



Exam Centre Contingency and Adverse Effects Policy

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1. Aims of the Joint Contingency Plan:

The Joint Contingency Plan is designed to ensure a consistent and effective response in the event of major disruption to the examination system affecting significant numbers of candidates across several awarding organisations. All awarding organisations are required to have their own well established contingency plans in place to respond to such disruptions, and these have been implemented already on numerous occasions. This Joint Contingency Plan takes into account these processes and procedures and is designed to complement them, not replace them. The organisations that own this plan are those who have a significant interest in assessments delivered in line with the national common examination timetable, but where appropriate these contingencies should be applied to other qualifications.

The plan will be implemented in the event of major disruption to the system, such as widespread illness, travel disruption, bad weather or power failures. Any actions taken will be subject to the advice of the official agencies dealing with the specific circumstances being faced, for example the Police, Environment Agency or Health Protection Agency.

Implementing the plan will safeguard the interests of candidates while maintaining the integrity of the examination system and safeguarding qualification standards.

The contingencies applied will be selected based on the context of the disruption and have been implemented on several occasions in response to localised issues. They would be applied on a larger scale in response to any widespread disruption at a national level.

The priority when implementing contingencies will be to maintain three principles:

- Delivering assessments to published timetables
- Delivering results to published timetables
- Complying with regulatory requirements in relation to assessment, marking and standards.

If the usual contingencies are no longer sufficient to maintain these outcomes, an identified Crisis Management Team consisting of representatives of all organisations involved will be convened by Ofqual to agree the additional actions required.

The national examination timetable applies to GCSEs, AS levels, A-levels and Principal Learning.

2. Communications:

The scale of the exams, qualifications and testing system in England, Wales and Northern Ireland is huge, involving more than a million learners each year and thousands of centres. It is vital that a system of this size has robust and co-ordinated contingency plans in place to deal with any major disruption that may affect candidates.

In the event of major disruption, communication is a key factor in ensuring an effective and consistent response across the agencies involved. This includes communications between the organisations involved in the response and communications to stakeholders such as centres, candidates, parents or carers and the public. Details of whether specific contingencies have been agreed across organisations will be confirmed on the Ofqual website and proactively communicated to relevant stakeholders.

www.ofqual.gov.uk

The organisations involved in this Joint Contingency Plan are committed to:

- sharing timely and accurate information as required to meet the aims of the plan
- communicating with stakeholders so they are aware of disruption to the exams, the contingency measures being implemented and any actions required of them as a result
- ensuring that any messages to the public are clear and accurate.

3. Background and Ownership:

The Joint Contingency Plan was first developed in 2006 and has been updated regularly since then. It is jointly owned by Ofqual, the Welsh Government, CCEA, AQA, Edexcel, EDI, ICAAE, OCR, VTCT, WJEC, City & Guilds, JCQ, DfE/Teaching Agency, DENI and UCAS. Ofqual acts as the central point of contact for the Contingency Plan and convener of the Contingency Management Group. While Scotland operates a different examinations system, the Scottish Qualifications Authority has been involved in the compilation of the plan to ensure its approach adopts the same principles of fairness, transparency, evidence and integrity. The Joint Contingency Plan is subject to regular reviews and amendments by the involved parties so it continually represents the latest experiences and expertise to ensure appropriate responses to disruption to the exams, qualifications and testing system.

4. Disruption of teaching time – centre is closed for an extended period:

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Dorset Studio School is 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.

Recommended actions:

Where there is disruption to teaching time and students miss teaching and learning, it remains Dorset Studio School's responsibility to prepare students, as usual, for examinations.

- In the case of modular courses, we may advise candidates to sit examinations in an alternative series
- We will follow DfE guidance on emergency planning, with advice on severe weather. This is available on the Department for Education website.

5. Disruption in the distribution of examination papers:

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Disruption to the distribution of examination papers to Dorset Studio School in advance of examinations.

Recommended actions:

- Awarding organisations to provide Dorset Studio School with electronic access to examination papers via a secure external network. The Examinations Officer will ensure that copies are received, made and stored under secure conditions.
- Awarding organisations to source alternative couriers for delivery of hardcopies.

6. Candidates unable to take examinations because of a crisis - centre remains open:

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Candidates are unable to attend Dorset Studio School to take examinations as normal.

