



Exam Contingency Plan

Approved: November 2023

Next review due: November 2025

Purpose of the Plan

This plan examines potential risks and issues that could cause disruption to the exams process at St Ivo Academy. By outlining actions 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 notice Preparing for disruption to examinations (effective from 11 October 2021).

This plan also confirms St Ivo Academy's compliance with JCQ's General Regulations for Approved Centres (section 5.3) that the centre has in place:-

- A written examination contingency plan which covers all aspects of examination administration. This will allow members of the senior leadership team to act immediately in the event of an emergency or staff absence. The examination contingency plan should reinforce procedures in the event of the centre being unavailable for examinations, or on results day, owing to an unforeseen emergency.

Possible cause of disruption to the exams process

1 Exams and Assessment Manager absence at key points in the exams process

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/assessment plan not produced identifying key tasks and deadlines
- Sufficient invigilators not being recruited

Entries

- Awarding Bodies not being informed of early/estimated entries which prompts release of early information required by teaching staff.
- Candidates not being registered for 2 year vocational courses.
- Candidates not being entered with Awarding Bodies for external exams.
- Awarding Body entry deadlines missed or late or other penalties being incurred.

Pre-Exams

- Invigilators not being trained or updated on changes to Instructions for Conducting Exams.
- Exam timetabling, rooming allocation, invigilation allocation not prepared.
- Candidates not briefed on exam timetables and Awarding Body information for candidates.
- Confidential exam/assessment materials not received and stored under the required secure conditions.
- Non-Exam Assessment work not submitted to Awarding Body.

Exam Time

- Exams not taken under the conditions prescribed by the Awarding Bodies.
- Required reports/requests not submitted to Awarding Bodies during exam periods eg, very late arrival, suspected malpractice, special consideration.
- Candidates' scripts not dispatched as required for marking to Awarding Bodies.

Results and Post Results

- Access to exam results, affecting the distribution of results to candidates.
- The facilitation of the post results services.

Centres actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

Planning

- St Ivo Academy to approach other Trust academies for appropriate support.
- The Exams Assistant to take over the responsibility for completing the data collection exercise in collaboration with the SLT responsible for exams.
- The Exams Assistant to refer to the Month by Month Exam Tasks Document which includes contact details of Awarding Bodies and local network group.
- Onward recruitment programme throughout the year to recruit new invigilators together with a bank of trained support staff within the school.
- Seeking/following Awarding Board guidance and instructions.
- Invoking actions as detailed in statutory guidance.
- Communicating with parents/carers and students via parentmail/school website.

Entries

- The Exams Assistant to deputise for the Exams and Assessment Manager and take over the responsibility for completing entries, following the Key Dates Calendar and the Month by Month Exams Tasks Document.
- Heads of Department to support Exams Assistant to ensure all deadlines are adhered to.
- Seeking/following Awarding Body guidance and instructions.
- Invoking actions as detailed in statutory guidance.
- Communicating with parents/carers and students via parentmail/school website.
- Prioritising candidates whose progression would be seriously delayed if they do not take their exams when planned.
- Entering candidates for the next available series, where available.
- Utilising local network groups and sharing expertise.

Pre-Exams

- The Exams Assistant to deputise for the Exams and Assessment Manager and take over the responsibility for completing all pre-exam tasks, following the Key Dates Calendar and the Month by Month Exams Tasks Document with the support of the SLT for Exams.
- Heads of Department to have overall responsibility to ensure that all internal assessment material and samples of work are stored under secure conditions.
- Heads of Department to ensure all inputting of marks onto the system and Awarding Body websites are completed correctly and within the time restraints set by the Awarding Body.
- Keep abreast of all relevant regulations concerning the storage and release of confidential materials.
- Obtain and collate availability of invigilators and allocate sessions for forthcoming exam seasons.
- Produce timetables and share with teachers, students via email, parentmail and via Form Tutors.
- Utilising local network groups and sharing expertise.
- Seeking/following Awarding Body guidance and instructions.
- Invoking actions as detailed in statutory guidance.
- Communicating with parents/carers and students via parentmail/school website

Exam Time

- The Exams Assistant to deputise for the Exams and Assessment Manager and take over the responsibility for the day to day running of the exams, following the timetable produced and the Month by Month Exams Tasks Document with the support of the SLT for Exams.
- Keep abreast of all JCQ Regulations concerning the conduct of exams and following the Instructions for Conducting Exams.
- All personnel involved in administering exams to have access to the JCQ Manuals - Instructions for Conducting Exams and Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments which provide full details on the administration of exams and their requirements.
- Ensure that special consideration requests, malpractice and late arrival documentation is completed correctly and on time.
- Ensure that all scripts are packed and despatched to the Awarding Body in a timely manner.

