EXAM CONTINGENCY PLAN

2025/26

This plan is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current regulations

Approved/reviewed by	
October 2025	
Date of next review	October 2026

Key staff involved in the plan

Role	Name(s)
Head of centre	**Anesta McCullagh**
Exams officer line manager (Senior leader)	**Matthew Cooper**
Exams officer	**Paula Harris**
ALS lead/SENCo	**Vanessa Powell**
Senior leader(s)	**Anesta McCullagh, Richard Endicott, Matthew Cooper, Jen Vincent**

Contents

Key staff involved in the plan 2

Purpose of the plan 5

Alongside internal processes, this plan is informed by the Ofqual (and Northern Ireland Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment) **Exam system contingency plan: England, Wales and Northern Ireland** which provides guidance in the publication What schools and colleges and other centres should do if exams or other assessments are seriously disrupted and the **JCQ Joint Contingency Plan** for the Examination System in England, Wales and Northern Ireland and the JCQ document **Preparing for disruption to examinations** (Effective from 1 September 2023). 5

This plan also confirms Engineering UTC Northern Lincolnshire's compliance with JCQ's **General Regulations for Approved Centres** (section 5.3) that the centre has in place: 5

- 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, or on results day, owing to an unforeseen emergency. The potential impact of a cyber-attack should also be considered. 5

National Centre Number Register and other information requirements 5

Possible causes of disruption to the exam process 5

1. Exam officer extended absence at a critical stage of the exam cycle 5

Exams Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) 6

2. ALS lead/SENCo extended absence at a critical stage of the exam cycle 8

3. Teaching staff extended absence at a critical stage of the exam cycle 9

4. Invigilators - lack of appropriately trained invigilators or invigilator absence 9

5. Exam rooms - lack of appropriate rooms or main venues unavailable at short notice 10

6. Failure of IT systems and Cyber-attack 10

7. Emergency evacuation of the exam room (or centre lockdown) 10

8. Disruption of teaching time in the weeks before an exam – centre closed for an extended period 11

9. Candidates unable to take examinations due to a crisis – centre remains open 11

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) 11

11. Disruption in the distribution of examination papers 12

12. Disruption to the transportation of completed examination scripts 12

13. Assessment evidence is not available to be marked 12

14. 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) 12

15. Contingency planning for restrictions during a pandemic (COVID, CORONAVIRUS) 13

16. Any other cause of disruption to the exam process 13

Further guidance to inform procedures and implement contingency planning 14

DfE 14

Ofqual 14
JCQ 17
GOV.UK 18
Wales 18
Northern Ireland 18
National Cyber Security Centre 18
Exam day procedure (if Exam Officer does not arrive on exam day) 19
1. Exam day preparation 19
Further guidance to inform procedures and implement contingency planning 20
Ofqual 20
JCQ 22
GOV.UK 23

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 Ofqual (and Northern Ireland Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment) **Exam system contingency plan: England, Wales and Northern Ireland** which provides guidance in the publication *What schools and colleges and other centres should do if exams or other assessments are seriously disrupted* and the **JCQ Joint Contingency Plan** for the Examination System in England, Wales and Northern Ireland and the JCQ document **Preparing for disruption to examinations** (Effective from 1 September 2023).
This plan also confirms Engineering UTC Northern Lincolnshire'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 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, or on results day, owing to an unforeseen emergency. The potential impact of a cyber-attack should also be considered.

National Centre Number Register and other information requirements

The head of centre will also ensure that the centre as a contingency to enable the prompt handling of urgent issues only, responds to the awarding bodies' request for information regarding the contact details of a senior member of staff (which might include a personal mobile number and/or email address). This will ensure that any urgent matters which might adversely affect candidates which arise outside of term time, and which potentially put qualification awards at risk, can be addressed by awarding bodies with the support of that member of staff. Heads of centre should ensure that this member of staff has the necessary authority to mobilise resources to provide this support, which might include resolving issues within the centre itself.

Possible causes of disruption to the exam process

1. **Exam officer extended absence at a critical stafe 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*

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

The exam officer has completed an Engineering UTC Exams SOP (below) which will be updated at the beginning of every academic year. An additional workbook will include timelines and step by step guides for all the processes. If the exam officer was to be absent, the deputy head would be able to follow these instructions and also contact the exam boards for further guidance if needed.

