefore, ensure candidates and parents are aware of the contingency arrangements so that they may take them into account when making their plans for the summer.

(JCQ guidance above taken directly from **Instructions for conducting examinations** 2025-2026 <http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/ice---instructions-for-conducting-examinations>, section 15, Contingency planning)

JCQ Joint Contingency Plan www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/other-documents

JCQ Preparing for disruption to examinations www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations/

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

Guidance notes on alternative site arrangements www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/online-forms

Guidance notes for transferred candidates www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/online-forms

Instructions for conducting examinations www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/ice---instructions-for-conducting-examinations

A guide to the special consideration process www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/regulations-and-guidance

Guidance for centres on cyber security (Effective from November 2023; Revised July 2025) www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations/

5 tips to get exam ready and stay cyber safe! www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/blogs/

GOV.UK

Emergency planning and response: Exam and assessment disruption

www.gov.uk/government/publications/emergency-planning-and-response-for-education-childcare-and-childrens-social-care-settings

Dispatch of exam scripts guide: Contingency planning www.gov.uk/government/publications/dispatch-of-exam-scripts-yellow-label-service

Wales

School closures: examinations gov.wales/school-closures-examinations

Opening schools as well as childcare and play settings in extreme bad weather and extreme hot weather: www.gov.wales/opening-schools-well-childcare-and-play-settings-extreme-bad-weather-and-extreme-hot-weather

Northern Ireland

Exceptional closure days – Northern Ireland www.education-ni.gov.uk/articles/exceptional-closure-days

Checklist - exceptional closure of schools www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/checklist-exceptional-closure-schools

National Cyber Security Centre

Cyber Security for Schools www.ncsc.gov.uk/section/education-skills/cyber-security-schools

Cyber security training for school staff www.ncsc.gov.uk/information/cyber-security-training-schools