- Seeking/following Awarding Body guidance and instructions.
- Invoking actions as detailed in statutory guidance.
- Communicating with parents/carers and students via parentmail/school website.
- Utilising emergency bank of support staff which have been trained for invigilation in the event of an invigilator absence.

Results and Post Results

- The Exams Assistant to deputise for the Exams and Assessment Manager and take over the responsibility for the downloading and distribution of results, with the support of the SLT for Exams.
- Information to be relayed to candidates and parents via school website and parentmail.
- The Exams Assistant to deputise for the Exams and Assessment Manager and take over the responsibility for responding to all results enquiries, obtaining guidance from the Awarding Bodies with the support of the SLT for Exams.

2. **Extended absence of SENDCo at key points in the exam cycle**

Criteria for implementation of the plan

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

Planning

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

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 Awarding Body deadlines.
- Staff providing support access arrangements (ie, scribes) not allocated and trained.

Exam Time

- Access arrangements for candidates not arranged for exam rooms.

Centres actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

Planning

- School to approach local schools (or other schools in Trust) for SENDCo support or engage outside qualified Teaching Assessor to conduct assessments who holds the correct Teacher Assessor Qualification and who has a close working relationship with the school.
- SENDCo to ensure the school SEN list is up to date and correct at all times, a copy being held electronically in Projects.
- Exams and Assessment Manager to ensure all applications for access arrangements are made before the Awarding Bodies deadlines.
- Exams and Assessment Manager to ensure all disabled students are accommodated in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.

Pre-Exams

- SENDCo and Exams and Assessment Manager to cross reference SEN List against candidates timetables for internal school assessments to ensure all candidates falling into this category are acknowledged and strategies put in place accordingly.
- Exams and Assessment Manager to make all applications to Awarding Bodies for any alternative access arrangements ie, alternative accommodate and overnight supervision.

Exam Time

- Ensure there are sufficient trained staff to support access arrangements, utilising an emergency bank of staff.
- Exams and Assessment Manager submitting special consideration requests, if applicable.

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

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Key tasks not undertaken including:-

- Early/estimated entry information not provided to the Exams and Assessment Manager on time, resulting in pre-release information not being received.
- Final entry information not provided to the Exams and Assessment Manager on time, resulting in candidates not being entered for exams or being entered late incurring fees being charged by Awarding Bodies.
- Non-examination assessment tasks not being set/taken by candidates as scheduled.
- Candidates not being informed of centre assessed marks before marks being 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 being provided to meet Awarding Bodies submission deadlines.

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

Early/estimated entry information not provided to the Exams and Assessment Manager on time, resulting in pre-release information not being received.

- Heads of Department to oversee entry information for all teaching staff.
- Exams and Assessment Manager to download material from secure website when available and arrange for printing with papers being retained in secure storage.
- Special consideration request being submitted, if applicable.
- Prioritising candidates whose progression will be seriously delayed if they do not take their exams when planned.
- Entering candidates for the next available series where available.

Final entry information not provided to the Exams and Assessment Manager on time, resulting in candidates not being entered for exams or being entered late incurring fees being charged by Awarding Bodies.

- Head of Department to oversee all entry information for all teaching staff.
- Exams and Assessment Manager to set internal deadlines earlier than Award Body deadline to enable entries to be made, candidates and staff to check individual candidate information and any amendments made prior to the deadline for incurring penalty fees.

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

- Head of Department to oversee all non-examination assessments to ensure they fall within the correct window of opportunity and are completed on time.
- The Exams and Assessment Manager to seek Awarding Body advice for extension of window and/or special consideration.
- Seeking/following Awarding Body guidance and instructions.
- Invoking actions as detailed in statutory guidance.
- Communicating with parents/carers and students via parentmail/school website.