- Pre-exams: the deputy head will identify key tasks with reference to the Engineering UTC Exams SOP (see below). The deputy head will have access to a shared drive and cabinet which includes all information collected from HODs.
- Entries: the information is collected and shared with SLT and HODs. The deputy head has accounts set up with all exam boards with same rights as exam officer. In the absence of the exam officer, the deputy head will have access to the exam boards as well as A2C.
- Pre exams: Deputy Head will ensure that timetables are distributed and will coordinate sending off any internally assessed work. Deputy Head will book rooms and invigilators following the guides from exam officer and SIMS handbook using exams organiser on SIMS. If extra invigilators are required, the deputy head will arrange recruitment and training with the help of the business manager. An invigilator training powerpoint is on a shared drive which the deputy head can access, hard copy versions are also available in the invigilator folder in the exam officers office. Receptionist is trained on the signing off exam papers and the deputy head are aware of the secure process and have access to the secure storage.
- During Exams: The deputy head 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 deputy head and reported to the exams boards
- Results: deputy head has access to the exam board website and able to download results on pre-results day. Deputy head will be downloaded by the deputy head who will work with the Centre Principal to arrange distribution. Post results queries will be managed by the deputy head and the Principal.

Exams Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)

	Exams Officer
Each KPI	• 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	• Review the Exams Policy and SOP • Estimated entries/Intention to enter for June series - 4th October (same date every year) • 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 DfE checking exercise • Register Voc. Qualifications • Enquiries about Results – 20th September CATS/NGRT testing, etc. • Create Year 11 exam stationary packs • Create Year 11 and any other year group exam student ID cards (different colour for different year groups) • Archive exam registers and paperwork from last year Download November re-sits basedata
Oct	• November re-sit entry lists to Head of English/Maths • Make November re-sit entries – 21st October (same date every year) • Plan and organise November re-sits including seating, timetables, exam room prep • Email invigilators for November re-sit availability and arrange training session Invigilation timetable • 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 • Collate certificates and create check-lists • January entries - 21st October (same date every year)
Nov	• Archive coursework – 3 months • Run November re-sit exams • November mock exams entry form out to HODS • November mock exams prepare timetable and organise including seating, timetables, exam room prep • Run November mock exams
Dec	• Register Voc. Qualifications. - check • Recruit and train invigilators • Plan and organise January exams including seating, timetables, exam room prep • Email invigilators for January exams availability and arrange training session Invigilation timetable • Summer exam timetable dates download • Summer exam basedata download Find out deadlines for coursework/ controlled assessment

Jan	• Quality control of Voc. Qualification. Exams • HT4 mock exams entry form out to HODS • HT4 mock exams prepare timetable and organise including seating, timetables, exam room prep • Summer exam entries form out to HODS • Summer exam entries enter and HODS to check and sign off
Feb	• Summer entries – 21st February (same date every year) • HT4 mock exams
Mar	• Finalise summer exam timetable • Create invigilator timetable • Arrange invigilator meeting before exams start • Organise rooms for summer exams • Create Year 11 exam stationary packs • Double check exam ID cards
Apr	• 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) Year 11 exam pack, letters and timetables out to parents
May **Jun**	• Quality control of examinations • 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	• Access arrangement testing for year 9 ready for year 10 applications • 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. ALS lead/SENCo 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

- 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.
- Planning – Students are tested in year 9 if needed, students with EHCP do not need testing. Training is delivered by the SENCO to all staff at the beginning of each academic year on the collection of evidence needed, SLT help run this training and are fully aware if the process
- Pre-Exams – SENCO and deputy head have access to CAP along with a user guide of how to use the system, deadlines are in the EO's timeline. Deputy head and SENCO aware of the use of CAP.
- Extra Time – SLT, TA's and all invigilators are trained each year on how to support extra time

3. Teaching staff 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 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. Exams officer and deputy head to liaise with Heads of Departments and any other relevant teaching staff to ensure that any required entries are made on time and are correct. Also to make sure any marks are submitted to the relevant awarding bodies in a timely manner

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 so we have a backup if invigilators are absent

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 exam rooms within school to be made available for exams (room S20-S26 are rented out to local authority – these rooms will not be available during exam seasons to ensure they will be available)
- Alternative venue – Scunthorpe Church of England Primary School, Gunnell Street, Scunthorpe, DN15 6HP / 01724 842526. Mrs Trish Atkinson – Head Teacher. The school has 2 halls which has a total capacity of 80 students. Confirmed on 10/12/2021 with Trish Atkinson.

