



# HARRODIAN

## Examination Contingency Plan and Resilience Arrangements Policy

### This Policy has been written:

- To meet the requirements of the OFQUAL Joint Contingency Plan
- To meet the requirements of the Joint Qualifications Council (JCQ)

### Monitoring and Review

- This policy will be subject to continuous monitoring, refinement, and audit by the Examinations Officer.
- The Head of Curriculum and Assessment (Upper School 11s/Year 7 to Upper Sixth) and the Head of Teaching and Learning (Upper School 11s/Year 7 to Upper Sixth) will undertake a formal annual review of this policy for the purpose of monitoring, and of the efficiency with which the related duties have been discharged, by no later than one year from the date shown below, or earlier if significant changes to the systems and arrangements take place, or if legislation, regulatory requirements or best practice guidelines so require.
- The next official date for review is March 2025.

### Key staff involved in contingency planning

Role	Name(s)
Head of Centre	James Hooke
Exams Officer Line Manager (Senior Leader)	Taryn Oldacre
Exams officer	Anita Leyshon
SENCo	Rachel Kimber/Nick Welz
SLT members	James Hooke, Taryn Oldacre, Alison Heller, Robert Stewart, Andrew Woodward, David Sanders Peter Hardie, Lucy Horan, Amber Moore, Camilla Crawford

## **Aims of the Exam Contingency Plan**

The Examination Contingency Plan is designed to ensure a consistent and effective response in the event of major disruption to the examination system at Harrodian.

Alongside internal processes, this plan is informed by the 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 complies with the JCQ general regulations (section 5) in that:

*The centre agrees to “have in place a written examination contingency plan/examinations policy which covers all aspects of the examination administration. This will allow members of the senior leadership team to have a robust contingency plan in place, minimising risk to examination administration, should the examinations officer be absent at a crucial stage of the examination cycle.”*

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 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, the Senior Leadership Team will agree to the additional actions required.

## **Communications**

In the event of local disruption, communication to teachers and students will take place through the Examinations Officer following agreement with the Headmaster or Exams Officer Line Manager, Taryn Oldacre.

In the event of major disruption, details of specific contingencies agreed across organisations involved in the examinations process will be confirmed on the OFQUAL website and proactively communicated to relevant stakeholders.

This includes communications between the organisations involved in the response and communications to stakeholders such as centres, candidates, parents or carers and the public.

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.

## **Scenarios as set out in the Government's Joint Contingency Plan**

### **Section 1: Pupils unable to get to School**

#### **1. Disruption of teaching time - School closed for an extended period**

If Harrodian 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, it is the responsibility of the School to prepare students for examinations as usual.

The School will implement plans to facilitate teaching and learning by an alternative method or alternative location and will

- prioritise candidates who have an exam shortly
- advise candidates, where appropriate, to sit examinations in the next available series

The School will communicate with parents, carers and candidates about the potential for disruption and the plans to address the issues.

Guidance on emergency planning, with advice on severe weather, is available on the Department for Education website:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/emergencies-and-severe-weather-schools-and-early-years-settings>

#### **2. Candidates unable to take examinations because of a crisis – School remains open**

If candidates are unable to attend to take the examination as normal, (for example if they are ill) the School will:

- Liaise with candidates to see if the exam can be taken at an alternative venue in agreement with the relevant awarding organisations.
- Offer candidates the opportunity to sit the exam missed in the next available series.
- Apply to the awarding organisations for special consideration for candidates where they have met the minimum requirements.

JCQ guidance on special consideration can be accessed through the JCQ website:  
[https://www.jcq.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Guide\\_to\\_spec\\_con\\_process\\_May23\\_FI\\_NAL.pdf](https://www.jcq.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Guide_to_spec_con_process_May23_FI_NAL.pdf)

## **Section 2: Distribution/Collection of Exam Papers and Scripts**

### **3. Disruption in the distribution of examination papers to the School in advance of the exams**

If the distribution of examination papers to the School in advance of examinations is disrupted:

- The Examinations Office will be in contact with the awarding organisations.
- The awarding organisations will source alternative couriers for delivery of hardcopies.
- The awarding organisations could provide the School with electronic access to examination papers via a secure external network, or
- Awarding organisations could fax examination papers to School if electronic transfer is not possible.