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.

- Head of Department to liaise with the Exams and Assessment Manager as to the internal deadline to be disseminated to candidates.
- Head of Department and teaching staff to liaise to prepare letters/parentmail in advance to advise candidates when their marks are available on Bromcom.
- Following Awarding Body instructions and guidelines to mitigate situation.
- Informing parents and students of progress regularly.
- Exams and Assessment Manager to apply for special consideration, if applicable in the event of an issue being discovered which would have meant students appeal would have been substantiated.

Internal assessment marks and candidate's work not provided to meet Awarding Body submission deadlines.

- Exam and Assessment Manager to log materials despatched and to chase absent departments regularly with the support of the SLT for exams.

4. **Invigilators – lack of appropriate trained invigilators and/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 the exam.

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

Failure to recruit and train sufficient invigilators to conduct exams.

- Exams and Assessment Manager to ensure a regular programme of recruitment throughout the academic year, with staff trained to accompany all successful recruitment.
- Exams and Assessment Manager to recruit, train and retain emergency team of support staff and the Senior Leadership Team to act as invigilators at short notice.

Invigilator shortage on peak exam days.

- Invigilation roles to be undertaken by emergency team of support staff trained as invigilators to ensure correct ratio of invigilators is retained at all times as per JCQ Instructions for Conducting Examinations.

Invigilator absence on the day of the exam

- Invigilation roles to be undertaken by emergency team of support staff trained as invigilators to ensure correct ratio of invigilators is retained at all times as per JCQ Instructions for Conducting Examinations.

5. **Exam rooms – lack of appropriate rooms or main rooms unavailable at short notice**

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Exams and Assessment Manager unable to identify sufficient/appropriate rooms during exam timetable planning.
- Insufficient rooms available on peak exam days.
- Main exam venues unavailable due to an unexpected incident at the time of an exam.

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- Exams and Assessment Manager to seek support and guidance from SLT for exams to ensure venues are suitable for the size of cohort and type of exam.
- Exams and Assessment Manager, with the support of the SLT for exams to arrange for an invigilator supervised area to be set aside in the event that there has to be multiple sittings of the same exam to ensure all candidates can sit their exam in the correct environment,

whilst maintaining the security and integrity of all candidates and their exam scripts at all times.

6. Failure of IT systems

Criteria of implementation of the plan

- MIS system failure at final entry deadline.
- MIS system failure during exam preparation.
- Network/IT failure during exam time.
- MIS system failure at results release time.

MIS system failure at final entry deadline.

- Exams and Assessments Manager to ensure submission date is at least one week prior to the published Awarding Body deadline and to approach Awarding Body for guidance on alternative method of submission.

MIS system failure during exams preparation.

- Exams and Assessment Manager to be proactive in preparing well in advance for any exam season to allow MIS system to return to normal.

Network/IT failure during exam time.

- SLT to ensure a member of the IT department is on hand to assist with any network/IT issues during the exam season.
- Exams and Assessment Manager to apply for Special Consideration from Awarding Bodies for any disruption caused.

MIS system failure at results release times.

- SLT to ensure a member of the IT department is on hand to assist with any network/communication issues.
- Exams and Assessment Manager to contact Awarding Bodies for advice and guidance on alternative method of downloading results.

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

- Exams and Assessment Manager to contact the Awarding Body to report the incident and obtain advice and guidance on the way forward.
- SLT to provide support to the Exams and Assessment Manager
- Principal to be kept fully up to date at all times.
- Invigilation team to follow evacuation procedures to ensure all candidates and staff are safe and accounted for.
- Exams and Assessment Manager to ensure appropriate forms are completed and returned to the Awarding Body to initiate implementation of special consideration, with supporting evidence if available.
- Exams and Assessment Manager and SLT to consult JCQ publication of Centre's Emergency Evacuation Procedures.

8. **Disruption to teaching time in weeks before an exam – centre closed for an extended period.**

Criteria for implementation of 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

- In the case of modular courses, centre to consider candidates sitting assessments in a later series – consultation to be made with parents and students.
- School to implement remote learning arrangements via Teams, to which all students have access, in order that teaching and learning may continue.
- Seeking/following Awarding Body guidance and instructions.
- Invoking actions as detailed in statutory guidance.
- Communicating with parents/carers and candidates via parentmail/school website.