6. Failure of IT systems and Cyber-attack

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

Where a cyber-attack may compromise any aspect of delivery

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- The exams officer and deputy head are fully trained to use all the exam boards' website and if MIS system fails, exam officer will make entries direct to the awarding bodies, and will also arrange alternative method of data exchange. Exams officer also has a work laptop which can be taken home and make entries/amendments if school internet goes down. Engineering UTC has also confirmed with Scunthorpe Central Library access to their computers is allowed
- Results also accessed directly from awarding bodies and same as above
- During system failure, the exams officer will liaise with the awarding bodies to minimise disruption and costs
- Any cyber-attack will be reported to the NCSC (National Cyber Security Centre) via https://report.ncsc.gov.uk/
- The school will contact local law enforcement and action fraud on 0300 123 2040
- The school will contact the DfE by emailing – sector.securityenquiries@education.gov.uk

7. 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 to manage all such incidents and priority to be given to exam cohorts
- Invigilators are trained in this procedure and understand the actions they must take in the event of a fire alarm or other emergency that leads to an evacuation of the exam room in accordance with JCQ Instructions for conduction exams (ICE) section 25: emergencies. A copy of the Centre Emergency Evacuation procedure for examinations is placed in all exam rooms.

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 once discussed with exam boards

9. Candidates unable to take examinations due to 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
- Follow guidance provided by awarding body on the conduct of examinations in such circumstances
- 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
- Exam officer to liaise with principal and SLT over alternative arrangements and keep them updated on awarding bodies decisions
- Where accommodation is limited, prioritise candidates whose progression will be severely delayed if they do not take their examination or timetabled assessment when planned. For example, prioritise sixth students to ensure they receive their result for university entrance
- Contact local authority for advice in deciding whether the centre is able to open
- Wait for approval from awarding bodies to relocate exams to alternative site at Scunthorpe Church of England (details above point 5).
- Parents, carers and candidates to be informed of alternative arrangements
- Consider whether any candidates ability to take the examination or demonstrate their level of attainment has been materially affected, if so, apply for special consideration

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

- 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.
- Exams Officer to ensure copies are received, copied and stored under secure conditions
- As a last resort, and in close collaboration with centres and regulators, awarding organisations to consider scheduling of the examination on an alternative date

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
- where examinations are part of the national 'yellow label' service or where awarding bodies arrange collections, centres should contact seek advice from awarding organisations and instructions and should not make their own arrangements for transportation unless told to do so by the awarding body
- centres to ensure secure storage of completed examination scripts until collection
- Ensure careful tracking of papers against the centre's exam timetable throughout the season

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.
- Awarding organisation to generate candidates marks for affected assessment based on other appropriate evidence of candidate achievement as defined by the awarding organisations
- Where marks cannot be generated by awarding organisations, candidates may need to retake affected in a subsequent assessment series

14. 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

- Distribution of results: - centre to make arrangements to access its results at an alternative site, in agreement with the relevant awarding organisation, centres to make arrangements to coordinate access to post results services from an alternative site, centres to share facilities with other centres if this is possible, in agreement with the relevant awarding organisation
- Facilitation of post results services: centre to make arrangements to make post results requests at an alternative location, centres to contact the relevant awarding organisation if electronic post results requests are not possible Access and distribute results at alternative site:
  Alternative venue – Scunthorpe Church of England Primary School, Gunnell Street, Scunthorpe, DN15 6HP / 01724 842526. Mrs Trish Atkinson – Head Teacher. The school has 2 halls which has a total capacity of 80 students. Confirmed on 10/12/2021 with Trish Atkinson

15. Contingency planning for restrictions during a pandemic (COVID, CORONAVIRUS)

Criteria for implementation of the plan

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

Planning, entries, pre-exams, exam time, results and post-results

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- If able to work on-site, to ensure school procedures are adhered to such as face mask wear, one-way systems, to wash and sanitise hands etc.
- If working from home – to communicate via email and phone calls during the planning, entries and pre-exams organisation
- Contact relevant awarding body and follow instructions. Take advice, or follow instructions, from relevant local or national agencies in deciding whether your centre is able to open. 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.
- Where accommodation is limited, prioritise students whose progression will be severely delayed if they do not take their exam or timetabled assessment when planned.
- Communicate with parents, carers and students any changes to the exam or assessment timetable or to the venue.
- Communicate with any external assessors or relevant third parties regarding any changes to the exam or assessment timetable
- Where a candidate is unable to attend an exam due to issues such as COVID, the exam officer will contact the awarding organisation to determine the next available assessment opportunity of whether special consideration might be available
- Alternative venue – Scunthorpe Church of England Primary School, Gunnell Street, Scunthorpe, DN15 6HP / 01724 842526. Mrs Trish Atkinson – Head Teacher. The school has 2 halls which has a total capacity of 80 students. Confirmed on 10/12/2021 with Trish Atkinson.