The Examinations Officer will ensure that copies are received, made and stored under secure conditions.

### **4. Disruption to the transportation of completed examination scripts**

If there is a delay in normal collection arrangements for completed examination scripts (notified by normal collection agency/courier or awarding organisation):

- The School in the first instance should make contact with the awarding organisations.
- The School must not make arrangements for transportation without approval from awarding organisations, but wait for the advice/instructions from the awarding bodies.
- The School must ensure secure storage of completed examination scripts until collection.

## **Section 3: School Premises not available**

### **5. School is 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)**

If Harrodian is unable to open as normal for the scheduled examinations (for example if there was a fire) the Examinations Officer must inform each awarding organisation with which examinations are due to be taken as soon as possible.

The responsibility for deciding whether it is safe for the School to open lies with the Headmaster. The Headmaster is responsible for taking advice, or following instructions from relevant local or national agencies in deciding whether the School is able to open.

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

#### **Section 4: Availability of the exam scripts to mark, once submitted to awarding organisations**

##### **6. Assessment evidence is not available to be marked**

It is possible that large-scale damage to or destruction of completed examination scripts/assessment evidence might happen before it can be marked. In this eventuality, the Headmaster or the Examinations Officer will contact the awarding organisations as soon as possible to seek their advice. The Headmaster or Exams Officer will also immediately contact the parents, carers and students to apprise them of the situation.

It is recommended that:

- The awarding organisations should generate candidate marks for affected assessments based on other appropriate evidence of candidate achievement as defined by the awarding organisations in consultation with the regulators.
- The candidates should retake the affected assessment at a subsequent assessment window if possible.

**Points 7, 8, 9 and 10 corresponding to the Joint Contingency Plan are documented in Appendix A, as they relate only to the Awarding Bodies' responsibilities.**

#### **Section 5: Results**

##### **11. School is unable to distribute results as normal**

If the School is unable to access or manage the distribution of results to candidates, (for example the building is closed), the School will contact the awarding bodies as soon as possible to discuss alternative options. These may be to either:

- Make arrangements to access its results at an alternative site, or
- To share facilities with other centres where possible.

The School will also contact the parents, carer and students, as soon as a solution has been found, and have them directed to an alternative collection point if one has been found.

## **12. Awarding Organisations are unable to offer Post-Results services**

In the event of the awarding organisations not being able to provide post results services, such as answering enquiries and appeals from either students or the Examinations Officer, the School will:

- contact the awarding organisations about alternative options
- make arrangements to access its results at an alternative site
- make arrangements to coordinate access to post-results services from an alternative site
- share facilities with other centres where possible
- contact UCAS to notify them of any issues regarding appeals/remarks and the offer of university places

## **Additional Causes of Potential Disruption to the Exam Process**

### **1. Exams Officer extended absence, or failure to perform duties, at key points in the Exams Process/Cycle**

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

#### **Planning**

- Annual data collection exercise not undertaken to collate information on qualifications and awarding body specifications being delivered.
- Annual exam plan not produced identifying essential key tasks, key dates and deadlines.
- Sufficient invigilators not recruited and trained.

#### **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**

- Exam timetabling, rooming allocation; and invigilation schedules not prepared.
- Candidates not briefed on exam timetables and awarding body information for candidates.

- 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 eg. very late arrival, suspected malpractice, special consideration.
- Candidates' scripts not dispatched as required to awarding bodies.

#### **Results and post-results**

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

#### **Recommended School Actions**

- Second Exams Officer to take over and SLT to nominate a deputy. In the event of a failure to perform duties, the SLT will take appropriate action to resolve the issue.

### **2. SENCO extended absence, or failure to perform duties, at key points in the exam cycle**

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

#### **Planning**

- Candidates not tested/assessed to identify potential access arrangement requirements.
- Evidence of need and evidence to support a normal way of working not collated.