9. **Candidates at risk of being unable to take exams – centre remains open**

Criteria for implementation of plan

Candidates at risk of being unable to attend the exam centre to take exams as normal.

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

This must focus on options that enable candidates to take their exams.

- SLT and Exams and Assessment Manager to liaise with Awarding Bodies to obtain instructions.
- Ensure messages are sent via Parentmail and the school website at the earliest opportunity with clear instructions to candidates on the way forward.

- Alternative venues within the school utilised in the event of the main venue being out of action, with an isolation venue being used should all candidates not be able to be accommodated within the rescheduled room.
- Candidates unable to attend school due to transport issues and sitting a vocational subject to be entered for the next available exam series.
- Arrangements made with neighbouring schools to accommodate candidates' exams if at all possible. The Exams and Assessment Manager to arrange with the Awarding Bodies the receipt of emergency scripts/transfer of papers for the affected candidates if possible.
- Exams and Assessment Manager to contact invigilators and SEN support teams to advise them which school to attend if an alternative venue arranged for specified candidates.
- Seeking/following Awarding Body guidance and instructions.
- Invoking actions as detailed in statutory guidance.
- Communicating with parents/carers and candidates via parentmail/school website.

10. **Centre at risk of being unable to open as normal during the examination period**

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

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Centre at risk of being unable to open as normal for scheduled exams.

Centres actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

This must focus on options that enable candidates to take their exams.

- SLT and Exams and Assessment Manager to liaise on initial problem and which exams are to be affected.
- Exams and Assessment Manager to liaise with the affected Awarding Body at the earliest opportunity.
- Arrangements made with neighbouring schools to accommodate candidates' exams if at all possible.
- Exams and Assessment Manager to arrange with Awarding Body the receipt of emergency scripts for the affected candidates.
- Exams and Assessment Manager, with the support of the SLT for exams, to contact candidates, invigilators and SEND support team to advise them which school to attend for the exam.
- Principal to ensure adequate senior staff attend alternative venue to supervise and assist accommodating centre in order to retain the security and integrity of all scripts for all candidates.
- Exams and Assessment Manager to seek advice from Awarding Body regarding transfer of accommodation.

11. **Disruption in the distribution of exam papers**

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Disruption to the distribution of exam papers to the centre in advance of exams.

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- Awarding Body to provide centres with electronic access to exam papers via a secure network.
- Centres would need to ensure that copies are received, printed and stored under secure conditions and should have plans in place to facilitate such an action. Awarding Bodies would provide guidance on the conduct of exams in such circumstances.
- As a last resort, and in close collaboration with centres and regulators, Awarding Bodies to consider scheduling of the exam on an alternative date.
- Principal and Exams and Assessment Manager to ensure capacity within secure storage for the printed papers.

12 Disruption to transporting completed exam scripts

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Delay in the normal collection arrangements for completed exam scripts/assessment evidence.

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- Where exams are part of the national Yellow Label service or where Awarding Bodies arrange collections, centre to contact the Awarding Body for advice and instructions and should not make their own arrangements for transportation unless told to do so by the Awarding Body.
- For any exams where centre to make their own collection arrangements, centres should investigate alternative options that comply with the requirements detailed in the JCQ Instructions for Conducting Examinations.
- Centre to ensure secure storage of completed exam scripts until collection.
- Exams and Assessment Manager to contact Awarding Body at the earliest opportunity to discuss alternative collection arrangements.
- Exams and Assessment Manager to ensure that, whilst on site, all scripts remain securely stored within the Exam Store until the despatch can be achieved.

13 Assessment evidence is not available to be marked

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Large scale damage to or destruction of completed exam scripts/assessment evidence before it can be marked.

Completed exam scripts/assessment evidence does not reach Awarding Body.

