




# Exam Contingency Plan

Policy/Procedure creator: Mrs E Duell

Policy/Procedure created: 23/02/2021

Centre Name	Blessed Edward Oldcome Catholic College
Centre Number	24415
Date plan first created (dd/mm/yyyy)	06/01/2021
Current plan approved by	Mr G McClarey 
Current plan reviewed by	Mrs E Duell
Date of next review (dd/mm/yyyy)	30/09/2021

## Key staff involved in exam contingency planning

Role	Name(s)
Head of centre	Mr G McClarey
Senior leader(s)	Mrs C Corbin (Assistant Headteacher); Mr D McCormack (Deputy Headteacher (Academic)); Mr P Edmunds (Assistant Headteacher (RSL, Data & Timetable, Learning Technologies))
Exams officer	Mrs E Duell
ALS lead/SENCo	Mrs M Fitzer
Other staff (if applicable)	Mrs K Hickman (Exams Assistant); Mr B Pain (IT Manager); Lourdes IT (external IT support); Subject Leaders (various); Heads of Year (various); S Guise (SEN Assistant); Invigilators (various)

This plan is reviewed and updated annually to ensure that exam contingency planning at Blessed Edward Oldcome Catholic College is managed in accordance with current requirements and regulations.

## Purpose of the plan

This plan examines potential risks and issues that could cause disruption to the exam process.

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 at Blessed Edward Oldcome Catholic College.

Alongside internal processes this plan is informed by the Ofqual **Exam system contingency plan: England, Wales and Northern Ireland** which provides guidance in the publication, 'What schools and colleges and other centres should do if exams or other assessments are seriously disrupted'.

This plan details how Blessed Edward Oldcome Catholic College complies with the JCQ's **General Regulations for Approved Centres** (section 5.3, Centre management) by having in place a written examination contingency plan which covers all aspects of examination administration. This will allow members of the senior leadership team to act immediately in the event of an emergency or staff absence. The examination contingency plan should reinforce procedures in the event of the centre being unavailable for examinations, or on results day, owing to an unforeseen emergency.

## Possible causes of disruption to the exam process

### 1. Exams officer absence at key points in the exam process (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 post-results services

Other criteria:

No other criteria identified

**Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above**

The centre will:

Planning:

- Subject Leaders to double check the data collection information is provided to the Exam Office by the start of each academic year; SLT to check that the information regarding subjects / number of students certificating has been provided by the end of September
- Subject Leaders to visit Exam Board website(s) to be aware of key course date information and deadlines
- The number of active invigilators will be monitored for the following exam season. If insufficient invigilators available to cover external exams; D McCormack to arrange the use of exam trained Cover staff and trained non-teaching staff

Entries:

- If the Subject Leader does not receive pre-release material as expected and cannot access it online, K Hickman / D McCormack will contact the awarding body and get access to pre-release material online
- P Edmunds & D McCormack to check entries with Subject Leaders and arrival of exam papers in good time. In the event of entries not being made, SLT / K Hickman will make entries via SIMS exams and send to the Awarding Bodies via A2C. If urgent, contact the awarding body to receive emergency exam papers / download from the secure area of the exam board website on the day of the exam.
- Subject Leaders should enquire if no entry information has been collected or requested to be signed off prior to the entry deadline for their course(s). A check will be made by D McCormack in January/February to ensure that this procedure has been done ready for the following summer series.

Pre-Exams:

- Invigilators will be required to undertake online assessments and attend regular training sessions to ensure that they are trained and up to date with the latest JCQ regulations. Online resources from The Exams Office will be made available by K Hickman / D McCormack. Internal examinations will form part of ongoing training evidence
- P Edmunds to enquire after provisional timetable around July for the following summer series. If no exam timetable published by Exam Office to SLT or students; P Edmunds to print exam timetable(s) via SIMS or directly from Exam Board websites
- C Corbin to check that site team are aware of requirements for upcoming exams. If no information sent to site team and no instructions received from Exam Office; K Hickman / C Corbin to allocate rooms and candidates in liaison with SEN Office
- Exam timetables will be published to invigilators as soon as made available; bookings will be confirmed in advance via Sling website. If by May invigilators have not received any bookings for the summer series they should contact D McCormack / K Hickman to agree schedules
- When exam papers start arriving, D McCormack / K Hickman to check deliveries against despatch notes and store exam papers in the secure storage. Subject Leaders to ensure that non-examination assessment material is stored securely within their departments
- Subject Leaders to be aware of their own subject deadline(s); if internal marks or moderation samples not requested by Exam Office, Subject Leaders / D McCormack to contact awarding body