#### **Pre-exams**

- Approval for access arrangements not applied for to the awarding body.
- Modified paper requirements not identified in a timely manner to enable ordering within external deadlines.
- Staff providing support to access arrangement candidates not allocated and trained.

#### **Exam time**

Access arrangement candidate support not arranged for exam rooms.

#### **Recommended School Actions**

- SLT should nominate a deputy and an administrative assistant to cover the role. In the event of a failure to perform duties, the SLT will take appropriate action to resolve the issue.

### **3. Teaching Staff extended absence, or failure to perform duties, at key points in the exam cycle**

- Key tasks will not be undertaken including:  
Early/estimates 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.
- Internal assessment marks and candidates' work not provided to meet submission deadlines.

**Recommended School actions:**

- SLT to nominate an acting Head of Department to cover roles/tasks. In the event of a failure to perform duties, the SLT will take appropriate action to resolve the issue.

**4. Invigilators – lack of appropriately trained invigilators or invigilator absence**

- Failure to recruit and train sufficient invigilators to conduct exams.
- Invigilator shortage on peak exam days.
- Invigilator absence on the day of an exam.

**Recommended School actions:**

- Internal invigilators should be utilised alongside the external team of trained staff.

**5. Exam Rooms – lack of appropriate rooms or venues being unavailable at short notice**

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

**Recommended School actions:**

- Alternative venues to be identified well in advance, and at short notice, sources from the 'cover department'.

**6. Failure of IT Systems**

- System failure at final entry deadline.
- System failure during exams preparation.
- System or equipment failure during exams, particularly when candidates require laptops, printers, etc.
- System failure at results release time.



### **Recommended School actions**

- Exams Officer will communicate with relevant awarding organisations at the outset to resolve the issue.
- IT Department to address potential risk areas and issues with School technology prior to the start of exam cycle.

### **7. Emergency evacuation of the exam room (or centre lock down)**

- Whole centre evacuation (or lock down) during exam time due to serious incident resulting in exam candidates being unable to start, proceed with or complete their exams

### **Recommended School Actions**

- Follow the procedures as set out in the School Lockdown Policy.

### **Summary of the School's responsibilities in the event of disruption to examinations**

- Preparing plans for any disruption to exams as part of Harrodian's General Emergency Plan.
- 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 the School can open examinations as scheduled and informing relevant awarding organisations if the School is unable to open.
- Exploring the opportunities for alternative arrangements if the School cannot open for examinations and agreeing such arrangements with the awarding organisations.
- Assessing and liaising with awarding bodies in the event of disruption to the transportation of exam papers.

### **Resilience Arrangements for use in the unlikely event that the government determines that GCSE and A Level examinations and assessments will not go ahead as planned.**

In the extremely unlikely event that the government determines that GCSE and A Level examinations and assessments will not go ahead as planned, these resilience arrangements set out how evidence of performance will be gathered. Throughout this process, the expert opinions of Heads of Department and teachers together with academic oversight by the Head of Curriculum and Assessment (Upper School 11s/Year 7 to Upper Sixth), the Head of Teaching and

Learning (Upper School 11s/Year 7 to Upper Sixth) and the Head of Seniors and Sixth Form will form the basis for well-informed grades. The evidence provided by these resilience arrangements will ensure that there is sufficient evidence of candidate performance to enable alternative methods of awarding grades, such as Teacher Assessed Grades (TAGs), to be determined.

### **Scope of Assessments**

The School will plan assessment opportunities to gather evidence of candidate performance in line with their usual assessment approaches. Evidence gathered will be sufficient so the School feels confident that, taken together, the evidence is an appropriate assessment of the knowledge, understanding and skills of the candidate.

Heads of Department and teachers will plan so that the evidence gathered for candidates assesses them on a wide range of content, similar to that which they will expect in their summer exams, and across the assessment objectives for the qualification.

Candidates will normally only be assessed on content they have been taught so far, at the point in the year when their teachers would usually assess them. Heads of Department and teachers will plan both the assessment opportunities, and when they take place, in ways they judge will best support their candidates in preparing for their exams. For the most part, credible grades will be collected from exam-condition mock examinations that take place in December and January of the final year of study for both GCSE and A Level candidates.