16. Any other cause of disruption to the exam process

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Handling industrial strike action

Extreme weather

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- Follow procedures from handling strike action in schools guidance from the DFE
- *Schools are encouraged to consider what action they could take to ensure pupils due to take their GCSEs or vocational qualifications are supported and prepared for their exams. This could involve offering catch-up lessons or arranging additional revision sessions.*
- *Where timetabled examinations are scheduled on a day when bad weather/other conditions are a factor, the OFQAL Joint Contingency Examination Plan will come into operation.*
  Engineering UTC operates on the basis that it will open - unless overnight weather/other conditions are so extreme that there would be significant risk to students and staff travelling to school. If for any reason we are unable to open for examinations due to circumstance beyond our control, this will be communicated to all parties by a variety of mediums. The decision to open/not open school rests with the Head of Centre at all times after due consideration and advice taken.
  Where conditions have a significant effect on the number of staff and students that can reach school, a decision not to open is made as early as possible on the relevant morning.
  Local media outlets are contacted immediately, the website is updated and text messages sent where possible.

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
Cyber crime and cyber security: a guide for education providers
DfE Cyber Security Guidance – March 2023

Ofqual

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 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 DfE 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 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 as well as 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 Governmen
- 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 5 October 2023) https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/exam-system-contingency-plan-england-waleshttps://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-disruptedand-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-planhttps://www.gov.uk/government/publications/exam-system-contingency-plan-england-wales-and-northern-irelandengland-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/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 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 'contingency ~~days~~ sessions' for examinations, summer 2024. 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 'contingency sessions' 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 2024, 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.

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 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 examination**s 2023-2024 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/
JCQ Notice to Centres - Examination contingency plan/examinations policy www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/generalhttp://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations/notice-to-centres--exam-contingency-plan/regulations/notice-to-centres--exam-contingency-plan/

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-conductinghttp://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/ice---instructions-for-conducting-examinationsexaminations

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

GOV.UK

Emergency planning and response: Exam and assessment disruption
www.gov.uk/government/publications/emergency-planning-and-response-for-education-childcare-and-childrenshttps://www.gov.uk/government/publications/emergency-planning-and-response-for-education-childcare-and-childrens-social-care-settingssocial-care-settings

Dispatch of exam scripts guide: Ensuring the service runs smoothly; 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 in extremely bad weather and extreme hot weather: www.gov.wales/opening-schools-wellhttp://www.gov.wales/opening-schools-well-childcare-and-play-settings-extreme-bad-weather-and-extreme-hot-weatherchildcare-and-play-settings-extreme-bad-weather-and-extreme-hot-weather

Northern Ireland

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

Checklist for Principals when considering Opening or Closure of School - exceptional closure of schools
www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/checklist-exceptional-closure-schools

National Cyber Security Centre

The NCSC's free Web Check and Mail Check services can help protect schools from cyber-attacks. Two NCSC cyber security services, which are already helping thousands of organisations to protect their websites and email servers from cyber-attacks, are now available to **all UK schools**. Both tools are available free of charge, are quick to set up, and thereafter run automatically. More information is available from the NCSC website.

The Department for Education has been asking centres to review **National Cyber Security Centre advice** following increasing number of cyber-attacks involving ransomware infections. The NCSC information supports centres in cyber security preparedness and mitigation work.

Ransomware attacks continue and the Department is reminding centres to review the NCSC advice and to take precautions. This includes ensuring that you have backups in place for your key services and data.

For ease of reference, the Department has highlighted key links relating to the NCSC cyber security guidance below:

1. Further ransomware attacks on UK education by cyber criminals - NCSC.GOV.UK

2. Mitigating malware and ransomware attacks
3. Offline backups in an online world
4. Backing up your data
5. Practical resources to help schools improve their cyber security
6. Building Resilience: Ransomware, the risk to schools and ways to prevent it
7. School staff offered training to help shore up cyber defences - NCSC.GOV.UK

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 2017-2018) 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.

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
- 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-andhttps://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-disruptedcolleges-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-englandhttps://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-disruptedwales-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/examshttp://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/ice---instructions-for-conducting-examinationsoffice/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://jcq.training.jcq.org.uk/CAP/Home/Training

Instructions for Conducting Examinations http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/ice---instructions-for-conductinghttp://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/ice---instructions-for-conducting-examinationsexaminations

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