Exam Time:

- Internal exams will be run under the JCQ rules to familiarise students with behavioural expectations. Any disruption, cheating or very late arrivals in the exam room will be noted by the invigilator; K Hickman / D McCormack to review JCQ Malpractice and Special Consideration documents and contact the awarding body as directed
- Parcel Force to be informed of the schools exam dates in advance; if completed exam scripts are not collected on schedule, they will be moved back to secure storage by K Hickman / D McCormack. Ongoing issues regarding the return of completed papers will be reported to the exam board

Results and Post-Results:

- P Edmunds to follow instructions to download results into SIMS and print onto headed paper for distribution to students on official results release day. Contact IBS for instructions and assistance if required
- SLT and Subject Leaders to check results for borderline candidates who may wish to use post-results services on restricted results release day; ; K Hickman / C Corbin to apply for Reviews of Marking and other post results services via the awarding body secure websites. Candidate permission must be obtained in advance.

## [2. ALS lead/SENCo extended absence at key points in the exam process \(exam cycle\)](#)

### **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

Other criteria:

No other criteria identified

#### **Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above**

The centre will:

#### Planning:

- Exam Office / D McCormack to communicate with SEN Office to ensure candidates in Year 10 & 11 are tested/assessed and that evidence of need has been collated in time to make an applications for the planned exam series deadline
- The centre recognises its duties under The Equality Act 2010, as set out in our Disability Policy 2020-21
- Evidence of need is collected and collated on an ongoing basis in liaison with Subject Leaders and teaching staff

#### Pre-Exams

- Access arrangements are made as far in advance as possible of any planned exams series using JCQ Access Arrangements Online (AAO). Permission will be requested via AAO before awarding any emergency access arrangements
- In the event of Access Arrangements or centre delegated arrangements not being put in place as agreed, the Awarding Body will be notified and Special Consideration will be applied for on the candidate's behalf via the secure website, as per the JCQ Special Consideration guidance.
- Modified papers will be requested in good time before the deadline for the planned exam series (January for Summer series) in liaison with the SEN office. In the event of modified papers not being received in time, the awarding body will be notified
- Learning Support Mentors and other Access Arrangement facilitators will receive ongoing training and updates in line with JCQ criteria. Requirements for each exam series cohort are monitored by SEN and Exam Office. Extra staff will be recruited and trained in advance of the planned exam series where a staffing shortfall is evident

#### Exam-time

- Access Arrangement candidate support is arranged in advance of every planned exam series. Contingency arrangements for staff absence are agreed in advance with SEN Office

### 3. Teaching staff extended absence at key points in the exam process (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

Other criteria:

No other criteria identified

#### **Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above**

The centre will:

- Subject Leaders are responsible for ensuring all data is collected from teachers in their department. Missing data must be submitted to the Exam Office as a matter of priority. In the event of a Subject Leader absence, their Second in Department must fill the role and provide this information
- Teaching Staff will ensure that candidates in their groups are informed of their centre assessed marks before marks are submitted to the awarding body to ensure they have adequate time to consider appealing internal assessment decisions and requesting a review of the centre's marking. See Non-Examination Assessment Policy 2020-21 and Internal Appeals Procedures 2020-21
- Subject Leaders will be aware of deadlines for the submission of candidate marks and work for their course(s). Reminders will be sent by the Exam Office to departments in advance of deadlines

#### **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

Other criteria:

No other criteria identified

#### **Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above**

The centre will:

- The recruitment of invigilators will take place on an ongoing basis to ensure the correct number of invigilators are trained and will be available to conduct exams for each planned exam series
- For large cohort exams, Cover Staff and other trained support staff will be used to invigilate, should a shortage arise