The total assessment time will not exceed the total time candidates would spend taking exams for the relevant qualification, plus any time spent on non-exam assessment. Heads of Department and teachers will guard against over-assessment and will not spend longer on these assessments than they would on their existing assessment arrangements. As such, by following the existing internal mock assessment arrangements, the School will have sufficient evidence.

The School will not look to introduce additional assessments for the purpose of gathering evidence of student performance, as this will be counter to supporting candidates as they prepare for their exams. Ideally candidates will benefit from the opportunities they are given to prepare for their exams, and will not be adversely affected by taking too many assessments. Providing mock exams are completed in this way, one set should be sufficient for the purposes of gathering evidence.

Heads of Department and teachers may also choose to carry out other internal assessments across the year that are not for the purpose of evidence collection.

### **The conditions under which candidates are assessed**

The School will assess candidates to provide them with opportunities to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding in ways that cover the assessment objectives for the qualification. Candidates taking GCSEs and A Levels will be assessed under exam-like conditions wherever possible. For example, candidates will:

- not know the questions in the assessment beforehand
- work independently and without assistance (other than as required for a reasonable adjustment)
- not have access to books or revision notes
- be supervised during the assessment
- be assessed under timed conditions equivalent to those under which they would expect to complete the assessment (or part of an assessment) during their final exam

These measures will both help to ensure that the work is authentic and, given that this reflects the conditions under which formal exams would have been taken, will prepare candidates for exams in the summer.

### **The assessment materials**

The mock GCSE and A Level assessments will be similar to full or parts of the exam papers that candidates are preparing to take and will be based on exam board materials as far as possible.

### **Student Awareness**

Candidates will be made aware that any assessment evidence collected and retained under these arrangements will be used to determine grades only in the unlikely situation that exams and formal assessments cannot go ahead. Students will also be told, where possible, before taking any assessment, whether their performance in the assessment would be used as part of the evidence to determine a grade for them if exams cannot go ahead as planned.

In exceptional circumstances, it might be necessary for assessments that were not taken in line with this guidance to be used as evidence to inform a grade should exams not go ahead as planned. This could be, for example, where a student misses the mock examinations because of serious illness. In such cases, the student might not have been told in advance of taking the assessment that their performance might be used as evidence. The School will expect to receive guidance on how to take this into account when determining TAGs once notified by the government that the exams cannot proceed as expected.

### **Marking**

Teachers will mark the assessments in line with published exam board mark schemes and guidance where appropriate. As these arrangements are intended to support the existing internal assessment process, candidates will be given feedback, which could include marks or comments. Students will not, however, repeat assessments with the same questions following such feedback for the purpose of evidence collection.

Teachers will tell the student the grade at which their performance in the assessment indicates they have performed. As teachers prepare candidates to take their qualifications, including through mock exams, those papers taken in and before 2019 and from 2023 onwards will be most useful when considering the standard of work expected at each grade. This will also support teachers where the assessment undertaken also informs decisions on predicted grades, be that for use internally or for external use such as UCAS predictions.

Teachers will take into account that approaches to grading were exceptional in autumn 2020 and 2021 and summer 2022. There was greater leniency in grade boundaries that is not normally applied in exams. The School will therefore ensure they do not consider grade boundaries from these years when providing an indicative grade for candidates.

Teachers will make it clear to their candidates that any grade used to indicate the level at which the student has performed is not an indication of what their final grade would be if it became necessary to award a qualification using the evidence. It will not be possible for a teacher to determine a final qualification grade unless Ofqual sets specific guidance on this, which Ofqual will do only if exams do not go ahead.

### **Retention of work**

Student work, either the original or a copy, will always be retained either digitally or physically by the School. Students may be given copies, or the original work, where this would support their study.

### **Non-examined assessment**

Where a GCSE, AS or A Level includes a non-exam assessment (NEA), teachers will support their candidates, wherever possible, to complete that assessment in line with the timescales set by exam boards. Should exams be cancelled, teachers will take a student's NEA into account when determining a TAG.