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- Awarding Body to generate candidate marks for affected assessments based on other appropriate evidence of candidate achievement as defined by the Awarding Body.
- Where marks cannot be generated by Awarding Body, candidates may need to retake affected assessment in a subsequent series.
- Exams and Assessment Manager to notify the Principal immediately of the issue.
- Exams and Assessment Manager to notify the relevant Awarding Body after consultation with the Principal to obtain advice and guidance for the way forward.
- Exams and Assessment Manager to offer candidates the opportunity to retake in the next available series, prioritising those students whose progression may be seriously delayed as a result.
- Exams and Assessment Manager to apply for special consideration for affected candidates if applicable/permissible.
- Seeking/following Awarding Body guidance and instructions.
- Invoking actions as detailed in statutory guidance.
- Communicating with parents/carers and candidates via parentmail/school website.

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

- Centre to make arrangements to access its results at an alternative site, in agreement with the relevant Awarding Bodies.
- Centre to make arrangements 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 Bodies.
- Centre to contact the relevant Awarding Body if electronic post results requests are not possible.
- Centre to provide results via student school email address, having first sent a test email to all students to ensure they receive the said test.
- Communicate to parents and candidates via Parentmail, email and school website clear and precise details on how students will access their results and when.

15. Centre required to escalate process if Head of Centre and SLT unavailable for exams

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

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Head of Centre and member of SL with oversight for exam administration are absent.

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the plan

- Exams and Assessment Manager to consult with relevant Awarding Body for advice.
- Exams and Assessment Manager to contact other members of SLT, if at all possible.

16. Absence of the Exams and Assessment Manager during the exam period

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Process in the event that the Exams and Assessment Manager is absent during the exam period.

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- SLT with oversight for exam administration to liaise with the Exams Assistant.
- SLT with oversight for exam administration and Exams Assistant to hold keys and have access to the secure store.

17. Disruption to any stage of running exams due to Covid-19 or other pandemics

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Centre is affected by the regulations regarding Covid-19 which affect any of the above stages of administering or planning exams.

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- Exams and Assessment Manager to follow instructions from SLT, who will be aware of the current Government guidelines.
- Exams and Assessment Manager to contact the Awarding Body for confirmation and advice.
- Centre to communicate with parents and candidates via email, school website and Parentmail.
- Exams and Assessment Manager to communicate with the invigilation and SEN support teams.
- Exams and Assessment Manager to apply for special consideration, if necessary/applicable.

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

Contingency planning

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

Covid specific guidance

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

- [actions for schools during the coronavirus outbreak](#) from the Department for Education in England
- [actions for FE colleges and providers during the coronavirus outbreak](#) from the Department for Education in England
- [responsibility for exams](#) from the Department for Education in England
- [vocational, technical and other general qualifications in 2022](#) from Ofqual (regulator)
- [GCSE, AS and A level qualifications in 2022](#) from Ofqual (regulator)
- [education and childcare: coronavirus](#) from Welsh Government
- [Qualifications Wales homepage](#) from Qualifications Wales (regulator)
- [coronavirus \(COVID-19\): guidance for school and educational settings in Northern Ireland](#) from Department of Education in Northern Ireland
- [coronavirus \(COVID-19\) \(information from CCEA\)](#) – information on vocational, technical and general qualifications from CCEA Regulation

General contingency guidance

- [emergency planning and response](#) from the Department for Education in England
- [school organisation: local-authority-maintained schools](#) from the Department for Education in England
- [exceptional closure days](#) from the Department of Education in Northern Ireland
- [checklist - exceptional closure of schools](#) from the Department of Education in Northern Ireland
- [school terms and school closures](#) from NI Direct
- [opening schools in extremely bad weather](#) - guidance for schools from the Welsh Government
- [bomb threats](#) procedures for handling bomb threats from the National Counter Terrorism Security Office

Disruption to assessments or exams

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

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

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

Steps you should take

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.

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.

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.

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 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.

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

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 [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.

Widespread national disruption to the taking of examinations or assessments

The governments' view across England, Wales and Northern Ireland is education should continue in 2021 to 2022 with schools remaining open and that examinations and assessments will go ahead in both autumn 2021 and summer 2022.

As education is devolved, in the event of any widespread sustained national disruption to examinations or assessments, national government departments will communicate with regulators, awarding organisations and centres prior to a public announcement. Regulators will provide advice to government departments on implications for exam timetables.