#### **5. Exam rooms - lack of appropriate rooms or main venue(s) 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

Other criteria:

No other criteria identified

#### **Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above**

The centre will:

- (where main exam venue(s) unavailable due to an unexpected incident at exam time) where possible, make use of other available rooms within the centre, prioritising candidates whose progression will be severely delayed if they do not take their exam or timetabled assessment when planned

- identify whether the exam or timetabled assessment can be sat at an alternative venue, in agreement with the relevant awarding body
- (where main exam venue(s) unavailable due to an unexpected incident at exam time) where possible, move to alternative venue, prioritising candidates whose progression will be severely delayed if they do not take their exam or timetabled assessment when planned

Alternative venue details:

- In an emergency, G McClarey to co-ordinate with Exam Office in finding an alternative venue. Awarding Body will be informed as per JCQ regulations
- Exam Office will apply for special consideration for candidates where they meet the minimum requirements set out in the JCQ guidance
- communicate with candidates (and where appropriate, parents/carers) any changes to the exam or assessment timetable or venue
- communicate with candidates (and where appropriate, parents/carers) any changes to the exam or assessment timetable or to the venue

Communication details:

- Candidates and parents will be informed of any change of venue via the school messaging service / email
  - ensure the secure transportation of question papers or assessment materials to the alternative venue
  - (after the exam) consider whether any candidate's ability to take the assessment or demonstrate their level of attainment has been materially affected and, if so, apply for special consideration

Other centre actions:

- Exam Office will check cohort size and need against rooms available in good time prior to planned exam series

## 6. Failure of IT systems

### Criteria for implementation of the plan

- MIS/IT system failure at final entry deadline
- MIS/IT system failure during exams preparation
- MIS/IT system failure at results release time

Other criteria:

No other criteria identified

### Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above

The centre will:

- Final entries will be submitted via A2C in good time prior to the final entry deadline for the planned exam series
- In the event of an MIS/IT system failure at the time of final entries being made, entries will be made either from another location on site with A2C installed, or via the exam board secure websites which can be accessed externally
- Exam planning and preparation is completed using Google shared documents with the SEN Office and Exam Assistant. In the event of any IT failure during the planning process it can be accessed externally from another location off-site
- In order to ensure results can be downloaded on release day, A2C will be installed on another machine on site
- In the event of college site being inaccessible to download results on release day they will be accessed directly from the secure area of awarding body websites

## 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

Other criteria:

No other criteria identified

**Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above**

The centre will:

- refer to and invoke its (exams) emergency evacuation policy/procedure in line with JCQ's 'Centre emergency evacuation procedure' (or its (exams) lockdown policy)
- contact the relevant awarding body as soon as possible and follow its instructions
- where accommodation is limited, prioritise candidates whose progression will be severely delayed if they do not take their exam or timetabled assessment when planned
- (after the exam) consider whether any candidate's ability to take the assessment or demonstrate their level of attainment has been materially affected and, if so, apply for special consideration

Other centre actions:

No other actions identified

**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

Other criteria:

No other criteria identified

**Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above**

The centre will:

- recognise it remains the responsibility of the centre to prepare students, as usual, for examinations
- facilitate alternative methods of learning
- communicate with candidates (and where appropriate, parents/carers) information relating to alternative methods of learning

Communication details:

- Candidates and parents will be informed of alternative methods of learning via the college messaging service / email
  - take advice offered by the awarding body regarding alternative arrangements for conducting examinations that may be available
  - take advice offered by the awarding body on the options for candidates who have not been able to take scheduled examinations
  - advise candidates, where appropriate, of the opportunities to take their exam or assessment at a later date

Other centre actions:

No other actions identified

**9. Candidates unable to take examinations because of a crisis - centre remains open**

**Criteria for implementation of the plan**

- Candidates are unable to attend the examination centre to take examinations as normal

Other criteria:

No other criteria identified

**Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above**

The centre will:

- take advice offered by the awarding body on the options for candidates who have not been able to take scheduled examinations
- discuss alternative arrangements with the awarding body if a candidate misses an exam or loses their assessment due to an emergency, or other event, outside of the candidate's control
- identify whether the exam or timetabled assessment can be sat at an alternative venue, in agreement with the relevant awarding body, ensuring the secure transportation of questions papers or assessment materials to the alternative venue
- communicate with candidates (and where appropriate, parents/carers) any changes to the exam or assessment timetable or to the venue

Communication details:

- Candidates and parents will be informed of alternative methods of learning via the college messaging service / email
  - consider whether any candidates' ability to take the assessment or demonstrate their level of attainment has been materially affected and, if so, apply for special consideration

Other centre actions:

No other actions identified

**10. Centre 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 unable to open as normal for scheduled examinations

Other criteria:

No other criteria identified

**Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above**

The centre will:

- take advice, or follow instructions, from relevant local or national agencies in deciding whether the centre is able to open
- contact the relevant awarding body as soon as possible and follow its instructions
- discuss alternative arrangements with the awarding body if the exam or assessment cannot take place
- follow guidance provided by the awarding body on the conduct of examinations in such circumstances
- where accommodation is limited, prioritise candidates whose progression will be severely delayed if they do not take their exam or timetabled assessment when planned
- communicate with candidates (and where appropriate, parents/carers) any changes to the exam or assessment timetable or to the venue

Communication details:

- Candidates and parents will be informed of alternative methods of learning via the college messaging service / email
  - consider whether any candidates' ability to take the assessment or demonstrate their level of attainment has been materially affected and, if so, apply for special consideration



Other centre actions:

No other actions identified

#### 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

Other criteria:

No other criteria identified

##### Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above

The centre will:

- liaise with awarding bodies regarding the provision of electronic access to examination papers via a secure external network and will ensure when copies are received/made these are stored under secure conditions
- follow guidance provided by the awarding body on the conduct of examinations in such circumstances
- understand that as a last resort, and in close collaboration with centres and regulators, awarding organisations will consider scheduling of the examination on an alternative date
- communicate with candidates (and where appropriate, parents/carers) any changes to the exam or assessment timetable or to the venue

Other centre actions:

No other actions identified

#### 12. Disruption to the transportation of completed examination scripts

##### Criteria for implementation of the plan

- (updated 2020/21) Delay in normal collection arrangements for completed examination scripts/assessment evidence

Other criteria:

No other criteria identified

##### Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above

The centre will:

- where examinations are part of the national 'yellow label' service or where awarding bodies arrange collections, seek advice from awarding bodies and will not make its own arrangements for transportation unless told to do so by the awarding body
- for any examinations where the centre makes its own arrangements for transportation, investigate alternative dispatch options that comply with the requirements detailed in the JCQ's Instructions for Conducting Examinations
- ensure the secure storage of completed examination scripts until collection

Other centre actions:

No further criteria identified

#### 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

- (updated 2020/21) Completed examination scripts/assessment evidence does not reach awarding organisations

Other criteria:

No other criteria identified

#### **Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above**

The centre will:

- liaise with the awarding body to determine if candidate marks for affected assessments may be able to be generated based on other appropriate evidence of candidate achievement as defined by the awarding body
- where marks cannot be generated by awarding body, inform candidates they may need to retake the affected assessment in a subsequent assessment series

Other centre actions:

No other actions identified

14. Centre unable to distribute results as normal (including in the event of the centre being unavailable on results day owing to an unforeseen emergency) or facilitate post-results services

#### **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

Other criteria:

No other criteria identified

#### **Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above**

The centre will:

- make arrangements to access its results at an alternative venue/share facilities with another centre if this is possible, in agreement with the relevant awarding body
- make arrangements to coordinate access to post results services from an alternative venue

Alternative venue details:

To be confirmed

- make arrangements to make post results requests at an alternative location
- contact the relevant awarding body if electronic post results requests are not possible
- inform candidates of any alternative arrangements in place for the distribution of results and the facilitation of post-results services

Communication details:

- Candidates and parents will be informed of any change to arrangements for issuing of results / post results services via the school messaging service / email

Other centre actions:

No other actions identified

15. Any other cause of disruption to the exam process

#### **Cause of disruption**

No further causes identified

#### **Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above**

Not applicable

# Further guidance to inform procedures and implement contingency planning

(updated 1 October 2020) **Ofqual**

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**

## 1. Contingency planning

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

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

### 1.1 Covid specific guidance:

- **Guidance for schools Covid-19** ([www.gov.uk/government/collections/guidance-for-schools-coronavirus-covid-19#safe-working-and-protective-measures](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/guidance-for-schools-coronavirus-covid-19#safe-working-and-protective-measures)) from the Department for Education in England (subject to frequent updates as the situation changes)
- **Responsibility for autumn GCSE, AS and A level exam series** ([www.gov.uk/government/publications/responsibility-for-autumn-gcse-as-and-a-level-exam-series](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/responsibility-for-autumn-gcse-as-and-a-level-exam-series)) from the Department for Education in England
- **Action for FE Colleges** ([www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-further-education-provision](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-further-education-provision)) from the Department for Education in England
- **Public health guidance to support autumn exams** ([www.gov.uk/government/publications/responsibility-for-autumn-gcse-as-and-a-level-exam-series/public-health-arrangements-for-autumn-exams](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/responsibility-for-autumn-gcse-as-and-a-level-exam-series/public-health-arrangements-for-autumn-exams)) from the Department for Education
- **Education and childcare: coronavirus** (<https://gov.wales/education-coronavirus>) from Welsh Government
- **Covid-19 - guidance for school and educational settings** ([www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-school-and-educational-settings-northern-ireland](http://www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-school-and-educational-settings-northern-ireland)) from Department of Education in Northern Ireland

### 1.2 General contingency guidance

- **Emergency planning and response** ([www.gov.uk/guidance/emergencies-and-severe-weather-schools-and-early-years-settings](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/emergencies-and-severe-weather-schools-and-early-years-settings)) from the Department for Education in England
- **Opening and closing local-authority-maintained schools** ([www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-organisation-maintained-schools](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-organisation-maintained-schools)) from the Department for Education in England
- **Exceptional closure days** ([www.education-ni.gov.uk/articles/exceptional-closure-days](http://www.education-ni.gov.uk/articles/exceptional-closure-days)) from the Department of Education in Northern Ireland
- **Checklist - exceptional closure of schools** ([www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/checklist-exceptional-closure-schools](http://www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/checklist-exceptional-closure-schools)) from the Department of Education in Northern Ireland
- **School closures** (<https://gov.wales/opening-schools-extremely-bad-weather-guidance-schools>) from NI Direct
- **Opening schools in extremely bad weather** (<https://gov.wales/opening-schools-extremely-bad-weather-guidance-schools>) - guidance for schools from the Welsh Government
- **Procedures for handling bomb threats** ([www.gov.uk/government/publications/bomb-threats-guidance](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/bomb-threats-guidance)) from the National Counter Terrorism Security Office.

## 2. Disruption to assessments or exams

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

You should discuss alternative arrangements with your awarding organisation if:

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

See also:

- JCQ Joint Contingency Plan for the Examination System in England, Wales and Northern Ireland ([www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/other-documents/jcq-joint-contingency-plan/](http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/other-documents/jcq-joint-contingency-plan/))

## 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' ([www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/ice---instructions-for-conducting-examinations/](http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/ice---instructions-for-conducting-examinations/)).
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 ([www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/](http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/))

## 6. Wider communications

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

The Department for Education in England, the Department of Education in Northern Ireland and the Welsh Government will inform the relevant government ministers as soon as it becomes apparent that there will be significant local or national disruption; and ensure that they are kept updated until the matter is resolved.

Awarding organisations will alert the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) and the Central Applications Office (CAO) about any impact of the disruption on their deadlines and liaise regarding student progression to further and higher education.

Awarding organisations will alert relevant professional bodies or employer groups if the impact of disruption particularly affects them.