### **GCSE and A Level Art and Design Qualifications**

Students taking GCSE and A level qualifications in subjects such as Art and Design do not take exams in any year. Teachers do not, therefore, need to carry out any additional assessments.

### **Reasonable adjustments for disabled candidates**

The same reasonable adjustments that will be made for disabled candidates taking exams in the summer will, where possible, be applied to the assessments. Records should be made of the adjustments and the reasons for them. The School will record the reason why any reasonable adjustment was not made.

If a student’s need for a reasonable adjustment is only identified after an assessment has taken place, their teacher will record the reason for this late identification and where possible allow the student to take a different, but equivalent, assessment with the reasonable adjustment in place.

**Special considerations for candidates whose performance is affected by an event outside their control**

If a teacher is satisfied that a student’s performance in one or more of the assessments was affected by an event that was outside of the student’s control at the time of, or immediately before, the assessment, such as illness or family bereavement, the teacher will mark the assessment as normal but record the issues so that these could be taken into account when determining a grade, should that be necessary.

The School will ensure candidates know they need to tell their teachers before, or immediately after, the assessment of any events outside of their control that might have affected their performance in an assessment.

Approved by:	Senior Leadership Team
Review cycle:	Annual
Last reviewed:	April 2024
Date of next review:	April 2025

## **Appendix A – Awarding Organisation Contingency Plans**

### **7. Disruption to the scanning process – where completed examination scripts are being scanned in preparation for onscreen marking**

If the examination boards scanning process is disrupted, resulting a risk to the delivery of results by scheduled dates, then:

- The awarding organisations will implement their existing contingency plans for the disruption to on-screen marking process.
- The awarding organisations will revert to the traditional form of marking.
- The awarding organisations will recruit, train or re-standardise qualified new markers.

### **8. Markers unable to mark examination scripts according to marking schedules**

If the examination board markers are unable to mark examination scripts resulting in a risk to the delivery of results by scheduled dates, the awarding organisations will:

- Re-allocate scripts to available markers.
- Recruit, train or re-standardise qualified new markers and prioritise marking based on results dates.

## **Section 5: Results**

### **9. Difficulty in meeting planned schedule or unable, to issue results**

If the awarding organisation(s) is unable to either meet the planned schedule for issue of results, or to issue results as planned due to a systems failure and therefore face delays in meeting the planned schedule for issuing results. The awarding body will:

- Notify the School about the potential delay, and the School will notify the parents, carers and students as it sees fit.
- Liaise with the relevant Further and Higher Education agencies to establish priorities for processing results in line with UCAS deadlines.
- Implement existing contingency plans for disruption to the schedule for issuing results.
- In consultation with regulators, assess the level of disruption and consider alternative options for issuing results dependent upon the nature of the particular systems failure.

### **10. Awarding Organisations unable to issue accurate results**

If, due to system error/failure or attack on systems a significant number of results cannot be validated as accurate or are issued and found to be inaccurate. The awarding organisations will:

- Notify the candidates, School and stakeholders of any incorrect results.
- Notify UCAS and other Further and Higher Education agencies about the impact on their deadlines.
- Re-validate the results.

- Re-issue results, via alternative format if necessary.

**School Actions**

In all cases, the School should make contact with and await guidance from the Awarding Organisations, responding to such guidance in a timely manner.

## **Appendix B – Actions/Decisions required from SLT to tackle outstanding issues**

### ***Identify alternative venue for examinations***

If the School is closed either as a result of severe external event, or School specific emergency, either long term or short term, this should dovetail into the School's Critical Incident Plan.

Currently the School has an evacuation plan that involves the use of St Paul's School. The plan will be updated to include use for examinations. Another place that could be used is Barnes Sports Hall. The School has a Marquee that can be taken down and reassembled in 3 days. During the summer months it is erected on the hard court area between the cloisters and tennis courts. If necessary it could be erected further from the School and used as an alternate examination venue.