Recommended actions:

- Dorset Studio School will liaise with candidates to identify whether the examination can be sat at an alternative venue in agreement with the relevant awarding organisations.
- Dorset Studio School will offer candidates an opportunity to sit any examinations missed at the next available series.
- Dorset Studio School will apply to awarding organisations for special consideration for candidates where they have met the minimum requirements. Candidates are only eligible for special consideration if they have been fully prepared and have covered the whole course but are affected by adverse circumstances beyond their control. **If a candidate chooses not to sit an examination for other reasons they should be aware that special consideration rules will not apply.**

JCQ guidance on special consideration can be accessed through the JCQ website:

www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/regulations-andguidance

7. Centre is unable to open as normal during the examination period:

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Dorset Studio School is unable to open as normal for scheduled examinations.

If Dorset Studio School is unable to open as normal for examinations we will inform each awarding organisation with which examinations are due to be taken as soon as is possible. As part of our general planning for emergencies, we will cover the impact on examinations. The responsibility for deciding whether it is safe for a centre to open lies with the Principal. The Principal is responsible for taking advice, or following instructions from relevant local or national agencies in deciding whether we are able to open.

Recommended actions:

- Dorset Studio School will open for examinations and examination candidates only, if possible.



- Dorset Studio School will use alternative venues in agreement with relevant awarding organisations (e.g. share facilities with other centres or use other public building, if possible).
- Dorset Studio School may offer candidates an opportunity to sit any examinations missed at the next available series.
- Dorset Studio School will apply to awarding organisations for special consideration for candidates where they have met the minimum requirements.

8. Disruption to the transportation of completed examination papers:

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Delay in normal collection arrangements for completed examination scripts.

Recommended actions:

- In the first instance Dorset Studio School will seek advice from awarding organisations and normal collection agency regarding collection. We will not to make our own arrangements for transportation without approval from awarding organisations.
- Dorset Studio School will ensure secure storage of completed examination papers until collection.

9. 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.

Recommended actions

- Awarding organisations to generate candidate marks for affected assessments based on other appropriate evidence of candidate achievement as defined by the awarding organisations.
- Candidates to retake affected assessment at subsequent assessment window.



10. Disruption to the scanning process – where completed examination scripts are being scanned in preparation for on-screen marking:

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Scanning process disrupted resulting in a risk to the delivery of results by scheduled dates.

Recommended actions:

- Awarding organisations to implement their existing contingency plans for disruption to on-screen marking process.

11. Centre is unable to distribute results as normal:

Criteria for implementation of plan

Dorset Studio School is unable to access or manage the distribution of results to candidates, or to facilitate post results services.

Recommended actions:

Dorset Studio School will contact awarding organisations about alternative options:

- make arrangements to access its results at an alternative site;
- make arrangements to co-ordinate access to post results services from an alternative site;
- share facilities with other centres if this is possible.

12. Summary of responsibilities in the event of disruption to examinations:

Awarding Organisations are responsible for:	Dorset Studio School is responsible for:
	Preparing plans for any disruption to exams as part of our general emergency planning.
Ensuring centres receive examination materials for scheduled examinations.	Preparing candidates for examinations.
	Ensuring examinations and assessments are taken under the conditions prescribed by awarding organisations.
	Ensuring, where relevant, that assessment materials and candidate work are stored under secure conditions.
	Deciding whether we can open for examinations as scheduled and informing relevant awarding organisations if we are unable to open.
Advising centres on possible alternative examination arrangements and declining / approving proposals for alternative examination arrangements.	Exploring the opportunities for alternative arrangements if we cannot open for examinations and agreeing such arrangements with the awarding organisations.
Evaluating and declining / approving requests for special consideration.	Judging whether candidates meet the requirements for special consideration as a result of any disruption and submitting these requests to the relevant awarding organisations.
	Assessing and liaising with the awarding organisations in the event of disruption to the transportation of papers.
Marking, moderating and grading candidate work.	
Issuing results to centres on scheduled dates.	The distribution of examination results to candidates.

13. Other Policies/Documents:

This Policy should be read in conjunction with the following Policies/documents:

- Policy for Controlled Assessment & Internal Assessment Decisions
- Late Arrival to Exams Policy
- Early Examination Entry Policy
- Staff Malpractice (Controlled Assessment) Policy
- Risk Management
- Internal Appeals Procedures Policy
- Exams Archiving Policy
- Disability Policy
- Management of Non-Examination Assessments Policy
- Exams Policy
- Word Processing Policy
- Access Arrangements Policy
- Emergency Evacuation Policy