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

(Ofqual guidance extract above taken directly from the Exam system contingency plan: England, Wales and Northern Ireland - **What schools and colleges and other centres should do if exams or other assessments are seriously disrupted** (updated 30 September 2021) <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

The qualification regulators, awarding bodies and government departments responsible for education have prepared and agreed information for schools and colleges in the event of examinations being seriously disrupted. This jointly agreed information will ensure consistency of response in the event of major disruption to the examinations system affecting significant numbers of candidates.

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

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.

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.

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.

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 above taken directly from **Instructions for Conducting Examinations 2021-2022** <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

This Notice is based on guidance provided within the JCQ Joint Contingency Plan, which is available from the JCQ website: www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/other-documents/jcq-joint-contingency-plan

In the event of widespread disruption to the examination system, all centres **must** have contingency plans in place. There are three main categories of disruption, which are outlined below.

Candidates at risk of being unable to take examinations – centres remain open

Centres' contingency plans should focus on options that enable candidates to take their examinations. As part of these preparations, centres should take into account the guidance provided in the JCQ publication Instructions for conducting examinations:

<http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/ice---instructions-for-conducting-examinations>

- consider moving the starting times of the examination for all candidates (see **section 6.2** of the JCQ publication Instructions for conducting examinations)
- being aware of the rules for very late arrivals (see **section 21** of the JCQ publication Instructions for conducting examinations).

Wherever possible, it is always in the best interest for candidates to sit the examination. However, if candidates who are unable to sit the examination meet the criteria, special consideration through absence for acceptable reasons is an option (see **Chapter 4** of the JCQ publication A guide to the special consideration process: <https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/regulations-and-guidance>

Please do not hesitate to call the relevant awarding body if you require additional support or guidance in the event of disruption to examinations.

Centres at risk of being unable to open as normal during the examination period

As above, centres' contingency plans must focus on enabling candidates to take their examinations if the centre is at risk of being unable to open as normal.

The responsibility for deciding 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.

Information on what centres should do if examinations or other assessments are seriously disrupted can be found in the three country regulators' exam system contingency plan:

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

Special consideration through absence for acceptable reasons is also available as an option if all other avenues have been exhausted and candidates meet the relevant criteria.

Please do not hesitate to call the relevant awarding body if you require additional support or guidance in the event of disruption to your examinations.

Disruption to transporting completed examination scripts

If there is a delay in normal collection arrangements for completed examination scripts:

- 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 publication Instructions for conducting examinations
- completed scripts **must** be stored securely until they are collected.

Summary of centre and awarding body responsibilities

Examination centres are responsible for:

- preparing plans for any disruption to examinations as part of centres' general emergency planning • deciding whether the centre can open for examinations as scheduled and informing relevant awarding bodies if the centre is unable to open
- exploring the opportunities for alternative arrangements if the centre cannot open for examinations and agreeing such arrangements with the awarding bodies
- judging whether candidates meet the requirements for special consideration because of any disruption and submitting these requests to the relevant awarding bodies
- assessing their circumstances and liaising with awarding bodies in the event of disruption to the transportation of papers.

Awarding bodies are responsible for:

- ensuring centres receive examination materials for scheduled examinations
- advising centres on possible alternative examination arrangements and declining/approving proposals for alternative examination arrangements
- evaluating and declining/approving requests for special consideration.

Contacting the awarding bodies

In all cases, if there are any concerns, please contact the relevant awarding body for advice:

AQA

0800 197 7162

eos@aqa.org.uk

CCEA

028 9026 1212, 028 9026 1293, 028 9026 1425

centresupport@ccea.org.uk

OCR

01223 553998

support@ocr.org.uk

Pearson

0344 463 2535

WJEC

02920 265 077

exams@wjec.co.uk

(JCQ guidance above taken directly from the notice - **Preparing for disruption to examinations** effective from 11 October 2021 www.jcq.org.uk/preparing-for-disruption-to-examinations/)

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

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

School organisation: local-authority-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>

Wales

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

Opening schools in extremely bad weather: guidance for schools gov.wales/opening-schools-extremely-bad-weather-guidance-schools

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 Counter Terrorism Security Office

Guidance - Bomb Threats www.gov.uk/government/publications/crowded-places-guidance/bomb-threats