***Consider an alternative venue for the distribution of exam results and the post-results service,*** should the School be closed, or the internal or external IT systems are not available. If this is the case then venues such as St Paul's School and Thomson House School could be used. Alternatively we could use Barnes Sports Hall.

***Appoint and train a Deputy Exams Officer*** – Helen Ryan for day to day tasks and Tom Bennett/Hayley Butler for SIMs Exams Organiser.

***Appoint/nominate and train a Deputy SENCO specifically for examination responsibilities – Nick Welz*** who could take over in the case of the absence/failure to perform duties of the SENCO.

***Appoint/nominate a Deputy for each Head of Department in respect of Public Exam responsibilities,*** who could take over in the case of each absence/failure to perform duties, of the Head of Department. Some departments such as Mathematics, Modern Foreign Languages and English have a deputy. For other departments the next most senior teacher will be asked by SLT to undertake those responsibilities. If this is not appropriate the department's SLT line manager will ensure that these duties are undertaken.

***Ensuring that the internal IT hardware is suitable to cope with the requirements of the candidates sitting exams with special consideration.***

In particular ensuring that the laptops/computers and printers are fit for purpose, fully functional with access to back-up machines, ensuring there is a procedure for managing any IT problems during exam periods giving the utmost priority to any issues.

***Ensuring that there is a plan to cover the failure of internal IT hardware/software in relation to the external interface*** during exam entry, exam preparation and results time both regarding links with the Awarding bodies, UCAS and SIMS. The Head of IT – Kris Kreis - will be asked to review all aspects of IT hardware and software and report back to SLT.



## Further guidance to inform procedures and implement contingency planning

### Ofqual

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

#### 1. Contingency planning

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

##### 1.1 Covid specific guidance:

- [Guidance for schools Covid-19](#) 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](#) from the Department for Education in England
- [Action for FE Colleges](#) from the Department for Education in England
- [Public health guidance to support autumn exams](#) from the Department for Education
- [Education and childcare: coronavirus](#) from Welsh Government
- [Covid-19 - guidance for school and educational settings](#) from Department of Education in Northern Ireland

##### 1.2 General contingency guidance

- [Emergency planning and response](#) from the Department for Education in England
- [Opening and closing 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 closures](#) from NI Direct
- [Opening schools in extremely bad weather](#) - guidance for schools from the Welsh Government
- [Procedures for handling bomb threats](#) 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

### **3. Steps you should take**

#### **3.1 Exam planning**

Review contingency plans well in advance of each exam or assessment series. Consider how, if the contingency plan is invoked, you will comply with the awarding organisation's requirements.

#### **3.2 In the event of disruption**

1. Contact the relevant awarding organisation and follow its instructions.
2. Take advice, or follow instructions, from relevant local or national agencies in deciding whether your centre is able to open.
3. Identify whether the exam or timetabled assessment can be sat at an alternative venue, in agreement with the relevant awarding organisation, ensuring the secure transportation of questions papers or assessment materials to the alternative venue.
4. Where accommodation is limited, prioritise students whose progression will be severely delayed if they do not take their exam or timetabled assessment when planned.
5. In the event of an evacuation during an examination please refer to JCQ's ['Centre emergency evacuation procedure'](#).
6. Communicate with parents, carers and students any changes to the exam or assessment timetable or to the venue.
7. Communicate with any external assessors or relevant third parties regarding any changes to the exam or assessment timetable.

#### **3.3 After the exam**

1. Consider whether any students' ability to take the assessment or demonstrate their level of attainment has been materially affected and, if so, apply for special consideration.
2. Advise students, where appropriate, of the opportunities to take their exam or assessment at a later date.
3. Ensure that scripts are stored under secure conditions.
4. Return scripts to awarding organisations in line with their instructions. Never make alternative arrangements for the transportation of completed exam scripts, unless told to do so by the awarding organisation.

## **4. Steps the awarding organisation should take**

### **4.1 Exam planning**

Establish and maintain, and at all times comply with, an up-to-date, written contingency plan. Ensure that the arrangements in place with centres and other third parties enable them to deliver and award qualifications in accordance with their conditions of recognition.