## **7. Widespread national disruption to the taking of examinations / assessments**

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

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

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

JCQ guidance taken directly from **Instructions for Conducting Examinations 2020-2021** ([www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/ice—instructions-for-conducting-examinations/](http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/ice—instructions-for-conducting-examinations/)) section 15, **Contingency planning**

15.1 The qualification regulators, JCQ 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: [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](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/exam-system-contingency-plan-england-wales-and-northern-ireland/what-schools-and-colleges-should-do-if-exams-or-other-assessments-are-seriously-disrupted)

15.2 In addition, awarding bodies have their own well-established contingency plans in place to respond to disruptions. It is important that exams officers who are facing disruption liaise directly with the relevant awarding body/bodies.

15.3 Centres should prepare plans for any disruption to examinations as part of their general emergency planning. It is important to ensure that relevant centre staff are familiar with the plan. Consideration should be given as to how these arrangements will be communicated to candidates, parents and staff should disruption to examinations occur.

15.4 In the event that the head of centre decides the centre cannot be opened for scheduled examinations, the relevant awarding body must be informed as soon as possible. Awarding bodies will be able to offer advice regarding the alternative arrangements for conducting examinations that may be available and the options for candidates who have not been able to take scheduled examinations.

15.5 The awarding bodies will designate a 'contingency day' for examinations, summer 2021. This is consistent with the qualification regulators' document Exam system contingency plan: England, Wales and Northern Ireland - [www.gov.uk/government/publications/exam-system-contingency-plan-england-wales-and-northern-ireland](http://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 that there is national disruption to a day of examinations in summer 2021, 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 was agreed to reschedule the examinations and the affected candidates will be expected to make themselves available in such circumstances. The decision regarding the re-scheduling 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.

#### **Links to other JCQ documentation**

JCQ Joint Contingency Plan - [jqc.org.uk/exams-office/other-documents](http://jqc.org.uk/exams-office/other-documents)

General Regulations for Approved Centres - [jqc.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations](http://jqc.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations)

Guidance notes on alternative site arrangements - [jqc.org.uk/exams-office/online-forms](http://jqc.org.uk/exams-office/online-forms)

Guidance notes for transferred candidates - [jqc.org.uk/exams-office/online-forms](http://jqc.org.uk/exams-office/online-forms)

Instructions for Conducting Examinations - [jqc.org.uk/exams-office/ice—instructions-for-conducting-examinations](http://jqc.org.uk/exams-office/ice—instructions-for-conducting-examinations)

A guide to the special consideration process - [jqc.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/regulations-and-guidance](http://jqc.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/regulations-and-guidance)

#### **GOV.UK**

Emergency planning and response: Severe weather; Exam disruption - [gov.uk/guidance/emergencies-and-severe-weather-schools-and-early-years-settings](http://gov.uk/guidance/emergencies-and-severe-weather-schools-and-early-years-settings)

(updated 2020/21) Opening and closing local-authority-maintained schools - [gov.uk/government/publications/school-organisation-maintained-schools](http://gov.uk/government/publications/school-organisation-maintained-schools)

Dispatch of exam scripts guide: Ensuring the service runs smoothly; Contingency planning - [gov.uk/government/publications/dispatch-of-exam-scripts-yellow-label-](http://gov.uk/government/publications/dispatch-of-exam-scripts-yellow-label-)

service

## **Wales**

School closures – examinations - [gov.wales/school-closures-examinations](https://gov.wales/school-closures-examinations)

(updated 2020/21) Opening schools in extremely bad weather - [gov.wales/opening-schools-extremely-bad-weather-guidance-schools](https://gov.wales/opening-schools-extremely-bad-weather-guidance-schools)

## **Northern Ireland**

Exceptional closure days - [education-ni.gov.uk/articles/exceptional-closure-days](https://education-ni.gov.uk/articles/exceptional-closure-days)

Checklist for Principals when considering Opening or Closure of School - [education-ni.gov.uk/publications/checklist-exceptional-closure-schools](https://education-ni.gov.uk/publications/checklist-exceptional-closure-schools)

School closures - [nidirect.gov.uk/articles/school-closures](https://nidirect.gov.uk/articles/school-closures)

## **(updated 2020/21) National Counter Terrorism Security Office**

Procedures for handling bomb threats - [gov.uk/government/publications/bomb-threats-guidance/procedures-for-handling-bomb-threats](https://gov.uk/government/publications/bomb-threats-guidance/procedures-for-handling-bomb-threats)