### **4.2 In the event of disruption**

1. Take all reasonable steps to mitigate any adverse effect, in relation to their qualifications, arising from any disruption.
2. Provide effective guidance to any of their centres delivering qualifications.
3. Ensure that where an assessment must be completed under specified conditions, students complete the assessment under those conditions (other than where any reasonable adjustments or special considerations require alternative conditions).
4. Promptly notify the relevant regulators about any event which could have an adverse effect on students, standards or public confidence.
5. Coordinate its communications with the relevant regulators where the disruption has an impact on multiple centres or a wide range of learners.

### **4.3 After the exam**

Consider any requests for special consideration for affected students. For example, those who may have lost their internally assessed work or whose performance in assessments or exams could have been affected by the disruption.

## **5. If any students miss an exam or are disadvantaged by the disruption**

If some of the students have been adversely affected by the disruption, you should ask the awarding organisation about applying for special consideration. Decisions about special consideration, when it is or is not appropriate, is for each awarding organisation to make. Their decisions might be different for different qualifications and for different subjects.

See also:

- [JCO's guidance on special considerations](#)
- [FAB's guidance on special considerations](#)

## **6. Wider communications**

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

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

Awarding organisations will alert the [Universities and Colleges Admissions Service](#) (UCAS) and the [Central Applications Office](#) (CAO) about any impact of the disruption on their deadlines and liaise regarding student progression to further and higher education. Awarding organisations will alert relevant professional bodies or employer groups if the impact of disruption particularly affects them.

### **7. Widespread national disruption**

In the event of widespread sustained national disruption, the government departments will communicate with regulators, awarding organisations and centres prior to a public announcement. Regulators will provide advice to government departments on implications for exam timetables.

[Ofqual guidance extract taken directly from the *Exam system contingency plan: England, Wales and Northern Ireland - What schools and colleges and other centres should do if exams or other assessments are seriously disrupted*, (updated 23 January 2018)  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/exam-system-contingency-plan-england-wales-and-northern-ireland/what-schools-and-colleges-should-do-if-exams-or-other-assessments-are-seriously-disrupted>]

## **JCQ**

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:

<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>

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 have designated the afternoon of **Thursday 8th June 2023, the afternoon of Thursday 15th June 2023 and** all day of 28th June 2023 as a 'contingency days' for examinations. This is consistent with the qualification regulators' document Exam system contingency plan: England, Wales and Northern Ireland - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/examsystem-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 local disruption to examinations. It is part of the awarding bodies' standard contingency planning for examinations.

**Centres must therefore remind candidates that they must remain available until Tuesday 29 June 2023 should an awarding body need to invoke its contingency plan.**

[JCQ guidance taken directly from JCQ *Instructions for Conducting Examinations 2022-2023* <http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/ice---instructions-for-conducting-examinations>, section 15, **Contingency planning**]

*General Regulations for Approved Centres*

<http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations>

Guidance on *Alternative Site* arrangements and *Transferred Candidate* arrangements

Accessed through secure login to the Centre Admin Portal (CAP) or through the JCQ training site

<http://jqc.training.jcq.org.uk/CAP/Home/Training>

*Instructions for Conducting Examinations*

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

*A guide to the special consideration process*

<http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/regulations-and-guidance>

## **GOV.UK**

*Emergency planning and response: Severe weather; Exam disruption*

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/emergencies-and-severe-weather-schools-and-early-years-settings>

*Teaching time lost due to severe weather conditions*

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/teaching-time-lost-due-to-severe-weather-conditions>

*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>

*Statutory guidance on school closures*

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-organisation-maintained-schools>

## **Wales**

*School closures – opening schools in extreme bad weather*

<http://gov.wales/topics/educationandskills/publications/guidance/schoolclosuresfaq/?lang=en>

## **Northern Ireland**

*Exceptional closure days* <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/articles/exceptional-closure-days>

*Checklist for Principals when considering Opening or Closure of School*

<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/checklist-exceptional-closure-schools>

*School closures* <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/school-closures>